

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

The
Black Prairie
Archives
An Anthology



Karina Vernon, editor

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Created for Wilfrid Laurier University Press by
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ABOUT THE WRITERS

MANDISA BROMFIELD has been with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) for close to twenty years. She is currently an Early Reading Coach, and has worked in a variety of other teaching roles in both English and French. She has also developed, written, and reviewed Africentric curriculum, and was a teacher at the Africentric Alternative School, the first publicly funded Afrocentric school in Canada. Mandisa completed a master's (MA) degree at OISE/UT, for which she explored her role as a non-Indigenous person working in urban Indigenous spaces. Much of her present work involves learning through Black Student Success and Excellence (TDSB). Her primary focus is infusing language instruction (in English and French) with anti-Black racism education in the early years and learning how to authentically share Indigenous perspectives as she works towards reconciliation as a treaty person living on Turtle Island.

NASTASSIA SUBBAN has been an elementary and secondary school teacher with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) for over thirteen years. She is currently the Assistant Curriculum Leader of Student Success, Community Partnerships and Critical Consciousness and has also held the role of a Seconded Faculty Member in York University's Faculty of Education. Nastassia completed a Master of Education that focused on Africentric and transformative learning and she is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Humanities at York University. She was a curriculum reviewer for the Grade 11 CAS 331: History of Africa and People's of African Descent course and created a curriculum guide for the text *Read, Listen, Tell*. Most recently, her focus has been on creating spaces for teachers to investigate the topic of self-actualization.

INTRODUCTION

The white-washing of Canadian history is a phenomenon that can be readily seen once one opens a Canadian history textbook. *The Black Prairie Archives: An Anthology* runs counter to this tale of history as it, “unearths and brings critical attention to the little-known history and cultural production of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Black writers on the Canadian prairies and connects this archival literature to the work of contemporary Black prairie authors.” This anthology gives us a new lens by which to imagine this place we have come to know as Canada. More specifically, this archive allows for Ontario students to reconsider the conceptions they may have developed or assumed about those who live in the Prairies. This document gives students and teachers the ability to think differently about different regions in Canada and also allows them to look at the many similarities that those of the African diaspora face whether you are in the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, or British Columbia. Most importantly, this archive uses primary sources to tell the untold stories of those that have made important contributions to Canadian history.

THE CURRICULUM DOCUMENT

This curriculum document has been created to support the text *The Black Prairie Archives: An Anthology*. This document is intended for, but not limited to, use in Grade 10, *Canadian History, Since World War 1*. This course, as stated in the Ontario curriculum, explores social, economic, and political developments and events and their impact on the lives of different individuals, groups, and communities, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities, in Canada since 1914. Students will examine the role of conflict and cooperation in Canadian society, Canada’s evolving role within the global community, and the impact of various individuals, organizations, and events on identities, citizenship, and heritage in Canada. Students will develop an understanding of some of the political developments and government policies that have had a lasting impact on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities. They will develop their ability to apply the concepts of historical thinking and the historical inquiry process, including the interpretation and analysis of evidence, when investigating key issues and events in Canadian history since 1914.

[Ontario Curriculum: Canadian and World Studies, 2018](#)

TERMINOLOGY

People of African ancestry living in Canada are often referred to as African, African-Canadian, Afro-Caribbean, Black, and Peoples from the African Diaspora. In *The Black Prairie Archives: An Anthology*, editor Karina Vernon uses the term “Black” as “it suggests that the nation does not function as the dominant point of reference in determining Black identities, organizing group affiliations, or in preserving Black archives (p. 11). For consistency of terminology, this resource will use the term Black to refer to the people named in the archive as well as all those who identify as Black. This resource also capitalises the letter

B in the word black when referring to Black people and culture as a form of respect to Black people and to follow the guidelines in *The Canadian Press Stylebook*.

REMOTE LEARNING

In order to support teachers in light of the remote learning models of schooling that may be taking place due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have provided online resources that students can utilize for a productive learning experience whether physically in classrooms or in remote online learning environments.

LEARNING NORMS

Unlearning history can bring up many different emotions and opinions and we strongly suggest setting norms within the classroom that speak to respect, kindness, understanding and empathy. Included are some guidelines around creating these norms in learning environments through the use of circles, which can help support caring and supportive learning environments that demonstrate love, "...when we teach with love we are better able to respond to the unique concerns of individual students, while simultaneously integrating those concerns into the classroom community. When teachers work to affirm the emotional well-being of students, we are doing the work of love (bell hooks, *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practice Wisdom*, p. 160). In addition, journaling can also be considered as a way to build community, learn, collaborate, and self-reflect.

TEACHING AND LEARNING CIRCLES

Why Use a Circle?

For many Indigenous peoples across the world, a teaching and learning circle is used to share ideas, thoughts, opinions and reflections. As a circle is a shape that represents equality, all voices can be heard when sharing in a circle. It is important that all members of the learning community sit around a circle in which all faces can be seen in order to represent the shared space in which all voices are heard and respected. Teaching and learning circles are communities in which everyone can learn from and support each other as they continuously reflect, learn, plan for action, and evaluate their own work.

Circles for Community Building

Circles can be extremely powerful for fostering relationships in a group. It is therefore necessary for everyone to listen to the speaker and this needs to be set as a group norm. When we listen to each other, we can learn from each other and feelings of connectedness can occur. Circles need to be established as safe spaces where everyone belongs so as to be inclusive of all. In addition, as everyone is seen as equal in the circle, there can be great growth as the students can learn from the educators and the educators can also learn from the students. This also has the potential to increase social capital.

Circles as a Check In / Check Out

A teaching and learning circle can be a great place to start learning and building intention around themes but also a place for reflection. If there is a great amount of learning done during a particular session or class, a circle can be used to build upon, check in for emotional well-being, solidify learning, and/or for closure.

Circles for Healing and as Restorative Practice

Circles can also be used to restore peace if conflict arises. Restorative justice circles and emotional emancipation circles are a key practice for many people of the African Diaspora. As some of the topics and issues explored in human rights work can be heavy, highly personal, and emotional, there is the potential for extremely heated discussions among learners and educators. Circles can be used for healing and to restore peace and well-being as well as for meaningful dialogue, reflection, and growth. Potential questions that can be asked:

- What was your part in the problem?
- What can we do to make sure this doesn't happen again?

It is critical to use open-ended questions when facilitating circles, and it is essential to build a sense of community in the classroom. Throughout this guide circles and icebreakers are used to foster community in the learning environment.

Sources:

International Institute for Restorative Practices, *Restorative Circles in Schools: A Practical Guide for Educators*, Second Edition, 2019.

International Institute for Restorative Practices, *International Institute for Restorative Practices, The Restorative Practices Handbook: for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators*, Second Edition, 2019.

Community Healing Network Inc., *Emotional Emancipation Circles*, 2020.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Note: Questions adapted from pages 108-109 of the Ontario Curriculum: Canadian and World Studies, 2018

Lesson #1: Historical Inquiry and Skill Development

Learning Goal:

- Learning About Archives

TASK	INSTRUCTION
Gather	Ask the following questions to the class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is history?• How does history impact the present?• What are the benefits of archiving?• Explore the following websites:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Library and Archives Canada in 90 seconds• How your home videos could contribute to Canadian archives• International Council on Archives• Online Jigsaw Puzzles: Piece Together Ontario's History• What is an archive? Discuss.
Synthesize	Using pages 39-109 in the Archive, select 2-3 writers and consider the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Why is it important to gather evidence from primary sources when investigating past developments and events?2. What are some sources you might consult to try to identify voices that may be missing from the official version of an event?
Transfer	Using the 2-3 people who were selected from the Archive, have students answer the above questions in their notebooks in sentence format. In addition, students can write about primary sources which they use in their daily lives.

Lesson #2: Canada 1914-1929

Learning Goal:

- Understanding some key social, economic, and political events, trends, and developments between 1914 and 1929.

TASK	INSTRUCTION
Gather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups, have students select 3-5 writers from the Archive (from the period between 1914 and 1929) and discuss the questions below.
Synthesize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why might different individuals and communities in Canada view the same event, trend, or development in different ways? • Why might we view it differently now? • In what ways did government policy during this period create or contribute to divisions in Canadian society? • Was this period a turning point for Black people in Canada? • In what ways did the lives and struggles of Black people, groups, and communities help shape Canada during this period? What lasting impact did they have on Canada?
Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students select three of the questions above and write a two paragraph response on their own. • Students can explore the Ontario Archives YouTube Channel to discover footage of this time period and compare it to the people selected in the Archive. Here are some prompting questions: How are their lives similar/different? What do you notice about this time period from the footage of the Ontario Archives?

Lesson #3: Canada, 1929-1945

Learning Goal:

- Understanding some key interactions within and between Black people from the Prairies and other communities in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. Students should also consider the identities and experiences of Black-Indigenous (Afro-Indigenous) peoples.

TASK	INSTRUCTION
Gather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups students should select 2-3 writers from the Archive during the time period 1929-1945. • Students can view this digital project: CBC Black on the Prairies • Students will view this digital project as they will be creating their own project at the end of this learning goal in their groups. <p>Note to the teacher: Where possible, ensure that each group has not selected the same people so that groups can learn from each other.</p>
Synthesize	<p>Answer the following questions below as a group with regards to your selection from the Archive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is it important to consider a variety of perspectives when analysing events, trends, or developments from this period? 2. In what ways was the impact of the Great Depression different for Black people living on the Prairies than for Black people living in Ontario? 3. How did colonialism continue to have an impact on Indigenous individuals and Black communities in Canada during this period? In what ways did events during this period reflect Black Canadians' views on human rights? 4. Did the Canadian government respect the human rights of all people during this period? 5. What impact did events during this period have on Canada's response to later human rights issues?
Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will choose a digital format and present their answers to the class (i.e., FlipGrid, JamBoard, Google Slides)

Lesson #4 Canada, 1945-1982

Learning Goal:

- Understanding the significance of some key social, economic, and political events, trends, and developments in Canada between 1945 and 1982.

TASK	INSTRUCTION
Gather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In small groups select 2-3 people from the Archive during the time period 1945-1982. <p><i>Note to the teacher:</i> Where possible, ensure that each group has not selected the same writers so that groups can learn from each other.</p>
Synthesize	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What impact did international politics and movements during this period have on the quality of life of Black people in Canada? 2. Why do times of change lead to both conflict and cooperation? What factors contributed to the development of social movements in Canada during this period? 3. In what ways did colonialist government policies continue to have an impact on Black, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit individuals and communities during this time? 4. Which event or development during this period made the most significant contribution to the development of identities in Canada? 5. What criteria can we use to make that judgement?
Transfer	Using a different digital format from the previous learning experience, present your answers to the class (ie FlipGrid, JamBoard, Google Slides)

Lesson #5: Canada, 1982-Present

Learning Goal:

- Analyse how various significant individuals, groups, organizations, and events, both national and international, have contributed to the development of identities, citizenship, and heritage in Canada from 1982 to the present.

TASK	INSTRUCTION
Gather	• Each student will select one person from the Archive during the time period 1982-present.
Synthesize	Based on the Archive selection students will answer the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why did you select this writer? What impact have changing demographics had on different groups in Canada since 1982? What impact has regionalism had on Canada and on identities in Canada? Which individuals or groups made the greatest contribution to heritage in Canada during this period? How can we measure that contribution? What impact has delving into the Black Prairie Archives had on you? What is your own history and what might your archive look like?
Transfer	• Students will use the answers from this section as well as from sections 1-4 to begin to formulate a plan for their culminating activity.

6. CULMINATING TASK

POSSIBLE IDEAS FOR A CULMINATING TASK

- Create an archive of family data.
- Explore how different archives use social media to store and share data.
- Using social media (i.e, Instagram, TikTok, etc.), create a digital archive of your life to date.
- Explore [Black History in Canada](#). How might you connect some of the resources listed to the people you have learned about in the Archive ? Write a 1-2 page response and/or create a visual representation of your thinking.

SPECIAL EDUCATION ACCOMMODATIONS

Accommodations refer to learning strategies, tools, supports, and/or services that are required in order for a student to access the curriculum and demonstrate learning. *Instructional Accommodations* refer to changes in learning and teaching strategies that allow the student to access the curriculum. *Environmental Accommodations* refer to changes that are required to the classroom and/or school environment so that the students can learn in a safe and inclusive environment. *Assessment Accommodations* refer to changes and flexibility in assessment strategies that are required in order for the student to demonstrate learning.

EXAMPLES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

Instructional Accommodations

- Buddy/peer tutoring
- Note-taking assistance
- Duplicated notes
- Contracts
- Reinforcement incentives
- High structure
- Partnering
- Ability grouping
- Augmentative and Alternative Communications Systems
- Assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software
- Graphic organizers
- Non-verbal signals
- Organization coaching
- Time-management aids
- Mind maps
- Increased breaks
- Concrete/hands-on material
- Manipulatives
- Tactile tracing strategies
- Gesture cues
- Dramatizing information
- Visual cueing
- Gesture cues
- Dramatizing information
- Visual cueing
- Large size font
- Tracking sheets
- Colour cues
- Reduced/uncluttered format
- Computer options
- Spatially-cued formats
- Repeat information
- Reword/rephrase information
- Allow processing time
- Word retrieval prompts
- Taped texts

Environmental Accommodations

- Alternative workspace
- Strategic seating
- Instructor proximity
- Reduced audio/visual stimuli
- Study carrel
- Minimize background noise
- Quiet setting
- Use of headphones
- Special lighting
- Assistive devices or adaptive equipment
- Extended time limits
- Verbatim scribing
- Oral responses, including audiotapes
- Alternative settings
- Increased breaks
- Assistive devices or adaptive equipment
- Prompts to return student's attention to task

Assessment Accommodations

- Augmentative and Alternative Communications Systems
- Assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software
- Large size font
- Colour cues
- Reduced/uncluttered format
- Computer options
- Processing time allowed



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