U.S. Black History

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Who escaped enslavement and returned to Maryland to help others reach freedom through the Underground Railroad?

A. Harriet Tubman
B. Sojourner Truth
C. Ida B. Wells
D. Mary McLeod Bethune

Correct answer: A. Harriet Tubman
After escaping, Tubman made repeated trips to assist others. The Underground Railroad was a network of people and routes.

2. Who published an autobiography in 1845 recounting his life under slavery and his escape?

A. W. E. B. Du Bois
B. Booker T. Washington
C. Frederick Douglass
D. James Weldon Johnson

Correct answer: C. Frederick Douglass
Douglass's 1845 Narrative described his experience in his own words. It became part of his public work for abolition.

3. Which U.S. tennis player broke a color barrier at Wimbledon by winning the women’s singles championship in 1957?

A. Wilma Rudolph
B. Althea Gibson
C. Ora Washington
D. Zina Garrison

Correct answer: B. Althea Gibson
Gibson became the first Black player to win a Wimbledon singles title in 1957. She won the women’s singles title there again in 1958.

4. Whose arrest in December 1955 for refusing to surrender a seat on a Montgomery bus helped prompt a boycott?

A. Ella Baker
B. Diane Nash
C. Fannie Lou Hamer
D. Rosa Parks

Correct answer: D. Rosa Parks
Parks's arrest helped spark the Montgomery bus boycott. Local organizers and riders sustained the protest.

5. Which historian launched the observance then called Negro History Week in 1926?

A. John Hope Franklin
B. Carter G. Woodson
C. James Baldwin
D. Alain Locke

Correct answer: B. Carter G. Woodson
Woodson and his association promoted the week to bring Black history into schools and public life. It preceded Black History Month.

6. Jacob Lawrence painted scenes of families leaving the South and finding work in northern cities. What movement did his series depict?

A. The Great Migration
B. The movement to the Dust Bowl
C. The California Gold Rush
D. The migration on the Oregon Trail

Correct answer: A. The Great Migration
Lawrence's Migration Series depicts movement from the rural South and changes in people's lives at their destinations.

7. Which journalist published Southern Horrors in 1892, using reporting to document lynching and challenge the explanations used to defend it?

A. Alice Dunbar-Nelson
B. Mary Church Terrell
C. Zora Neale Hurston
D. Ida B. Wells

Correct answer: D. Ida B. Wells
Wells investigated specific cases and published evidence refuting claims often used to justify the violence.

8. A 1926 poetry collection called The Weary Blues draws on music and Black life. Who wrote it?

A. Claude McKay
B. Countee Cullen
C. Langston Hughes
D. Jean Toomer

Correct answer: C. Langston Hughes
The Weary Blues was Hughes's first book of poetry. The title poem voices the sound and feeling of a blues performance.

9. A World War II archive describes Black pilots and support personnel trained at facilities in Tuskegee, Alabama. Which group do the records describe?

A. Tuskegee Airmen
B. Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry
C. Red Ball Express drivers
D. The 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion

Correct answer: A. Tuskegee Airmen
The Tuskegee program trained Black military pilots and personnel who supported them in a segregated military.

10. Which educator opened a school for Black girls in Daytona Beach in 1904 that became part of Bethune-Cookman University?

A. Mary Church Terrell
B. Nannie Helen Burroughs
C. Anna Julia Cooper
D. Mary McLeod Bethune

Correct answer: D. Mary McLeod Bethune
Bethune started the Daytona school and built it into a lasting institution. It later developed into Bethune-Cookman University.

11. A 1968 Memphis march placard carried during the sanitation strike declares ‘I AM A MAN.’ What demand does that message express most directly?

A. A request to end public waste collection
B. A promise to accept the existing working conditions
C. Recognition of Black workers' dignity
D. An announcement that negotiations had finished

Correct answer: C. Recognition of Black workers' dignity
The placard asserts the worker's humanity. Marchers used that message in a strike over working conditions and fair treatment.

12. Hiram Revels's credentials show that Mississippi elected him to the U.S. Senate in 1870. Which statement can that record refute?

A. Before 1913, state legislatures usually chose U.S. senators.
B. No Black person held a U.S. Senate seat during Reconstruction.
C. Reconstruction followed the Civil War.
D. Mississippi was represented in the U.S. Senate.

Correct answer: B. No Black person held a U.S. Senate seat during Reconstruction.
Revels took his seat in 1870, becoming the first Black U.S. senator. His election provides a direct counterexample.

13. A Freedmen's Bureau labor contract gives the term of employment and the promised pay. What can a historian learn from that contract alone?

A. What every worker privately thought of the agreement
B. Whether the employer made every payment on time
C. The average earnings of all freed workers
D. The terms recorded for that agreement

Correct answer: D. The terms recorded for that agreement
A written contract can show what was agreed or promised. Whether the terms were carried out requires other evidence.

14. Under the 1964 Civil Rights Act as enacted, which titles best match a motel denying a room because of race and an employer refusing to hire someone because of race?

A. Title II for the motel and Title VII for the employer
B. Title VII for the motel and Title II for the employer
C. Title II for both cases
D. Title VII for both cases

Correct answer: A. Title II for the motel and Title VII for the employer
Title II addresses discrimination in public accommodations, including covered motels. Title VII addresses employment discrimination.

15. In a 1969 article in The Black Panther, Emma Simms writes on behalf of mothers who say New Haven's free breakfast program helped feed children. What does her article establish most directly?

A. The public school district ran the breakfast program.
B. Every child in New Haven attended the program.
C. The mothers publicly described the program as meeting a need in their community.
D. No families in other cities experienced similar needs.

Correct answer: C. The mothers publicly described the program as meeting a need in their community.
Simms's article records how a group of local mothers understood the program. It gives evidence of their support for the program without measuring how many children attended.