



EXPLORING
BLACK
COMMUNITIES
IN CANADA
THROUGH FILM



STUDY GUIDE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Study Guide	3
Recommended Age Level	3
School Subjects.....	4
Keywords/Topics/Themes.....	4
Learning Objectives.....	5
NFB Films Used in This Study Guide	
• John Ware Reclaimed	6
• Journey to Justice.....	6
• Ninth Floor.....	6
• Sisters in the Struggle.....	7
• Icebreakers.....	7
• Remember Africville	7
Note on Emotional Impact of the Films.....	8
Note on the Use of the N-word in the Films	8
Centring Students.....	9
Teaching Philosophy and Pedagogy.....	9
Teacher Resource.....	9
Module 1: A 400-Year Presence	10
Module 2: Anti-Black Racism.....	12
Module 3: Intersectionality	16
Module 4: Community.....	18
Module 5: Resistance	20
Module 6: Documenting Black Canadian History Through Film	23
Module 7: Steppin’ Up! Anti-Racist Action.....	24
Glossary.....	26
Credits.....	27



EXPLORING BLACK COMMUNITIES IN CANADA THROUGH FILM

ABOUT THE STUDY GUIDE

This group of select NFB films examines various aspects of the history and experiences of Black, African and Caribbean Canadians. Students will explore anti-Black racism, Black Canadian activism, intersectionality, community, resistance and activism, and filmmaking as documenting Black Canadian history.

RECOMMENDED AGE LEVEL

This guide is suitable for students ages 13 and up.



John Ware Reclaimed



SCHOOL SUBJECTS

The content of the guide is relevant to the following school subjects:

- Anthropology
- Social Studies
- Civics/Citizenship
- Geography
- Creative Writing
- Health and Personal Development
- History
- English-Language Arts
- Diversity and Pluralism
- Media Studies – Journalism/News, Media Literacy
- Sociology

KEYWORDS/TOPICS/THEMES

Black Canadian history, Black feminism, Anti-Black racism, Black life in Canada, Justice, Power, Oppression, Racism, Interpersonal racism, Institutional racism, Life in Montreal, Black settlement in Western Canada, Civil society, Responsibility, Discrimination, Activism, Mental health, Intersectionality, Stereotypes, Colonization, Black Canadian labour, Black Power movement, Police violence, Community, Identity, Struggles, Resistance



Ninth Floor



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives are for students to develop a deeper awareness of the historical and contemporary experiences of Black Canadians and further develop their critical consciousness. These objectives can be a catalyst for students to explore the following paths of inquiry:

- Understanding the composition of Black Communities in Canada
- Understanding the impacts of imperialism and colonialism on Black, African and Caribbean peoples
- Examining interpersonal, institutional and systemic racism
- Exploring Black Canadian activism
- Examining government responses to racial discrimination
- Anti-racism
- Identifying anti-Black stereotypes



Ninth Floor



NFB FILMS USED IN THIS STUDY GUIDE

John Ware Reclaimed

nfb.ca/film/john-ware-reclaimed

Directed by [Cheryl Foggo](#)

2020 | 1 h 12 min



John Ware Reclaimed follows Black Canadian filmmaker Cheryl Foggo on her quest to re-examine the mythology surrounding John Ware, the Black cowboy who settled in Alberta, Canada, before the turn of the 20th century. Foggo's research uncovers who this iconic figure might have been, establishes his emigration to Alberta with the wider settlement of Black people in Western Canada, and explores what his legacy means in terms of anti-Black racism, both past and present.

Warning: This film contains explicit language.

Journey to Justice

nfb.ca/film/journey_to_justice

Directed by [Roger McTair](#)

2000 | 47 min



Journey to Justice traces the fight for Black Canadians' civil rights, from the 1930s to the 1960s, through the experiences of six Black Canadians who refused to accept racial injustice. The film features the activism of Hugh Burnett, Fred Christie, Bromley Armstrong, Viola Desmond, Stanley Grizzle and Donald Willard Moore, explores how anti-Black racism impacted their lives and those of other Black Canadians, and highlights how their persistence helped secure justice and civil rights for all Canadians.

Warning: This film contains explicit language.

Ninth Floor

nfb.ca/film/ninth_floor

Directed by [Mina Shum](#)

2015 | 1 h 21 min



Ninth Floor revisits one of the defining moments in Canadian race relations: the infamous Sir George Williams Riot in 1969. More than four decades after a group of Caribbean students accused their professor of racism, triggering an explosive student uprising, the film digs deep into the unfolding of this episode through the perspective of several former student activists. The documentary contextualizes the events in the broader Black Power and anti-colonial movements of the late 1960s and delves into the personal journeys of the protagonists trying to make peace with the past.



Sisters in the Struggle

nfb.ca/film/sisters_in_the_struggle

Directed by [Dionne Brand](#) and [Ginny Stikeman](#)

1991 | 49 min



Sisters in the Struggle takes a look at Black Canadian women who were active in politics, and community, labour and feminist organizing in the 1980s. The subjects share their insights and personal testimonies on the double legacy of racism and sexism, linking their personal struggles with the ongoing battle to end systemic discrimination and violence against Black women and Black men.

Warning: This film contains explicit language.

Icebreakers

nfb.ca/film/ice-breakers

Directed by [Sandamini Rankaduwa](#)

2019 | 15 min



Icebreakers highlights the history of Black Canadian hockey players through the contemporary story of Josh Crooks, a promising African Nova Scotian teen hockey star. The short film reveals the buried history of a pioneering Black hockey league in Atlantic Canada, as Crooks discovers that his unshakable passion is tied to a rich and remarkable heritage.

Remember Africville

nfb.ca/film/remember-africville

Directed by [Shelagh Mackenzie](#)

1991 | 35 min



Remember Africville examines the historic Black settlement that was established within the city limits of Halifax, Nova Scotia, during the 1840s. Over a century later in the 1960s, the families who lived there were forcibly displaced by the municipal government and their homes demolished in the name of urban renewal and integration. Twenty years later, the site of the community of Africville was turned into a stark, under-utilized park. The film shares conversations with former residents, their descendants and some of the decision-makers, using archival photographs and footage to tell the story of this close-knit community's painful experience.

Teachers can choose to show all or some of the films.



NOTE ON EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF THE FILMS

Watching these films may evoke strong emotions due to your own experiences with racism, discrimination and injustice, or the experiences of people you know. This can be difficult to admit and discuss. However, these topics and feelings can be acknowledged and worked through if we remember to be respectful of each other’s experiences and are intentional in how we enter and leave learning spaces like this. Teachers should ensure that adequate preparation time is allotted to plan for these conversations. If they feel the need to speak with someone after watching any of the films, students can reach out to teachers, school counsellors or the person they direct them to.

We want to acknowledge that the impact of the content of these films on Black, African and Caribbean Canadians will be different than the impact on non-Black people, given contextual realities of anti-Black racism and police brutality against Black people, especially after the events of the spring of 2020, with the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, adding to a long history of such occurrences. While the topics of racism and racialized violence can be discomfoting for everyone, some viewers may respond to them more intensely than others. Black, African and Caribbean people may feel discomfoted or triggered by the film because of their daily reality and experiences of racism and discrimination in Canada.

Viewing all films in a short window of time or viewing more than one film can compound the impact. The content of the films can be especially traumatic for those who have lost a loved one to violence and/or experienced the harsh process of the Canadian legal systems. For this reason, we encourage teachers to have supports available to students as needed. The discomfot that non-Black people might feel at learning more about racism and colonialism can be an important place for deepening their learning and commitment to action. It is important that opportunities be provided for students to talk through and unpack their feelings.

NOTE ON THE USE OF THE N-WORD IN THE FILMS

In each of the films, the word “nigger” is used by individuals describing their experiences of racism. It is important to inform students during the pre-viewing activities that they will hear this term, and to address it. Provide students with the meaning of the word and the context of its use in the films.

The n-word is a racial slur that’s used by white or non-Black people as a verbal attack against Black people, to dehumanize them, rob them of their dignity and reinforce white supremacy. It has been employed for centuries. According to Professor Randall Kennedy, one of its earliest uses was in 1619, and at that time its meaning was not as derogatory as it later came to be. Kennedy points out that white people began to use the n-word as a racial slur in the early 1800s. It has since been used to terrorize Black people; its impact is hurtful and harmful, as evidenced by the number of film subjects that continue to reflect on the word to this day.

The n-word is still in use by individuals of different backgrounds today. Artists use it in their music, and it has been reclaimed by some Black people as a term of endearment. In discussing this term, do not say the actual word; use the euphemism “the n-word,” and issue a caution to students to not use the term.

We recommend that you inform students at least one week prior to a screening that the n-word will be used in these films. Give students the option of not participating in the screening and provide them with an alternative activity—in the library or elsewhere—that meets institutional standards.

Additional warning: Incidental swearing (f-word) in the film ***Sisters in the Struggle***.



CENTRING STUDENTS

The learning and discussion that the activities in this guide support depend on positive relationships between students and educators, as well as a learning climate that promotes positive peer interactions based on respect. Teachers should be aware of what stage students are at when they begin these learning modules. Gain a sense of the students' knowledge of the following key topics that emerge in the films: race, racism, anti-Black racism, gendered discrimination, police violence, Black communities and Black activism.

Teachers should also ascertain beforehand which students may have personally experienced these issues. In approaching these topics, teachers should pay attention to student responses and use them to inform their approach and pace.



Sisters in the Struggle

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND PEDAGOGY

This guide was developed using an anti-racist framework. The pre- and post-viewing activities are intended to inform through anti-racist pedagogy. In unpacking the historical and contemporary manifestations of anti-Black racism, teachers should be comfortable and have experience talking about anti-Black racism and how it impacts Black life not only in Canada, but also worldwide. An anti-racist approach is required to effectively examine systemic and individual racism. The anti-racism approach employs counternarratives that centre the voices, experiences and perspectives of historically marginalized groups, in this case Black, Caribbean and African peoples, while challenging dominant paradigms of the nation of Canada and of Black Canadians. Anti-racism elucidates the racialization of power and access in Canada and informs actions that aim to disrupt anti-Black racism.

Through student-centred learning (SCL), students will critically examine race and racism. They will also learn more about how to work collaboratively to identify and address racial inequities and injustices past and present.

SCL includes a wide spectrum of instructional approaches. In student-centred classrooms, students are actively involved in the learning process through instructional strategies such as inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, peer instruction and community-based learning. SCL encourages students to engage in self-reflection, research, classroom presentations, group collaboration, and creative final projects that show evidence of learning.¹

TEACHER RESOURCE

Henry, Natasha (2019). [“Where Are the Black People? Teaching Black History in Ontario, Canada,”](#) in King, LaGarrett (editor), [Perspectives of Black Histories in School](#). Information Age Publishing, Charlotte.

¹Student-Centred Learning text was written by Sheelah McLean for the study guide on *nipawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up* produced by NFB Education, available to CAMPUS subscribers.



MODULE 1: A 400-YEAR PRESENCE

Learning Objectives

- Understanding the composition of Black Communities in Canada
- Understanding the impacts of imperialism and colonialism on Black, African and Caribbean peoples

Teaching Strategies

Self-guided learning
Inquiry-based learning

Background

People of African descent have been in what is now called Canada since the 1600s. European imperialism and colonialism were significant factors in the migration of African people to Canada. French and British expansion into the Americas during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries fuelled the transatlantic slave trade, which resulted in the forced migration of hundreds of enslaved Africans to the French and later British colonies that became Canada.

During the late 18th century, a large wave of freed African-Americans migrated to the colonies that came to make up Canada. This group was composed of formerly enslaved, and some indentured, Black people who served in the British military during the American Revolution in exchange for the offer of freedom and land. Over 3,000 Black Loyalists settled mainly in Nova Scotia, while a handful settled in Ontario. They lived in relative freedom at the same time that many Black people were enslaved in the colonies.

The gradual abolition and eventual complete abolition of enslavement in British North America attracted thousands of freedom seekers from the United States, who sought refuge from the turn of the 19th century through to 1865, when enslavement in the United States ended.

The post-emancipation era witnessed Black migration to Canada from the U.S. and the Caribbean. Higher concentrations of immigrants from African countries came to Canada beginning in the 1980s. People of African descent from various parts of the world have chosen to make Canada their home at various points and times in history. Their decisions were in some way shaped by global imperialism and colonization. These historical and ongoing processes have formed the roots of anti-Black racism.



John Ware Reclaimed



Pre-viewing Activity

Before commencing the film study, it is recommended that educators complete this module to provide students with some context to Black history in Canada. Have students survey some articles, videos and digital timelines.

Suggested resources include:

- [Black History in Canada Education Guide](#)
- [Canadian Encyclopedia Black History in Canada Collection](#)
- [Black Soul by Martine Chartrand, 2000, 9 min](#)
- Timelines
 - [Canadian Encyclopedia Black History Timeline](#)
 - [Black History in Canada: A Select Timeline](#)
 - [Black History Timelines](#)

Concluding Activity

Invite students to summarize and reflect on their learning. After completing the pre-viewing activity, ask them to complete a 3-2-1 prompt.

1. Record three things you learned.
2. Record two questions you have.
3. Record one thing you found interesting and that you'd like to learn more about.

Provide the class an opportunity to share and discuss.

Viewing

For this film study, teachers can choose to show one or two films to engage in a comparative study. It is advisable to have students watch the entire film(s) at this point and then to revisit sections using select clips in the remaining modules. To further extend the study, teachers can give students the option to choose another film to watch independently and add to their film study.

Guiding Questions

1. In each film, what is the origin of the segment of Black Canadians that were featured? Why and how did they come to Canada, and how was their migration shaped by imperialism and colonialism?
2. Why is the historical context to the presence of Black people in Canada important background for the films?

Teacher Resource

Sadler, Rosemary. Black History: Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas. Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute, 2018.



MODULE 2: ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Learning Objectives

Identifying and addressing anti-Black stereotypes and anti-Black racism
Examining the impact of racism on Black Canadians

Teaching Strategies

Self-guided work
Small-group discussion

Background

Black people in Canada have been subjected to racial discrimination since they arrived at the early colonies. The historical, long-standing manifestation of systemic racism rooted in white supremacy that people of African descent in Canada have faced is called anti-Black racism.



John Ware Reclaimed

According to the African Canadian Legal Clinic, “Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, to the extent that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger White society. Anti-Black racism is manifest in the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians, which includes unequal opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.”

The Black Health Alliance has defined anti-Black racism as “policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions such as, education, health care, and justice that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of Black-African descent.”

The term “anti-Black racism” was first expressed by Dr. Akua Benjamin, a Ryerson social-work professor. The term seeks to highlight the unique nature of systemic racism on Black Canadians and the history as well as experiences of enslavement and colonization of people of Black African descent in Canada.

Many stereotypes and myths about Black people that were perpetuated during European imperialism and colonization continue to circulate as common beliefs and narratives today. For instance, prevalent myths include that Black people are more prone to criminality and are physically threatening, “uncivilized,” “savage”



and “uneducable.” Stereotypes of Black women included “the Mammy” and “Aunt Jemima” stereotypes, which depict them as loyal domestic workers and caregivers to white families, and the “Sapphire” caricature that portrays Black women as rude, loud and overbearing. The stereotypes of Black men include the “Sambo” stereotype, which portrays Black men as simple-minded, docile and naturally lazy, making them dependent on control and direction from white people.

These stereotypes have evolved over time and have been used to dismiss the humanity of people of African descent. They have been employed to maintain systemic oppression such as enslavement, racial segregation and racial discrimination. These deep-seated anti-Black views and beliefs have led to harmful patterns of prejudice, discrimination, violence and even death. Anti-Black racism has produced inequitable outcomes for Black people in Canadian society. Eradicating its legacies and impact has been a driving factor of Black activism.

Pre-viewing Activity

Take some time with students to critically examine how racist ideas of Black people underpin anti-Black racism. Have students research and examine the following terms: stereotype, prejudice, racism and discrimination. Explain the objective of the activity to the class. Share some or all of these common tropes with students:

- Black males are athletes, academic underachievers, fatherless;
- Black females are loud, angry, aggressive, hypersexual;
- Black people are poor, physically larger and stronger, and not intellectual or professional;
- Blackness is a contaminant, evil, bad or negative.

Ask students to locate portrayals in the media of Black people that represent them negatively and perpetuate particular myths and stereotypes. They can also write down some examples that they’ve heard. How does each portrayal fit the definition of the identified tropes? How is each of them harmful and racist? Discuss how these myths and stereotypes are used to justify ongoing racism. End this activity with a discussion on the activity. Ask:

1. How do the stereotypes recorded by the class make you feel?
2. What do you notice about the stereotypes listed?
3. How do you think a stereotype might cause someone to act unfairly toward another person?
How might they affect people’s lives?
4. What do you think an individual can do to help reduce stereotyping?



Viewing

Re-watch the sections in the films that discuss anti-Black racism. Here are some suggested clips:

nfb.ca/m/playlists/3f1a70ad915940459507af5a31e42fba/playback

FILM TITLE

	<i>John Ware Reclaimed</i>	<i>Journey to Justice</i>	<i>Ninth Floor</i>	<i>Sisters in the Struggle</i>	<i>Icebreakers</i>	<i>Remember Africville</i>
Clip 1	<u>Historical and personal accounts of anti-Black racism, with director Cheryl Foggo</u> Timecode: 28:00 – 32:12 Clip Duration: 4 min 4 sec Warning: Language, use of n-word	<u>Racism and discrimination comes in many forms</u> Timecode: 0:00 – 8:55 Clip Duration: 8 min 55 sec	<u>Professor faces racism charge</u> Timecode: 6:50 – 11:00 Clip Duration: 4 min 5 sec	<u>Racism in the schoolyard</u> Timecode: 4:20 – 6:25 Clip Duration: 2 min 1 sec Warning: Language, use of n-word	<u>Racism on the rink</u> Timecode: 3:20 – 3:55 Clip Duration: 35 sec	<u>Basic services were not provided</u> Timecode: 5:35 – 7:05 Clip Duration: 1 min 17 sec
Clip 2		<u>Fred Christie</u> Timecode: 9:02 – 10:50 Clip Duration: 1 min 58 sec	<u>The majority's notion of who we are</u> Timecode: 13:50 – 15:30 Clip Duration: 1 min 43 sec	<u>Racism is out in the open</u> Timecode: 13:07 – 18:05 Clip Duration: 4 min 58 sec Warning: Language, the f-word	<u>I couldn't talk him to go back</u> Timecode: 7:24 – 8:15 Clip Duration: 55 sec	
Clip 3		<u>Black Canadian soldiers</u> Timecode: 10:50 – 16:10 Clip Duration: 5 min 14 s	<u>You were supposed to be voiceless</u> Timecode: 17:15 – 18:05 Clip Duration: 53 sec			
Clip 4		<u>Africville</u> Timecode: 16:13 – 17:45 Clip Duration: 1 min 36 sec	<u>The long-term effect of racism on mental health</u> Timecode: 52:55 – 55:50 Clip Duration: 2 min 53 sec			
Clip 5		<u>Viola Desmond</u> Timecode: 17:46 – 21:45 Clip Duration: 3 min 59 sec	<u>To say that I'm sorry presupposes that I should have done something different</u> Timecode: 1:11:00 – 1:12:25 Clip Duration: 1 min 14 sec			
Clip 6		<u>Racist theatre, literature and film</u> Timecode: 35:00 – 37:45 Clip Duration: 2 min 47				



Guiding Questions

1. Define racism and describe the different ways that it affects us and our society.
2. Describe how the people in each film experience racism and/or describe systemic and individual anti-Black racism.

Systemic racism in many institutions in society is intricately interconnected. Complete the chart with information from the films. Share and discuss as a class or in small groups.

SOCIAL SYSTEM	HOW ANTI-BLACK RACISM MANIFESTS
Economic (businesses, banking, etc.)	
Employment	
Government (legislation, political representation)	
Justice (policing, court system)	
Health Care	
Education	
Child Welfare	
Media	
Housing	

**Depending on where you and your class are in terms of teaching/learning about systemic oppression, systemic racism, white supremacy and anti-Black racism, it would be helpful to provide ongoing opportunities to make connections between the films and current events when answering the Guiding Questions. It's also important to remember that unpacking these questions may resonate with some Black students who have experienced racism, and may elicit emotional responses. Ensure that you show support for all students who share personal stories of racism, in ways that validate their experiences.

3. What are some of the ways in which racism has impacted Black Canadians (e.g., mentally, physically, economically, socially, etc.)? How does historical anti-Black racism continue to shape the Black experience in Canada today?
4. As shown in the films, individual Black Canadians were subjected to racist attacks and interpersonal racism. How did they describe the impact and the feelings they experienced? How did they deal with it/react to it?
5. What does the film, and by extension, the director, suggest about racism?

Teacher Resource

[Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategy](#)



MODULE 3: INTERSECTIONALITY

Learning Objectives

Understanding and identifying how race, gender and class intersect to create additional barriers
Examining the impact of racism on Black Canadians

Teaching Strategies

Self-guided work
Small-group discussion

Background

Anti-Black racism is experienced in very particular ways based on the intersection of race and other dimensions of someone's identity, such as gender, class, sexuality, religion, citizenship and immigration status, and ability/disability. *Intersectionality* is the way in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group. The concept of intersectionality was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw and is anchored in Critical Race Theory. Crenshaw's research builds on a long tradition of Black feminist scholarship and activism that seeks to understand the marginalizing experiences of Black women and girls as both gendered and racialized. For example, intersectionality creates additional forms of subordination, barriers, and power imbalances for Black women in Canada.



Icebreakers



Viewing

Re-watch the sections in the films that discuss the gendered ways that Black Canadians experience anti-Black racism. Here are some suggested clips:

nfb.ca/m/playlists/cf99efa80b9f48fb85f5ee7dd20acf0f/playback

FILM TITLE			
	<i>John Ware Reclaimed</i>	<i>Journey to Justice</i>	<i>Sisters in the Struggle</i>
Clip 1	<p><i>Racism at the Royal Hotel</i> Timecode: 33:12 – 34:00 Clip Duration: 51 sec Warning: Language, use of the n-word</p>	<p><i>Racism and discrimination comes in many forms</i> Timecode: 0:00 – 8:55 Clip Duration: 8 min 55 sec</p>	<p><i>When the whole world is asleep, Black women are working</i> Timecode: 6:40 – 12:15 Clip Duration: 5 min 26 sec</p>
Clip 2			<p><i>I can't separate racism and sexism</i> Timecode: 39:55 – 41:17 Clip Duration: 1 min 20 sec</p>

Guiding Questions

1. How did the people in the films describe the impact of intersectionality on Black women? Black men?
2. How are anti-Black views and sentiments perpetuated?
3. Why do you think it is important to have words like “intersectionality” to describe people’s experience?
4. How does the intersecting relationship between race and gender impact outcomes for Black Canadians in society?
5. How do you see intersectionality relating to the people in your life and/or the people in your community?



MODULE 4: COMMUNITY



Sisters in the Struggle

Learning Objectives

- Define community
- Outline the characteristics of communities
- Analyze personal membership in various communities
- Understand the contemporary composition of the Black Canadian population by examining census data
- Describe the ways in which Black Canadians defined, found, built and forged community

Teaching Strategies

- Group discussion
- Co-operative learning model

Background

Black Canadian communities are described in the plural because they are not monolithic. They comprise people from varying backgrounds and social identities. A community is a group of interacting people who share common elements such as values and beliefs, norms, religion, cultural customs and practices, multiple identities, and worldviews. Many Black Canadians consider themselves to be part of a global community called the African diaspora. People of the African diaspora are dispersed throughout the world due to forced migration (enslavement) and voluntary migration. They can trace their ancestral origins to Africa. Generally, they have shared, although varying, experiences of colonization, systemic racism, enslavement and the erasure of Black identities. There is also a common collective effort to challenge these forms of oppression, to improve the living conditions of Black people around the world and advance the cause of justice, freedom and liberation.

Black Canadians are also part of communities of place—physical locations such as neighbourhoods, towns and historical settlements. They are also involved in identity-based communities. This includes a collective embracing of a shared Black identity as a form of community that Black Canadians engage in. Black Canadians also look for and find a sense of community in organizations. These community affiliations are based on how individual Black Canadians define their identities. Community is simultaneously an identifiable place and a grouping of people connected by shared common experiences, worldviews, values and beliefs.

People form communities for survival and to foster a sense of belonging.



Opening Activity

Begin by asking students to make a list of all of the communities they are part of, and to explain why. When students have finished making their lists, have them share with the class for discussion (sharing can also be done digitally using applications like Google Jamboard). Ask them to define what community is and why it is important. Provide guidance as needed.

Viewing

Re-watch the sections in the films that discuss community. Here are some suggested clips:
nfb.ca/m/playlists/e4f563871ba3493887e8d3dfa1ae62bd/playback

FILM TITLE			
	<i>John Ware Reclaimed</i>	<i>Icebreakers</i>	<i>Remember Africville</i>
Clip 1	<i>These were my people</i> Timecode: 16:00 – 16:50 Clip Duration: 49 sec	<i>Giving back to the community</i> Timecode: 4:20 – 6:45 Clip Duration: 2 min 25 sec	<i>It was a home, a real home</i> Timecode: 29:55 – 30:50 Clip Duration: 59 sec (add 1 sec to the front)
Clip 2		<i>It's an important part of our history</i> Timecode: 9:55 – 12:25 Clip Duration: 2 min 38 sec	<i>For three days you have your community back</i> Timecode: 31:30 – end Clip Duration: 3 min 14 sec

Guiding Questions

1. How are Black communities, identities and cultures discussed in the films?
2. What role did a sense of community play for people in the films?
3. How have Black Canadian communities remained the same and/or changed over time?

Closing Activity

Place students in small groups and have them review this profile of Black Canadians by Statistics Canada: [2016 Diversity of the Black Population in Canada: An Overview](#).

Ask groups to select five things that they learned and three to five things they can connect to the films they viewed. Next, have students compare and contrast examples of the popular representation of Black Canadian communities versus the reality of Black communities. Students can share their observations with the class.



MODULE 5: RESISTANCE

Learning Objectives

Understanding various anti-racist actions by Black Canadians and their allies and accomplices, past and present

Teaching Strategies

Group discussion
Co-operative learning model
Inquiry-based learning



Remember Africville

Background

There is a centuries-long history of resistance by Black people in Canada against racial oppression, racial discrimination and second-class citizenship. Black Canadians have always advocated for justice and rights and for changes in society that would improve living conditions for Black people and other marginalized groups. They challenged enslavement, racially segregated schooling and the practice of trying to block Black men from exercising their right to vote. They spoke out against unfair treatment in the distribution of land grants. In the 20th century, they fought against racial discrimination in employment, housing, real estate, military service and immigration. The police killings of Black people, racial profiling and over-policing in certain communities have also been issues that Black Canadians have vocally challenged. Black Canadians faced pervasive anti-Black racism in all facets of Canadian society. Along with mistreatment, exclusion and marginalization, Black people in Canada have had to contend with how their identities were erased and their 400-year presence disregarded and denied. They were in a country that viewed Black people as outside of the nation and worked to define itself as “a white man’s country.” Black people in Canada have engaged in many resistance movements since the 1800s, including the anti-slavery movement, the civil rights movement in Canada and the United States, the Pan-African movement, and the Black Power movement.

Black Canadians responded to and fought against anti-Black racism in many ways. Many formed or joined organizations to advocate for change, held community meetings, lobbied politicians, wrote petitions, published newspapers, filed lawsuits, organized and participated in demonstrations, held sit-ins and occupations, and challenged pervasive, damaging stereotypes of Black people through various mediums, including art. Black Canadians have a long history of advocating for human rights and racial equity. Driving factors are love and concern for their children, families and wider communities. They have also found creative ways to affirm the identities, histories and culture of Black people, including through community heritage programs, various forms of art, operating Black bookstores, creating community-based archives, and establishing historical societies and museums.



Viewing

Re-watch the sections in the films that examine how Black Canadians have resisted anti-Black racism.

Here are some suggested clips:

nfb.ca/m/playlists/f425995c25b241a8a9f2f71015c99af1/playback

FILM TITLE

	<i>Journey to Justice</i>	<i>Ninth Floor</i>	<i>Sisters in the Struggle</i>	<i>Remember Africville</i>
Clip 1	<i>Viola Desmond and the brotherhood of sleeping car porters</i> Timecode: 17:47 – 23:45 Clip Duration: 6 min 3 sec	<i>We as students have a right to be heard</i> Timecode: 11:00 – 12:50 Clip Duration: 1 min 53 sec	<i>Taking it to the streets</i> Timecode: 12:15 – 13:06 Clip Duration: 49 sec	<i>Unless you're willing and able to raise hell, you don't get</i> Timecode: 14:05 – 16:40 Clip Duration: 2 min 34 sec
Clip 2	<i>Dresden, Ontario</i> Timecode: 23:47 – 26:40 Clip Duration: 2 min 56 sec	<i>We are not leaving here until we get answers</i> Timecode: 15:30 – 17:15 Clip Duration: 1 min 37 sec	<i>Would you sign this petition?</i> Timecode: 18:05 – 19:05 Clip Duration: 1 min 16 sec	
Clip 3	<i>Victory in Dresden, Ontario</i> Timecode: 26:42 – 33:35 Clip Duration: 6 min 57 sec	<i>Show solidarity</i> Timecode: 19:10 – 23:30 Clip Duration: 4 min 22 sec	<i>I'm fighting for these things 'cuz I want these things to change</i> Timecode: 43:52 – 46:35 Clip Duration: 2 min 41 sec	
Clip 4	<i>Racist imagery in literature and film</i> Timecode: 35:00 – 37:45 Clip Duration: 2 min 47 sec	<i>Let's take a stand now!</i> Timecode: 27:15 – 32:55 Clip Duration: 5 min 45 sec		
Clip 5	<i>Donald Moore and Canada's racist immigration policy</i> Timecode: 37:47 – 43:50 Clip Duration: 6 min 2 sec			

Guiding Questions

1. Identify the ways that Black Canadians fought against anti-Black racism collectively and individually. Which one is most interesting to you and why? Discuss in a small group.
2. Are the resistance movements today similar to and/or different from those of the 20th century?
3. How does understanding the history of Black Canadian resistance help social justice efforts today?



Closing Activity

1. Choose one of the resistance movements Black Canadians were involved in between the 19th and 20th centuries and conduct some research to learn more.
2. Read the profiles of Black Canadians featured in the [Akua Benjamin Legacy Project](#). Which story was most interesting to you? Why?
3. Invite students to research and create a digital portrait or profile of one of the following:
 - A Black Canadian artist
 - Third World Bookstore
 - Knowledge Bookstore
 - Nile Valley Books
 - The African Canadian Heritage Association
 - The Alvin McCurdy Collection, Archives of Ontario
 - Lynn Jones African Canadian and Diaspora Heritage Collection
 - Wilma Morrison Collection, Archives of Ontario
 - The Black Cultural Centre, Nova Scotia
 - The Black Loyalist Heritage Centre, Nova Scotia
 - The Ontario Black History Society
 - The Essex County Black Historical Research Society
 - The Amherstburg Freedom Museum
 - Uncle Tom's Cabin
 - The Chatham WISH Centre
 - The BC Black Awareness Society
 - The New Brunswick Black History Society
 - Saskatchewan African Canadian Heritage Museum
 - Nunavut Black History Society
 - Black Cultural Society of PEI
 - Black Settlers of Alberta and Saskatchewan Historical Society
 - Black History Manitoba
 - Black History Month – Montreal

Students can create an Instagram post, a Facebook profile or event, a Twitter thread, a TikTok or Adobe Spark video, or an interactive timeline.



MODULE 6: DOCUMENTING BLACK CANADIAN HISTORY THROUGH FILM

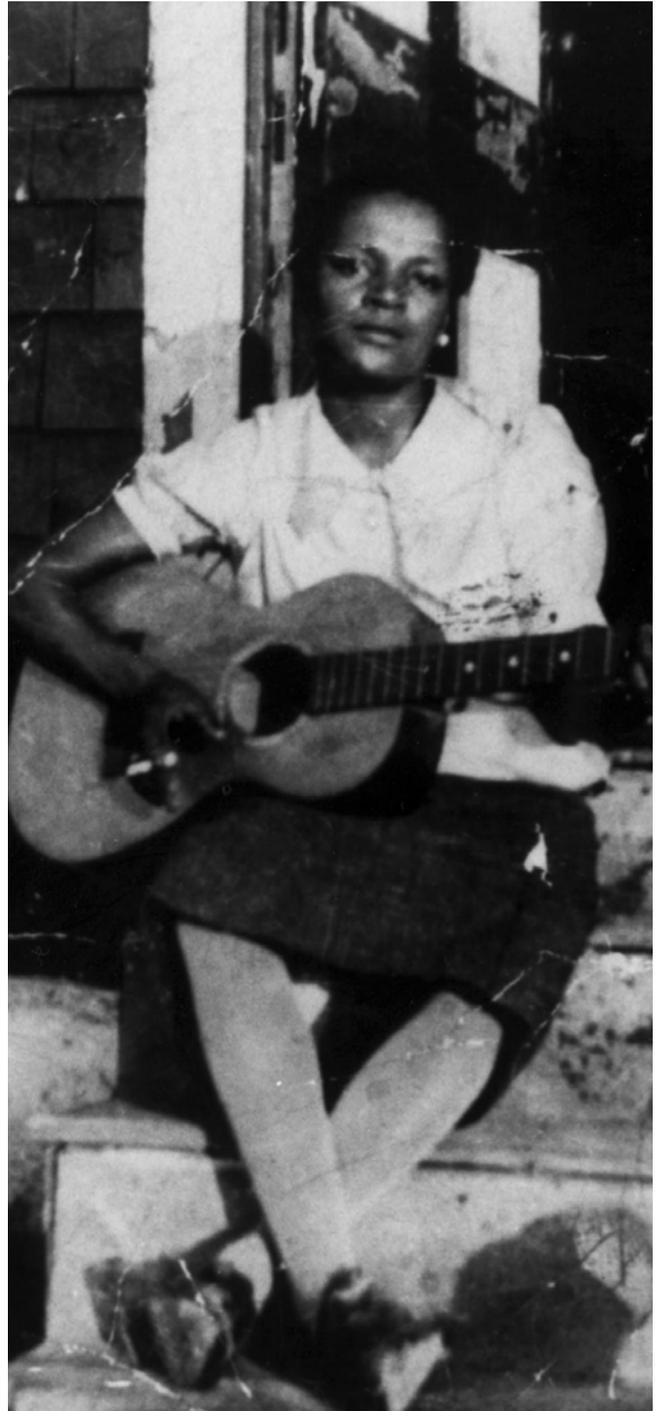
Learning Objectives

Learn how filmmaking is a form of activism and plays a role in documenting Black Canadian perspectives
Explore the field of filmmaking as a career

Teaching Strategies

Group discussion
Inquiry-based learning

1. Describe some of the filming techniques (camera, visual, audio) used by the director. Which technique was most impactful for you and why? How do the techniques convey different feelings? Choose video clips to illustrate your answers.
2. What roles do documentaries like this play in recording the perspectives and experiences of Black Canadians and in challenging the dominant narratives of Canada?
3. Research and learn more about one of the Black Canadian filmmakers and write a biographical profile. You can include what inspired their film focus, their personal and educational backgrounds, etc.



Remember Africville



MODULE 7: STEPPIN' UP! ANTI-RACIST ACTION

Learning Objectives

Understanding anti-racism
Empowerment to take action through
community engagement

Teaching Strategies

Group discussion
Co-operative learning model
Community-based learning

Background

Taking action against racial discrimination, systemic racism and racial oppression is referred to as anti-racism. In the films above, we have seen some of the ways in which Black Canadians have made conscious efforts, and taken deliberate actions, to effect change and improve the lives of their communities throughout history.



Ninth Floor

Working towards creating an equitable and just society requires people to commit to fighting against racism. There are different forms of racism: individual, interpersonal, institutional and structural racism. They are interrelated in various ways and reinforce racist ideas, behaviours and policies. Racism came into sharp focus in the spring of 2020 when there was a global uprising sparked by a number of brutal killings of African-American men and women at the hands of the police during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thousands of people worldwide, including in Canada, protested in the streets for consecutive days in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, and to express their abhorrence at the injustices Black people have long been subjected to and the blatant disregard for Black life. Protestors amplified the demand that systemic racism in all its forms be addressed by all levels of government, in public institutions, and in corporations. Global citizens have been calling for an anti-racist world.

Anti-racism involves people making conscious, intentional decisions to become more aware about race and racism, and to challenge the legacies of colonization, white supremacy and white-dominant culture, and inequitable institutions and society. Being anti-racist is about the actions you take. Anti-racist principles are used to change policies and practices, to disrupt anti-Black racism, and ultimately to help transform our communities and societies.



Teacher Resource

[Being Antiracist](#)

Jewell, Tiffany, and Durand Aurélie. *This Book Is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work*. Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2020.

ACTIVITY

1. What actions can you take individually and collectively to disrupt anti-Black racism and other forms of racism and discrimination? Identify ways you can get involved and show your support.
2. Have students work in small groups to plan a **strategy** or **tactic** that aims to provide a solution to a major institutional or social challenge facing Black communities in various parts of Canada, as well as to increase awareness and build community. This can include:
 - social media campaigns
 - petitions
 - letter-writing campaigns
 - boycotts
 - spoken-word events
 - rallies and demonstrations
 - art activism
 - non-violent direct actions (e.g., sit-ins)
 - fundraising
 - organizing a conference or meeting with speakers



GLOSSARY

Colonialism: Occurs when an empire or nation takes control of the lands, regions or territories outside of its own borders, often through the use of force and dispossession of the people living there. The empires turned these lands, regions or territories into a colony or settlement. European settlers used the myth of racial superiority as a rationale for dominating the social and political landscape in Canada. Colonialism is also the set of beliefs, policies and practices that is used by European settlers in power to justify and maintain control over Indigenous Peoples and their lands for settlement. These systems create an unequal power dynamic between Indigenous Peoples and white settler society.

Imperialism: The practice and policy (way of governing) of large or powerful nations that seek to extend their authority and control beyond their own borders. The aim of imperialism is the creation of an empire. Imperialist nations take control of other countries through the use of force and power. A group of many colonies is called an empire. Nations build empires to increase power or wealth. They control other lands to obtain valuable natural resources, take control of a territory's trade, or exploit the labour of the territory's people.

Interpersonal racism: Refers to an individual's racist assumptions, beliefs or behaviours; between individuals (e.g., use of racial slurs).

Institutional racism: Racial discrimination that is maintained by individuals in institutions that are established in a prejudiced, colonial society through policies, practices, culture and norms.

Structural racism: Inequalities rooted in the system-wide operation of a society that excludes substantial numbers of members of particular groups from significant participation in major social institutions based on particular social identities.

Systemic racism: Includes the policies and practices entrenched in established colonial institutions, which result in the exclusion or promotion of particular groups. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary.

Strategy: A plan of action designed to achieve a goal.

Tactic: The actual method or means used to achieve that goal. Multiple tactics might be part of one strategy. Tactics are short-term goals.

White supremacy: The belief that white people are inherently superior to other races and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, in particular Black, Indigenous or Jewish people.



CREDITS

This study guide was written by Natasha Henry and produced and prepared by Anne Koizumi.

Natasha Henry is an educator, historian and curriculum consultant specializing in the development of learning materials that focus on the African Diasporic experience. Natasha's work is grounded in her commitment to research, collect, preserve and disseminate the histories of Black Canadians.

Anne Koizumi is a Learning Program Manager in Educational Programs at the NFB. She is a passionate media-arts educator who has taught animation and documentary workshops across Canada.