

## **An Opening From the Writing Team**

*Anti-racism in teaching and learning is ongoing and intentional and requires commitment.*

*Antiracist education is good for everyone, not just for minorities, Enid Lee opined a long time ago. It is good for the teacher, it is good for the learner, it is good for the administrator, it is good for the policy maker, because how we come to understand our world is powerfully connected to how we make sense of our existence in society.*

*George Sefa Dei*

You are here. Welcome. Being here could represent many things. It could be a curiosity, a willingness to engage, an intent to deepen your understanding of your relationship to Canadian Black Lives or an affirmation of your lived experiences.

Whatever the reasons, this resource could be a beginning or a continuation based on where you are in your learning journey, but as you are reading this, know that this resource will support that journey and encourage further investigation.

This curriculum support document was developed in an effort to provide Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) members with guidance and information to support the ongoing work of learning about the heritages, histories, cultures, and contributions of the African Diaspora in Canada. The intent is for this resource to illustrate how this knowledge can be highlighted in various subject areas.

The teaching of African Canadian history should not be viewed as an “event,” but rather as an ongoing process taking place throughout the school year, not just during Black History Month. The intent of the information presented in this document is to build teacher background knowledge on the accomplishments and contributions of people of African descent to Canadian history.

People of African origin have been present in Canada since the early 1600s. From Mathieu DaCosta to enslavement to the storied history of various migration patterns, people of African descent have contributed to the diversity of Canada. Most of the early African Canadian immigrants came to Canada as a result of several significant historical events: the American Revolution, the 1793 Act to Limit Slavery, the War of 1812, the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838, the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1833, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, and the Underground Railroad Movement. Subsequently, and post WWII, people of African descent from the global diaspora have made Canada their home.

Although slavery was legally practised in Canada from the 1600s until the abolition of the slave trade in 1834, the abolitionist movement was affecting our country by the 1790s. Three key pieces of legislation resulted in Canada's appeal to enslaved African-Americans:

- In 1793 in Upper Canada (present-day Ontario), Lieutenant John Graves Simcoe passed the Act Against Slavery on July 9th. The purpose of this legislation was to end the sale of enslaved African persons. In addition, the Act freed enslaved people who came to Canada from the United States. However, this Act did not free those who were already enslaved in Canada.
- In 1807, Great Britain abolished the slave trade, although an illegal trade in African people continued globally for several years after that.
- In 1833, slavery was abolished throughout the British Empire. At that time, Upper and Lower Canada were under British rule, resulting in the outlawing of the practice of slavery here as well.

People of African descent, both past and present, have played an important role in the cultural, political, social, and economic progress of this country.

Today, we are confronted with the results of the erasure of Black History and Black lives through education in school structures and societal systems. The prevalence of anti-Black Racism in educational settings is a hard truth of our collective history and present. This document tells a story of resistance, resilience and rising. The content of this document will assist education workers in bridging the gaps in knowledge of Black History and building a growing body of resources to support teaching about Canadian Black Lives and anti-Black racism in Canada.

## **IMPORTANT NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY**

It is important that educators are conscious of why certain terms to describe people of African descent are no longer socially acceptable. Primarily, these terms once used in the past had been used in a derogatory manner or because new terms better conveyed African heritage. In this document, the terms 'Black,' 'Afro-Caribbean,' 'African Canadian,' and 'diasporic African,' are used to refer to people of African descent. In the past, terms such as 'negro,' 'coloured,' and 'mulatto' were used but are no longer acceptable. Presently, acceptable terms for people of mixed ancestry include: 'biracial,' 'mixed heritage,' 'mixed ancestry' or 'mixed culture.' A student engaging with lesson plans in this document might encounter these terms and others and should understand them within the historical context.

It is equally important to pay attention to language when discussing slavery in the Americas.

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>Use:</b>
Slave	enslaved man, enslaved woman, enslaved person, etc.
Slavery	chattel slavery
fugitive slave, runaway slave, rebel slave	freedom-seeker
slave owner, master,	enslaver
Africa	African countries, African nations (specify)

In the opening pages of this resource are tools that will foster the mindset for the approach to each activity.

You will engage with:

- This Opening
- The Africentric Land Acknowledgement
- The Critical Consciousness Questions
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Facilitator's Reflection- (Included in some lessons as points to consider prior to implementing lesson)

Remember that this is a journey.

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*-The Writing Team*