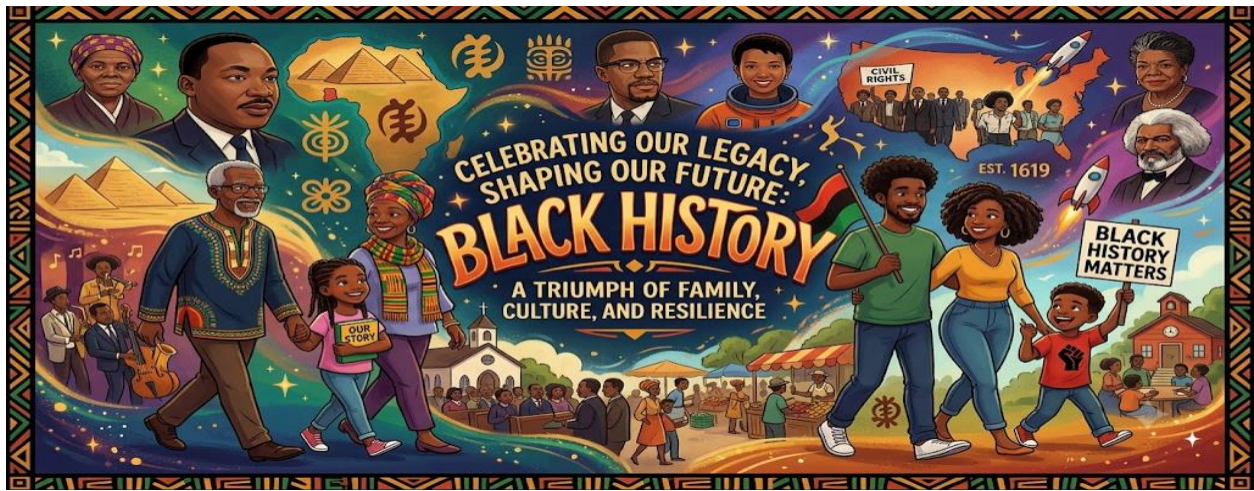




☀️ Read to Rise: ☀️

A Black History Back-to-School Reading Challenge

August 3, 2026 – August 30, 2026

The Middle - High School Experience

Your Weekly Reading Adventure! ★

Every Monday, a brand-new adventure begins! First, look at your challenge list and pick a cool reading category. (Remember to pick a new one each week!) Next, find a book, article, essay, or other published work that matches that category and start reading.

Once you finish your reading, it's time for some extra fun!

Complete the special weekly activity, complete your weekly ticket ([click for ticket](#)), and submit.

Submit your ticket every week by **Sunday at 5:00 PM** to claim your guaranteed weekly prize and secure up to four entries into the Grand Finale prize drawing at the end of the challenge!

Grab a book or another publication, read and explore, and let the fun begin!



1. Breakthroughs in STEM

- **The Reading:** Read a biography, memoir, or article about a Black scientist, tech innovator, engineer, or mathematician (such as Katherine Johnson, Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, or Alan Emtage)
- **The Challenge:** Identify **three major contributions** made by this individual. Choose one and create a detailed visual blueprint, a digital slide presentation, or a small 3D prototype using household materials to demonstrate how it works.



2. Culinary History & Culture

- **The Reading:** Read a book or historical essay exploring the origins of soul food, traditional African diaspora ingredients (like okra, yams, or rice), or the legacy of Black culinary pioneers.
- **The Challenge:** Select a recipe that represents this cultural history. **Prep and cook the dish** from scratch, researching the cultural significance of at least one key ingredient while you cook.



3. Codes, Cartography & The Underground Railroad

- **The Reading:** Read a historical account of the Underground Railroad, focusing on how freedom-seekers navigated escape routes using tools like the night sky, map-making, or hidden quilt patterns.
- **The Challenge:** Design a single, intricate **quilt square or geometric map**. Use colored pencils, markers, or digital design tools to embed a "hidden message" or map route within the geometric lines, and write a paragraph decoding it.



4. Icons of Music & Sound

- **The Reading:** Read about a Black musical pioneer, a specific era (like the Harlem Renaissance or the birth of Hip-Hop), or a legendary artist (like Miles Davis, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, or Stevie Wonder).
- **The Challenge:** Listen to an album or playlist of their work. Analyze the rhythm or lyrics and **recreate the vibe**: write an original poem/song verse, mix a short digital track, or learn to play one of their signature hooks on an instrument.



5. African Empires & Global Civilizations

- **The Reading:** Read a non-fiction book or historical study on a pre-colonial African kingdom (such as the Kingdom of Mali, the Kingdom of Kush, or the Benin Empire), or a great ruler (like Mansa Musa or Queen Nzinga).
- **The Challenge:** Map it out! Create a profile card for the empire or ruler detailing **three major historical achievements** (such as trade wealth, architectural marvels, or university centers) and share it with someone else.



6. Literature & Visual Arts Movements

- **The Reading:** Read a piece of fiction, poetry collection, or graphic novel by a Black author, **OR** dive into a historical survey of Black artists (like Jacob Lawrence, Augusta Savage, or Jean-Michel Basquiat).
- **The Challenge:** Channel the style of the author or artist. **Create a piece of original art**—a canvas painting, a digital design, or a spoken-word performance piece—that reflects the themes of identity, struggle, or joy found in your reading.



7. Youth Activism & Change-Makers

- **The Reading:** Read about historical or modern youth-led movements, or young Black activists who took a stand for civil rights, education, or environmental justice (such as Claudette Colvin, the Little Rock Nine, or Mari Copeny).
- **The Challenge:** Reflect on a social issue you care about today. Write a **one-page action plan or draft an editorial pitch** outlining how young people can organize and lead a positive change in your community this summer.



8. The Anthropology of Play & Games

- **The Reading:** Read a cultural history or analysis of traditional African strategy games (like Mancala variants, Shax, or Morabaraba) or the cultural impact of urban playground games and street sports.
- **The Challenge:** Build a game. Construct a fully functional, custom version of a strategy game using recycled items, wood, or cardboard. Write out a concise rulebook and **challenge a friend or family member to a competitive match.**



9. Resistance, Freedom & Systemic History

- **The Reading:** Read a rigorous historical text or narrative regarding the transatlantic slave trade, instances of organized resistance (like the Stono Rebellion or the Haitian Revolution), or the fight to abolish slavery.
- **The Challenge:** Document the legacy. Write a short reflection or record a brief audio memo detailing how the resilience shown in these historical moments laid the groundwork for modern civil rights movements.



Grand Finale: A drawing will be held on August 31, 2026, featuring two grand prize winners from each category of the reading challenge (Little Learners, Elementary Explorers, and the Middle-High School Experience). Every weekly ticket you submit enters your name into the drawing, giving you up to four chances to win.