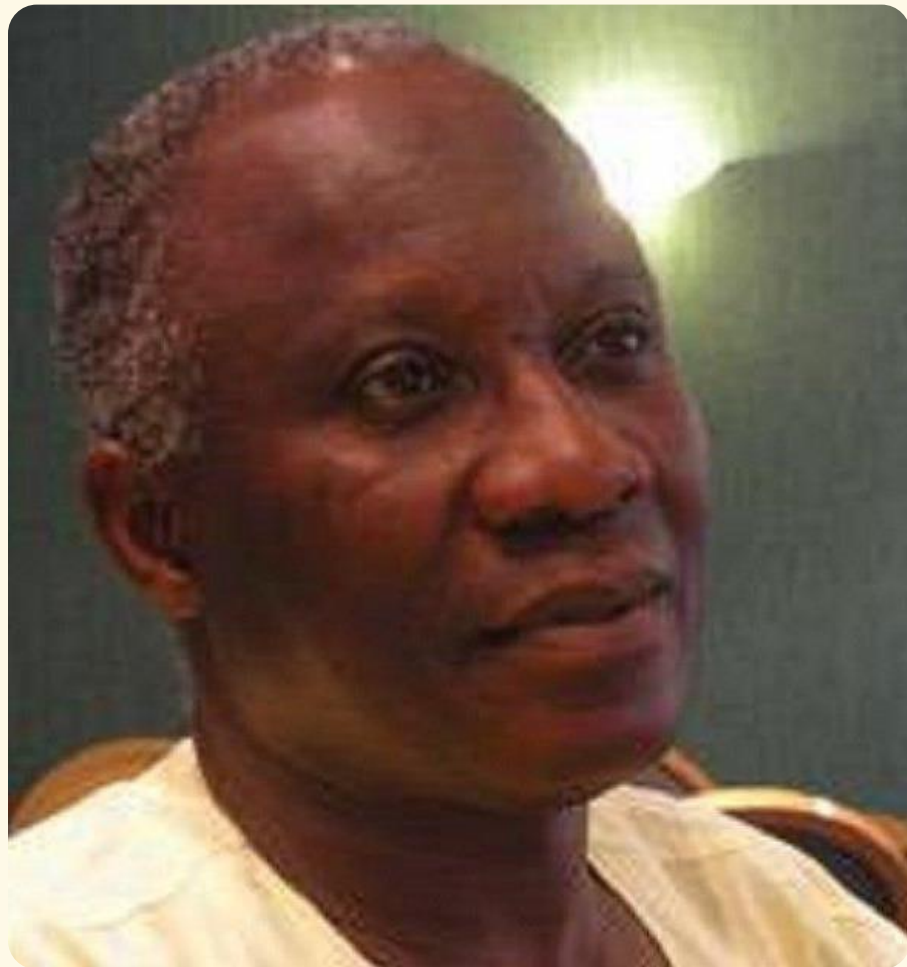


UK Black History Month

Discovering its roots, pioneers, and celebrations





Why October in the UK?

DID YOU KNOW?

In North America, Black History Month takes place in February. Yet across the United Kingdom, we celebrate throughout October. Why did our founders choose this specific month?

Akyaaba Addai-Sebo

A Visionary London Campaigner

Akyaaba Addai-Sebo, a Ghanaian analyst and activist working at the Greater London Council (GLC), conceived UK Black History Month in 1987.

He wanted every child of African and Caribbean descent to feel proud of their identity, cultural heritage, and vital contribution to British society.



Why October Was Chosen



African Harvest

October corresponds with periods of harvest, reconciliation, and cultural renewal in many African traditions.



New Academic Year

Young minds arrive in autumn refreshed and eager, providing a vital opportunity for schools to embed pride early on.



Community Pride

It created an energetic space for communities across boroughs to share music, arts, and political heritage.



Curriculum Impact

Launching early ensures diverse stories and historical achievements influence lessons throughout the whole school term.

How It Grew Across the UK

1990s

National rollout across
UK towns, schools,
and civic halls.

1987

First official
celebration held at
County Hall in London.

Today

A vibrant national
celebration of arts,
music, and heritage.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/z67h7v4#zdjbnk7>

Spotlight on British Trailblazers



Olaudah Equiano

Prominent 18th-century writer whose famous autobiography powered the British abolitionist movement.



Mary Seacole

Heroic Jamaican-born doctress who independently provided vital medical care during the Crimean War.



Walter Tull

Pioneering professional footballer and one of the first Black infantry officers in the British Army.

Core Purposes of the Month

1

Celebrate Achievements: Honour outstanding contributions across science, literature, sports, and politics.

2

Enrich the Curriculum: Ensure overlooked historical voices and narratives are taught in every school.

3

Foster Belonging: Recognise that Black British history is fundamentally interwoven into our shared national story.

Beyond October

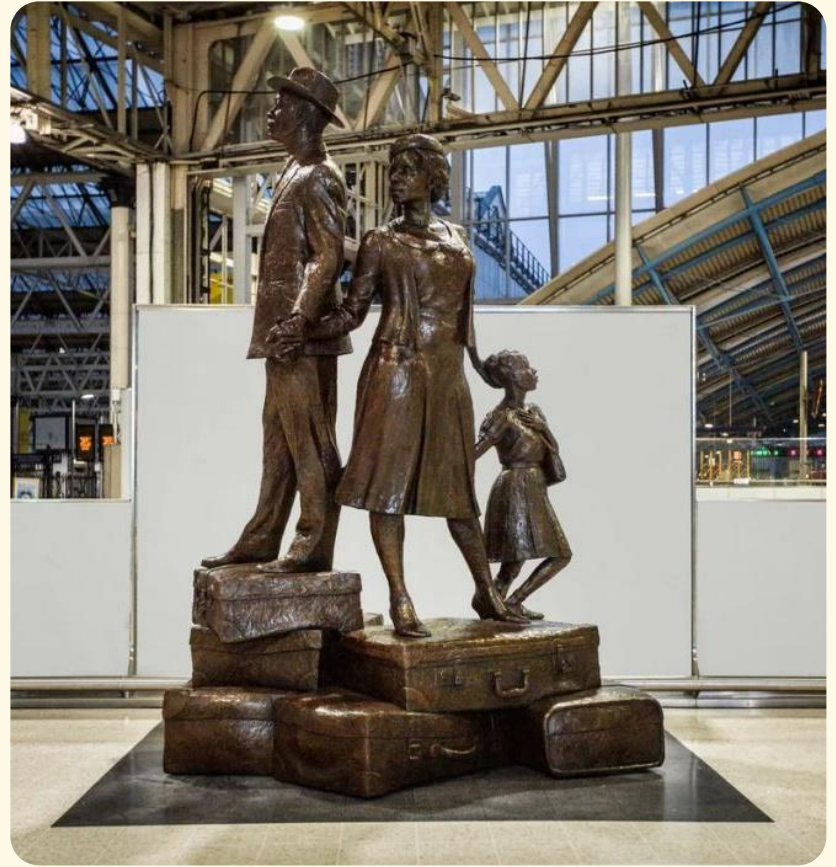
365 Days of Shared History

Historians and community leaders stress that while October provides a vital focal point, Black history should not be restricted to one calendar month.



Remember

Black British history is everyday
British history, present in every era.



Listening: Origins of UK BHM

Listen to the audio and answer the questions



The First UK Black History Month

▶ Play audio

- 1 In which year was UK Black History Month first held?
- 2 Where did the inaugural event take place?
- 3 Who conceived and spearheaded the UK celebration?
- 4 Why was October chosen instead of February?

Listening: Origins of UK BHM

Check your answers below



The First UK Black History Month

▶ Play audio

- 1 It was first held in 1987.
- 2 It took place at County Hall in London.
- 3 Akyaaba Addai-Sebo spearheaded it.
- 4 It marks the start of the school year when pupils are refreshed.

Knowledge Check: UK Origins

Which organisation did Akyaaba Addai-Sebo work for when founding UK Black History Month in 1987?

1.

National Union of Teachers

2.

United Nations Youth Taskforce

3.

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

4.

Greater London Council (GLC)

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