

## KEY MOMENTS IN BLACK HISTORY

**3100 BCE -1619**

**Africa Before Slavery**  
The people of Africa had rich and diverse histories and cultures centuries before Europeans arrived. Africans had kingdoms and city-states, each with its own language and culture. The empire of Songhai and the kingdoms of Mali, Benin, and Kongo were large and powerful with monarchs heading complex political structures governing hundreds of thousands of people.



**1460-1618**

**West African Trade**  
West Africans had traded with Europeans through merchants in North Africa for centuries. The first traders to sail down the West African coast were the Portuguese in the 15th century. The Dutch, British, French and Scandinavians followed. They were interested in precious items such as gold, ivory and spices, particularly pepper.

**1500-1618**

**Beginning Of The Transatlantic Slave Trade**  
From their first contacts, European traders kidnapped and bought Africans to be sold in Europe. However, it was not until the 17th century, when plantation owners wanted more slaves to satisfy the increasing demand for sugar in Europe, that transatlantic slaving became the dominant trade.

**1562**

**John Hawkins England's First Slave Trader**  
John Hawkins was England's first slave trader. In 1562 he sailed from The Barbican in Plymouth with three ships and violently kidnapped about 400 Africans in Guinea, later trading them in the West Indies.

**1672**

**Royal Africa Company Formed**  
The Royal African Company is formed in order to regulate the English slave trade, with a legal monopoly over the 2,500 miles of African coast from the Sahara to the Cape of Good Hope. The company is financed by royal, aristocratic and commercial capital.

**1730**

**The First Maroon War**  
The First Maroon War was a conflict between the Jamaican Maroons and the colonial British authorities that started around 1728 and continued until the peace treaties of 1739 and 1740. It was led by slaves who escaped from their plantations to set up communities of free black people in Jamaica amongst the mountains.



**1789**

**'The Interesting Narrative Of Olaudah Equiano' Or 'Gustavus Vassa The African' Is Published**  
It tells of his kidnap in Nigeria, his being sold into slavery, his journey to the West Indies, his life as a slave and his struggle to buy his freedom.

**1791**

**St. Domingue Revolt**  
Enslaved Africans on the slave colony of St. Domingue revolted against French colonial rule. The revolt, which transformed itself into the Haitian Revolution, began 230 years ago and ended in January 1804. Haiti was established and, subsequently, the first Black country to win its independence.



**1795**

**Second Maroon War In Jamaica; Fedon's Rebellion In Grenada**  
The Second Maroon War broke out in 1795. The public flogging of two Maroons convicted of stealing pigs from a white planter was the casus belli that caused the Maroons simmering hostility towards the colonial government to boil over into armed confrontation.

**1833**

**Slavery Abolition Act**  
Slavery Abolition Act is passed in Parliament, taking effect in 1834. This act gives all enslaved people in the Caribbean their freedom although some other British territories have to wait longer. However, ex-slaves in the Caribbean are forced to undertake a period of 'apprenticeship' (working for former masters for a low wage) meaning slavery is not fully abolished until 1838.

**1854**

**Mary Seacole**  
Mary Seacole travelled to England, and approached the War Office, asking to be sent as an army nurse to the Crimean War (1853-1856) where there was known to be poor medical facilities for wounded soldiers. Seacole's reputation after the war rivalled Florence Nightingale's. She died in 1881.



**1914**

**World War I**  
They travelled to the 'Mother Country' from the Caribbean at their own expense to take part in the fight against the Germans. Their support was needed, and they gave it. Soldiers also from Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Gambia and other African colonies were recruited.

**1917**

**Walter Tull dies**  
Walter Tull died aged 29 in 1918 while leading an attack on the Western front during the Second Battle of the Somme in March. The Commanding Officer of the 23rd Battalion recommended him for a Military Cross for bravery.

**1939-1945**

**World War II**  
Out of a population of 14 million in the Caribbean colonies of the British Commonwealth, about 16,000 West Indians and more than a million African soldiers volunteered for service alongside the British during the Second World War.

**1948**

**SS Empire Windrush Arrives**  
The Empire Windrush arrives in Tilbury Dock, more than half of the 1,027 listed passengers on board (539) gave their last country of residence as Jamaica, while 139 said Bermuda. Many of them were ex-servicemen, who had served in England during the war.



**1958**

**First Black Newspaper**  
Claudia Jones (born in Trinidad) founded the first major black post-war newspaper 'The West Indian Gazette'. Claudia was also a political activist and community leader. The Gazette was crucial in her fight for equal opportunities.

**1963**

**The Bristol Bus Boycott**  
Led by youth worker Paul Stephenson the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 arose from the refusal of the Bristol Omnibus Company to employ black or Asian bus crews in the city of Bristol.

**1964**

**Dr Martin Luther King Visits London**  
Dr Martin Luther King Jr. visited London on his way to accept a Nobel Peace Prize in Norway. While in the UK, he brought together C.A.R.D. (the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination) and preached at St. Paul's Cathedral.



**1964**

**Malcolm X debates Oxford University Union**  
Malcolm X ended a tour of Africa, where he had passed through a dozen different states travelled first to Paris and then the UK. There he took part in a debate at the Oxford Union Society in one of his final public appearances before his murder the following February.



**1965**

**Race Relations Act Passed**  
Protections against discrimination were extended in 1968, and further in 1976. This legislation resulted in the right to take discrimination complaints to civil courts or industrial tribunals and set up the Commission for Racial Equality.



**1966**

**Caribbean Artists Movement**  
Caribbean Artists Movement The Caribbean Artists Movement (CAM), founded in London in 1966, was the first organised collaboration of artists from the Caribbean with the aim of celebrating a new sense of shared Caribbean 'nationhood', exchanging ideas and attempting to forge a new Caribbean aesthetic in the arts.



**1968**

**First Black Headteacher**  
Dr. Beryl Gilroy became London's first black headteacher at Beckford Primary in West Hampstead. She later became a successful novelist, writing stories for and about her students, believing in literature that could 'heal'.

**1970**

**The Mangrove Nine Trial**  
The Mangrove Nine were a group of British black activists tried for inciting a riot at a 1970 protest against the police targeting of The Mangrove, a Caribbean restaurant in Notting Hill, London. The power of the British state went up against black power and lost.

**1971**

**New Immigration Bill**  
Britain's home secretary Reginald Maudling announces that Commonwealth citizens lose their automatic right to remain in the UK under the government's new Immigration Bill.

**1973**

**First Black News Reporter**  
First black news reporter Trevor McDonald joins ITN as a reporter from the BBC World Service and becomes Britain's first black TV news reporter. Trevor rose through the ranks and joined the News at Ten. He received an OBE in 1992 and a knighthood in 1999.

**1975**

**Lenny Henry's TV Debut**  
Lenny Henry makes his television debut winning the New Faces talent competition by doing stand-up comedy and impersonations. Lenny is now one of Britain's best-known comedians.

**1978**

**Viv Anderson Plays For England**  
Viv Anderson became the first black British footballer to play for England in an international tournament against Czechoslovakia.

**1981**

**The Brixton Uprising**  
The Brixton Uprising occurs as tensions between the black British community and the police in the area culminated in three days of rioting against police brutality and discriminatory policies. The uprisings spread across the UK (most notably in Toxteth, Liverpool).

**1982**

**The Voice Newspaper Launched**  
Val McCalla started the weekly newspaper The Voice. The newspaper went on to become the voice for the British African-Caribbean community. He has since been honoured as a pioneering publisher for the black community.



**1984**

**Thompson Wins Olympic Gold**  
Daley Thompson became only the second competitor in history to win the decathlon at two Olympic Games, winning gold medals in 1980 and 1984. He was awarded the MBE in 1982, CBE in 2000 and BBC Sports Personality of 1982.

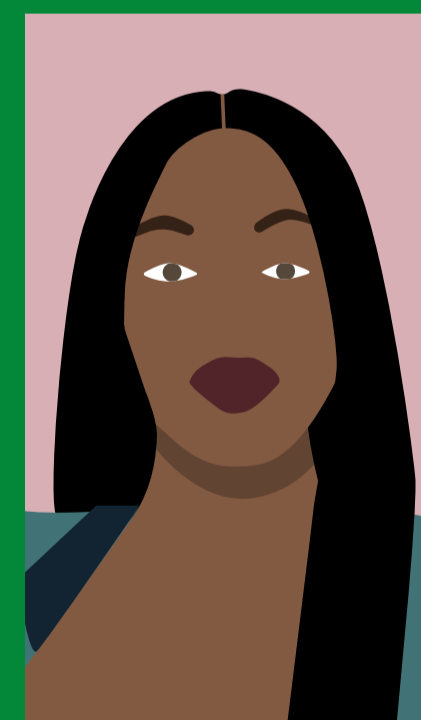
**1987**

**First Black Parliamentarians**  
Diane Abbott, Paul Boateng, Bernie Grant, and Keith Vaz all won seats for Labour in the '87 General Election. Grant made his mark by wearing a Ghanaian robe.



**1988**

**Naomi Campbell**  
At age 18 Naomi Campbell became the first black female to grace the cover of French Vogue. It helped catapult her to supermodel status.



**1991**

**Bill Morris**  
Bill Morris is elected the first black leader of a British trade union; Morris takes up the post of General Secretary of the transport & General Workers' Union.

**1992**

**Linford Christie Olympic Gold**  
Linford wins the sought after 100m gold medal at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. He is the only British man to have won gold medals at all four major competitions open to British athletes: the Olympic Games, the World Championships, the European Championships and the Commonwealth Games.



**1993**

**Stephen Lawrence**  
The A-Level student is murdered by a group of white men while waiting for a bus in Eltham, South-East London. Failure to capture his killers provoked his parents to begin a campaign to shame the authorities. No-one has been convicted.

**1999**

**Lawrence Report**  
After a long campaign by Doreen & Neville Lawrence, a report by Sir William Macpherson is published. It looks at the police handling of Stephen's murder and contains a withering attack on racist attitudes within the Metropolitan Police force.

**2005**

**Private Beharry**  
Johnson Beharry (born in Grenada) is awarded the Victoria Cross, the most prestigious award for a soldier, serving in Iraq when his unit were ambushed twice. He risked injury to rescue others. He needed brain surgery for head injuries.

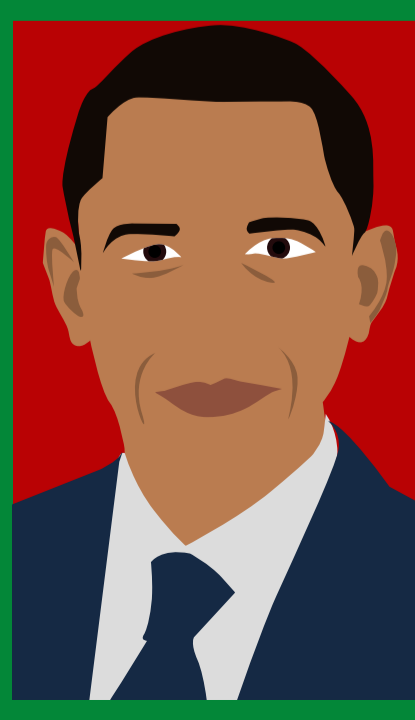
**2008**

**Lewis Hamilton**  
Lewis Hamilton wins his first Formula World Championship title with McLaren in 2008 before moving to Mercedes, he is a joint-record seven World Drivers' Championship titles and is considered the best Driver of all time; he was knighted in the 2021 New Year Honours.



**2009**

**Barack Obama Becomes 44th US President**  
On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th president of the United States; he is the first African American to hold that office.



**2013**

**Doreen Lawrence**  
British Jamaican campaigner and the mother of Stephen Lawrence, who was murdered in a racist attack in South East London in 1993, created a Life Peer in 2013. She launched the first national Stephen Lawrence Day on 22 April 2019.



**2016**

**Colin Kaepernick**  
Colin Kaepernick began his peaceful protests during the national anthem. Before Colin Kaepernick knelt, he sat. And this quiet action of protest was largely unnoticed until August 26, 2016.



**2018**

**The Windrush Scandal**  
British political scandal concerning people who were wrongly detained, denied legal rights, threatened with deportation and in at least 83 cases wrongly deported from the UK.

**2020**

**George Floyd Killed**  
George Floyd was an African-American man who was murdered. After his death, protests against police brutality, especially towards black people, quickly spread across the United States, the UK, and globally.

**2021**

**First Black US Vice President**  
Kamala Harris becomes the first Black US Vice President in January 2021. Harris became the first woman and first woman of colour to become vice president of the United States.