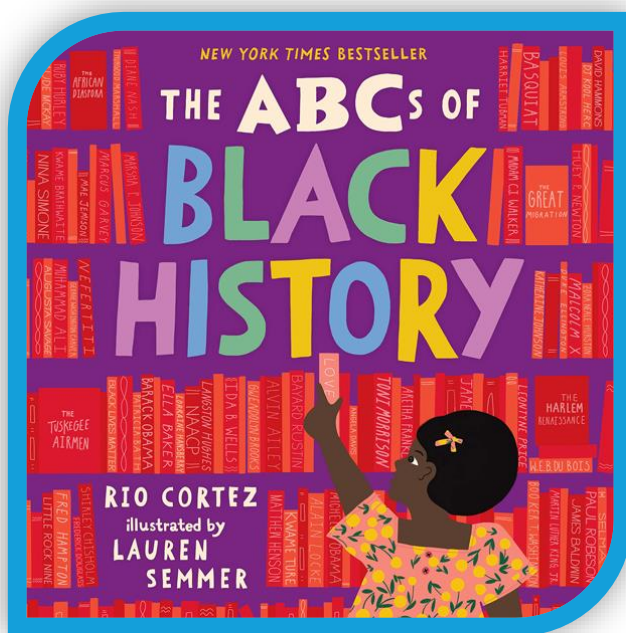




# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

**About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



## The ABCs of Black History

Rio Cortez (Author), Lauren Semmer (Illustrator)

ISBN: 978-1523507498

Publisher: Workman Publishing Company

Year Published: 2020

Age Range: 5-18

### Book Themes

Black History, Civil Rights, Racism, Activism, People, Identity and Culture

### About the Book

B is for Beautiful, Brave, and Bright! Letter by letter, this book celebrates a story that spans continents and centuries, triumph and heartbreak, creativity and joy. It's a story of big ideas—P is for Power, S is for Science and Soul. Of significant moments—G is for Great Migration. Of iconic figures—H is for Zora Neale Hurston, X is for Malcom X. It's an ABC book like no other, and a story of hope and love. In addition to rhyming text, the book includes back matter with information on the events, places, and people mentioned in the poem.

### Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their

responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a conversation that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What is the book about?
- Have you read other ABC books before? How is this book similar? How is it different?
- What thoughts and feelings came up as you read the book?
- What did you learn that you didn't know before? What surprised you?
- What are some pages that stood out to you? Why did they stand out?
- How do the illustrations help tell the story of Black history?
- What more do you want to learn?
- Why do you think it's important to learn about Black history?
- Why do you think we should learn about the history of our groups as well as other groups?
- Why do you think the author decided to write this book?

## Talking Points

Below are some important considerations that will make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

### 1. Black History

This book is about Black history and through the alphabet, it explains, describes and illustrates important and meaningful events, milestones, time periods, cultural aspects, people and accomplishments in Black history. Talk with your child about how Black history is U.S. history. Explain that even though it is a central aspect of U.S. history, it often doesn't get the attention it deserves in school, in communities and in society. Black history is frequently minimized, excluded or inaccurately portrayed due to racism, bias, and exclusion. That is one of the reasons we commemorate Black History Month in February. Explain that while Black History Month is sometimes the only time in school and society we talk about Black history, stress that Black history should be part of and incorporated into our teaching and learning throughout the year. Talk with them about their experience in school and in their community about learning Black history. You can also discuss with your child what they already know about Black history that is reflected in the book and what they didn't know but want to learn more about. Another idea is to learn about Black history in your own community by exploring museums, historic houses, plaques about local history, etc. Make a commitment to learning more as a family.

### 2. Social Justice and Civil Rights

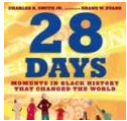
Talk with your child about how the book, and Black history in general, includes the history of social justice and civil rights in the U.S. Because U.S. history includes a long history of harm, bias and injustice faced by the Black community, striving for social justice is an important part of that history. Define social justice as "a set of conditions and principles that ensure every person has equitable economic, political and social rights, access and opportunities." Another way to say this (for younger children) is that "everyone deserves to be treated fairly and to be given a fair chance in life." Together, point out the places in the book where social justice and civil rights are addressed (e.g., enslavement, school desegregation efforts, voting rights, Black Lives Matter movement). Talk with your child about the importance of people coming together to work for social justice, both historically

and today. Share with them any examples you have of you doing that in your life and ask them about the important social justice issues today that impact the Black community (e.g., police violence and Black Lives Matter). Ask them what civil rights or social justice issues are important to them and talk together about how they might get involved in addressing that issue(s).

### 3. Balance the Struggle and the Joy

Sometimes when Black history is discussed, the focus is primarily on racism and the ways in which Black people have been harmed, oppressed and discriminated against historically and in present day. While it is important to discuss this part of Black history, it is also important that we balance those learnings and discussions with the positive and uplifting exploration of Black culture, achievement, celebration, and promise as well as feelings of joy, pride and power. It is important not to convey the message that Black history is all about oppression and the fight for rights and freedom, which can feel like a deficit-centered approach. At the same time, that struggle is an important part of Black history. Talk with your child about these different aspects that are reflected in the book and elicit from them examples of what they learned that are about the struggle for social justice and what they learned that is about culture, achievements and joy. You can also discuss aspects of your family's identity (race, ethnicity, religion etc.), what you know about that history and explore what more you want to know.

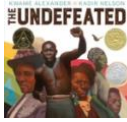
## Other Books You May Like



*28 Days* by Charles R. Smith, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/28-days-moments-in-black-history-that-changed-the](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/28-days-moments-in-black-history-that-changed-the)



*Born on the Water* by Nikole Hannah-Jones, Renée Watson, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-1619-project-born-on-the-water](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-1619-project-born-on-the-water)



*The Undefeated* by Kwame Alexander, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-undefeated](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/the-undefeated)



*Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre* by Carole Boston Weatherford, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/unspeakable-the-tulsa-race-massacre](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/unspeakable-the-tulsa-race-massacre)

## ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and other resources on Black history and culture, civil rights and race and racism.

### Websites

6 Ways to Be an Ally

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol)

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying. (Also in Spanish.)

### 13 Exceptional Kid Lit Books to Read for Black History Month

[www.adl.org/blog/13-exceptional-kid-lit-books-to-read-for-black-history-month](http://www.adl.org/blog/13-exceptional-kid-lit-books-to-read-for-black-history-month)

Provides a list of recommended children's and young adult books to teach about Black history and the Black experience, a great way to open the door to discussions about these experiences and milestones. Each recommended book comes with discussion guides for educators and families.

### Authors Read Aloud and Conversation Series

[www.adl.org/author-read-aloud-conversation-series](http://www.adl.org/author-read-aloud-conversation-series)

This series features prominent children's and young adult authors in engaging, insightful and lively discussion about their work and its relevance to the human experience.

### Black History Month

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/black-history-month](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/black-history-month)

Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Here are some lesson plans and resources to help you teach about Black history in your classroom and at home.

### Civil Rights Movement

[www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/civil-rights-movement](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/civil-rights-movement)

Provides historical background information, resources and pictures about the Civil Rights Movement.

### Race Talk: Engaging Young People in Conversations about Race and Racism

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/race-talk-engaging-young-people-in-conversations-about)

As a society, public conversations about race and racism have increased in volume and intensity. Here are some suggestions and strategies for having classroom conversations with young people about these issues.

### Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources)

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

### The Question Corner: Early Childhood FAQs

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner)

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children.

### Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk)

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources. See "[Lonnie Chavis of 'This is Us' Reflects on His Experiences with Racism.](#)"

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity & Culture: Black, African American, Caribbean, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[205\]=205](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[205]=205)

Race & Racism, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-8=1&tid\[217\]=217&tid\[218\]=218&tid\[219\]=219&tid\[220\]=220&tid\[221\]=221](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?childrens-lit-select-all-8=1&tid[217]=217&tid[218]=218&tid[219]=219&tid[220]=220&tid[221]=221)