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## Alphabet Black History Month Quiz

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### A

1. **Alice Coachman** was the first African American woman to win a gold medal in track and field. Because of her ethnicity Alice was barred from public training facilities and forced to train however she could. She was noticed by Harry Lash, the boys' track and field coach, at Madison High School, in 1938. She qualified for the 1940 and 1944 Olympic games but did not compete until 1948 when she leaped a record-breaking height of five feet, six and an eighth inches in the high jump finals. She was the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal.

**Question:** Why could Alice not compete in the 1940 and 1944 Olympic Games?

### B

2. **Bessie Coleman**, in 1922, became the first African American woman to stage a public flight in America. This amazing aviator had previously taught herself French and moved to France to obtain a flying license because flying schools in America denied her entry. She earned her pilot's license in just seven months and then specialised in stunt flying and parachuting, earning a living performing aerial tricks.

**Question:** Bessie was born in 1892. What year did she die and what was the cause of her death?

### C

3. **Claudette Colvin** is a Black civil rights activist who, in March 1955, refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger, an action which Rosa Parks is more famous for doing. She was arrested and became one of the four plaintiffs in *Browder v. Gayle*, which ruled that Montgomery's bus system was unconstitutional.

**Question:** How long after Claudette refused to give up her bus seat did Rosa Parks do the same thing?

### D

4. **Doreen Lawrence**, now Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE, is the mother of the late Stephen Lawrence, who, at the age of 18 years, was murdered in a racist attack in South East London in 1993. After Stephen's murder Doreen tirelessly campaigned for justice for her son over many years. She claimed that the Metropolitan Police investigation was unprofessional and racist, and after a judicial enquiry was held into the circumstances and investigation of her son's death, a report was written that changed the face of policing forever.

**Question:** What was the name of the report?

## E

5. **Earl Cameron** CBE lived from 1917 to 2020 and was a Bermudan actor who lived and worked in the UK. His part in a film called Pool of London won him much critical acclaim and is now considered as the first major role for a Black actor in a British mainstream film.

**Question:** In which 1965 James Bond film did Earl play a character called Pinder? a) Thunderball b) Goldfinger c) You Only Live Twice

## F

6. **Frank Bailey** was born in Guyana and came to England in 1953. He heard from the Fire Brigade's Union that Black people were not employed by the fire service. Regardless of this, Frank applied and was accepted, becoming a Fire Officer in West Ham Fire Brigade in 1955. In 1965 he left to become a social worker and then the first Black legal advisor at a magistrate's court, specialising in work with Black young people.

**Question:** Frank lived in an area of London famous for its spectacular carnivals. What area of London would this be?

## G

7. **George Bridgetower** was born in 1778 (or 1780, no one is sure) in Poland, to an Eastern European mother and West Indian father. Aged just ten years, George became a professional violinist and gave performances with the Royal Philharmonic Society Orchestra. He began composing and teaching and earned a Bachelor of Music Degree at Cambridge.

**Question.** Which famous composer dedicated a violin concerto to him?  
a) Beethoven. b) Tchaikovsky c) Mozart

## H

8. **Haile Selassie**, 1892 to 1975, was the Emperor of Ethiopia, from 1930 to 1974, and he sought to modernise his country. He brought Ethiopia into the United Nations and made Addis Ababa the major centre for the organisation of African unity. Haile Selassie was regarded as the Messiah of the African race by the Rastafarian movement. From the late 1920s on, Haile Selassie, was in effect the Ethiopian government; by establishing provincial schools, strengthening the police force and outlawing feudal taxation, he sought to help his people and increase the authority of central government.

**Question.** How did Haile Selassie fall from power?

## I

9. **Idris Elba OBE**, born in 1972, is an English actor, writer, producer, rapper, singer, song writer and DJ. He is best known for his starring part in the BBC television series Luther and at the 69<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards he won an award for this role. In 2016 Idris was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List, and in 2020 he was listed in the top 100 of the most influential people in the UK of African or African Caribbean descent.

**Question:** On an album by a famous female singer, initials TS, the introduction of the song features a snippet of an interview with Idris; who is the singer?

## J

10. **Jack Leslie** was an English professional footballer and the only Black professional player during his 14-season spell with Plymouth Argyle. He joined the club in 1921 and his partnership with player Sammy Black has gone down in history as one of the very best partnerships ever. Jack was called up to the national team in 1925 but the invitation was withdrawn. Jack believed that this withdrawal was because of his ethnicity.

**Question:** How have Plymouth Argyle honoured Jack?

## K

11. **Kanya King**. Kanya is an internationally renowned entrepreneur of the Music of Black Origin (MOBO) awards. Kanya studied at Goldsmiths college in London, then took a job as a television researcher, where she identified a gap in the market for a mainstream British awards ceremony celebrating music inspired or influenced by Black music.

**Question:** Which BBC Radio 4 programme recently assessed Kanya as one of the most powerful women in the UK?

## L

12. **Lubaina Himid**. Lubaina was born in Zanzibar in 1954 and moved to the UK shortly afterwards. She was an important figure in the emergence and development of Black artists in Britain in the 1980s. Her work, "Between the two my heart is balanced" has particular poignancy today, with its depiction of migrants crossing oceans.

**Question:** In which year did Lubaina win the Turner prize?

- a) 1997 b) 2007 c) 2017

## M

13. **Mike Fuller QPM.** Michael Fuller QPM, also known as Mike Fuller, is a former Chief Constable of Kent Police and Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service. He is Britain's first (and only, so far,) Black Chief Constable and worked at Kent Police in this role from January 2004 until March 2010. Mike started his police career in the Metropolitan Police Service as a cadet in 1975, working in demanding uniformed and CID positions throughout London, including Scotland Yard.

**Question:** In which year was Mike awarded an Honorary Doctorate by Arden University for his long-standing commitment to mentoring black officers and community support work?

- a) 2005 b) 2010 c) 2019

## N

14. **Nina Simone**, 1933 to 2003, was an American singer, songwriter, musician, arranger and civil rights activist. Her musical style ranged from classical, jazz, blues, folk and R & B through to gospel and pop. Nina performed and spoke at Civil Rights meetings such as at the Selma to Montgomery Marches. She is regarded as one of the most influential recording artists of the twentieth century.

**Question:** Which singer and songwriter named his piano after her?

## O

15. **Oona King**, Baroness King of Bow is a British Labour Party politician and the former chief diversity officer of Channel 4. Oona was born in Sheffield to Preston King, an African American academic and Hazel King, who is a British Jewish person. Before becoming an MP, Oona was a researcher for the European Parliament. In 1997 she became the second Black woman in history to be elected as a Member of Parliament

**Question:** who was the first Black woman to be elected as an MP?

## P

16. **Phillis Wheatley** (1753 to 1784) was the first African American author of a published book of poetry. She was born in West Africa and was kidnapped at the age of seven or eight and sold into slavery. She was purchased by the Wheatly family, who encouraged her to write poetry. Her first volume of poems appeared in London in 1773.

**Question:** The man who was to become the first President of the United States wrote to Phillis after she sent him some poetry, citing her as a genius. Who was this?

## Q

17. **Quincey Jones**. Quincey Jones is an African American record producer, instrumentalist, song writer, composer and film and television producer. Amongst many achievements he has been nominated for seven Oscars, produced albums for Michael Jackson and was the producer for the charity single, "We are the world," which raised funds for victims of famine in Ethiopia.

**Question:** in 1985 Quincey produced a film that received 11 Oscar nominations. The film was based on a book by Alice Walker and one of the stars was Whoopi Goldberg. What was the name of the film?

## R

18. **Ray Charles** (1930 to 2004) was an African American singer, songwriter and composer who had been blinded during his childhood as a result of glaucoma. During the 1950s he pioneered the soul music genre by combining blues, jazz, rhythm and blues and gospel styles. He became one of the first Black musicians to be granted artistic control by a mainstream record company and during his career won 17 Grammy awards, including 5 posthumously.

**Question:** Which other hugely famous American singer called Ray Charles "The only true genius in show business"? (Initials FS)

## S

19. **Sislin Fay Allen** (known as Fay Allen), was the first Black woman police constable in the United Kingdom, serving in the Metropolitan Police in London 1968 to 1972. Born in Jamaica, she moved to London, where, as an adult she worked at the Queen's Hospital Croydon, then saw a recruitment advert for the police force, and, despite the fact that it was widely believed that the force did not take Black applicants, succeeded in her application, aged 29 years.

**Question:** Who was the first male Black police constable to join the Metropolitan police?

## T

20. **Toussaint L'Ouverture**. Francois Toussaint L' Ouverture, 1743 to 1803 was a former Haitian slave; he was given his freedom in 1776 and subsequently led a slave revolt. He formed an army of former slaves and deserters from the French and Spanish armies and successfully ended slavery in Hispaniola by 1795. He was the most prominent leader of the Haitian revolution. In July 1802 he was captured and imprisoned by the French; sadly, he died in 1805 and his death is believed to have been caused by malnutrition, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

**Question:** Was Toussaint L'Ouverture known as:

- a) The Founder of Haiti   b) The Father of Haiti   c) The General of Haiti

## U

21. **Uneku Atawodi**, now known as Neku Atawodi-Eden is the only Black woman in the world known to play polo professionally. At the age of 16 hen she informed her parents of her interest in playing polo, they disapproved, and stopped financing the cost of her horses, in the hope this would stop her from pursuing this idea. She refused to give up, and financed the costs herself, and went on to become a professional polo player and equine sports scientist.

**Question:** At which UK Polo Club did Neku undertake mucking out horses' stables to finance her own costs?

- a) Ascot Park   b) Epsom Polo Club   c) Cambridge and Newmarke

## V

22. **Venus Williams**, born in 1980, is an American professional tennis player. A former world Number 1 in both singles and doubles, Venus is generally regarded as one of the all-time greats of women's tennis, and, along with her sister Serena, is credited with ushering in a new era of power and athleticism on women's professional tennis. Venus first reached the Number 1 ranking in singles in 2002, becoming the first African American woman to do so.

**Question:** How many Olympic Gold medals has Venus won?

- a) 1   b) 3   c) 4

## W

23. **Wangari Maathai** 1940 to 2011, was born in Kenya, and was a member of the Kikuyu tribe. She was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize, in 2004, for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace. She was a pioneer in articulating the links between human rights, poverty, environmental protection and security, and was the founder of the Green Belt Movement.

**Question:** Wangari inspired the United Nations to launch a campaign that has led to the planting of trees worldwide. Approximately how many trees have been planted?

- Answer** a) 11million   b) 11 billion   c) 30 million

## X

24. **Malcolm X**, 1925 to 1965 was an African American leader in the civil rights movement. He was also a minister and supporter of Black Nationalism. He urged his fellow Black Americans to protect themselves against White aggression “by any means possible”, a stance that sometimes put him at odds with the non-violent teachings of Martin Luther King. He achieved prominence in the Nation of Islam, a belief system that merged Islam with Black nationalism. Malcolm X was assassinated at an Organization of Afro American unity rally in 1965.

**Question:** How many times did Martin Luther King and Malcolm X meet?

- a) once   b) twice   c) never

## Y

25. **Yomi Adegoke** is a multi-award-winning British journalist and author. She writes about race, feminism, popular culture and how they all intersect. She has worked at ITN, and for Channel 4 News and freelanced for Vogue. Recently she was listed as one of the most influential people in London by the London Evening Standard. She has co-written a best-selling book, “Slay in your Lane: The Black Girls’ Bible”

**Question:** Yomi is of Nigerian descent. Where was she born?

- a) Bournemouth   b) Bristol   c) London

## Z

26. **Zadie Smith** is an English novelist, essayist and short story writer. Her debut novel was “White Teeth”, which immediately became a best seller and attracted great acclaim. She was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2002 and was listed as one of Granta’s 20 Best Young British Novelists in 2003 and again in 2013. Zadie is currently a tenured Professor of Fiction at New York University and a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

**Question:** IGSNW MEIT is an anagram of the title of one of Zadie Smith’s novels. What is the title of this book?

# Answers

1. Due to World War 2 the games were cancelled.
2. Bessie tragically died in 1926, aged 34, after falling to her death from an open aeroplane passenger seat in a test flight; the pilot was also killed.
3. Nine months after, in December 1955.
4. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report by Sir William Macpherson.
5. a) Thunderball
6. Notting Hill.
7. a) Beethoven
8. By a Marxist military coup.
9. Taylor Swift.
10. The board room at the newly refurbished Mayflower grandstand has been recently renamed in his honour. There is also a proposal to rename Sir John Hawkins Square (in Plymouth city centre) after Jack Leslie.
11. Woman's Hour.
12. 2017
13. 2019
14. Elton John
15. Diane Abbott.
16. George Washington
17. The Color Purple.
18. Frank Sinatra
19. Norwell Roberts. During his career he was considered to be the first Black Police Officer in the United Kingdom although it has since been revealed that he had been preceded by a Metropolitan Police Superintendent Robert Branford. Police Constable John Kent was the first officer in the UK.
20. The Father of Haiti.
21. Epsom.
22. C) 4
23. b) 11 billion
24. Once
25. C) London
26. Swing Time