



African-American Inventors

By: Janelle Cox
M.S. in Education

Social Studies
Grades 6–8



Introduction

Most people have heard of famous inventors and their inventions that make our daily lives easier. But many African-American inventors have been overlooked. In this lesson, students will be actively involved in class discussions that create awareness and understanding about African-American inventors whose technological inventions have changed our lives. Students will be put into small groups where they must choose three inventors to research and complete a project on.

Learning Objectives

- [3.People, Places and Environments](#). Research African-American inventors
- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7](#). Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Materials Needed

- List of African-American inventors
- Computer

Procedure

Ask students, “Think about all of the inventions that you use in your daily lives. Now, choose your favorite and tell me why you chose that invention.” Give students a few minutes to think, then go around the classroom and ask students to reveal their choices.

Activity 1: African American Inventors

1. After discussing students’ favorite inventions and creating a heightened interest in the topic, tell students that they will be learning about African-American inventors. Discuss how African-American inventors have changed our lives through many inventions, from the traffic light to the ironing board.
2. Next, give students a few examples of inventors such as Alexander Miles who invented automatic elevator doors and Sarah Boone who invented the ironing board.
3. After discussing a few inventors, introduce the research project that students will be completing about African-American inventors. Then establish small groups of about three students.

Continued on page 2



African-American Inventors

By: Janelle Cox
M.S. in Education

Social Studies
Grades 6–8



Continued from page 1

Activity 2: Research Project

1. Once groups are established, inform students that they will be choosing three African-American inventors to learn more about from a list and will research and present a project about these inventors.
2. Allow students to choose their inventors and give them time to talk within their groups to figure out which roles each student will play within the group.
3. Inform students that they will have class time for the next few days to complete the project. However, all research must be done at home and class time is to work on a visual board display, skit, or movie presentation of their findings.
4. Students share their final project with the class.

Evaluation

Assess students on their research project and how closely they've followed the guidelines.