

## Reader's Theater Exercise 26: Identify African American Accomplishments and Practice Reading With Expression



**February is Black History Month**, celebrated to recognize the cultural and social contributions of earlier generations of African Americans to our country, and the significant effect their history has had on all other aspects of American life.

**In observance of Black History Month, this Reader's Theater Exercise will help your students learn about the accomplishments of various African Americans while also practicing reading with expression.** You students will have a blast acting out the roles of famous writers, scientists, politicians, and more while their classmates try to identify the person based on their knowledge of African Americans' achievements in history. The activity features inspiring and well-known quotations.

Don't forget to look at our Featured Story of the month, ***The Great Rhyme Travel Machine II: African American Heroes***, which also provides a platform for celebrating Black History Month and discussing relevant issues in your classroom.

### Teacher Instructions:

Read the famous African American quotes on the following page. Make enough copies of the sheet for each student to be given one person's quote by cutting the sheet into strips containing one person's quote.

Divide your class into activity groups of six students, and give each student one of the quotes. **Important:** direct them to keep the name of their person secret.

Next, each student will take a turn reading the quote aloud for their group using proper expression and excitement, as if they were portraying the famous person in a movie or play. Then, the other group members will try to guess the famous person who said the quote.

You can make the activity easier or more difficult by either providing a list of all the famous African American men and women featured in the activity to each student, or leaving the guessing open-ended.

**Students will love this educational, role-playing activity in a game format, which is not time consuming and is easy to fit into your lesson plan for Black History Month.**



*Cut out the quotations on this page  
and give one to each student.*

***Maya Angelou (Author and Humanitarian)***

History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.

***Martin Luther King Jr. (Civil Rights Activist and Clergyman)***

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

***Booker T. Washington (American Political Leader and Former Slave)***

I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has had to overcome while trying to succeed.

***Rosa Parks (Civilian and Civil Rights Activist)***

I did not want to be mistreated; I did not want to be deprived of a seat that I had paid for. It was just time ... there was opportunity for me to take a stand to express the way I felt about being treated in that manner.

***W.E.B. DuBois (Author and Co-Founder of the NAACP)***

To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships.

***Colin Powell (First African American Secretary of State)***

A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.

