



Trailblazers: Inspiring Empowerment

Wellbeing Activity from The Art Room

Introduction

Wellbeing Activity from The Art Room

A 'trailblazer' could be described as someone who sparks change and inspires others on their journey. This creative activity invites young people in secondary or high school to find inspiration in their favorite trailblazer in Black British history and culture.

Many people in Black British history and culture were pioneers in their field, blazing a trail for others to follow. This activity can help young people feel empowered, and tap into their own sense of agency.

This activity invites young people to imagine a trailblazer passing a baton or torch on to them. The baton or torch contains a message which encourages and empowers them in challenging times. They will then imagine passing this on to others, as a way of instigating change and inclusivity.

The symbolism of a baton and torch helps young people explore what empowers them and creates a sense of belonging in their community. This project gives each young person a chance to

think about and celebrate Black British history and culture. It aims to support their self-esteem by drawing from the confidence and resilience of others in our society.

Trailblazers: Inspiring Empowerment is part of the Celebrating Diversity collection by Place2Be's Art Room. These are creative activities that explore themes of equality, diversity and inclusion.

We plan to launch a new activity each year during Black History Month. This is a helpful way to encourage communication around race and Black British culture in our society, not just during Black History Month, but all year round.

Materials

- Paper or card
- Paint, crayons, pens or pencils
- Recycled items (kitchen/ toilet roll)
- Scissors
- Glue, tape, string, elastic band

Activities

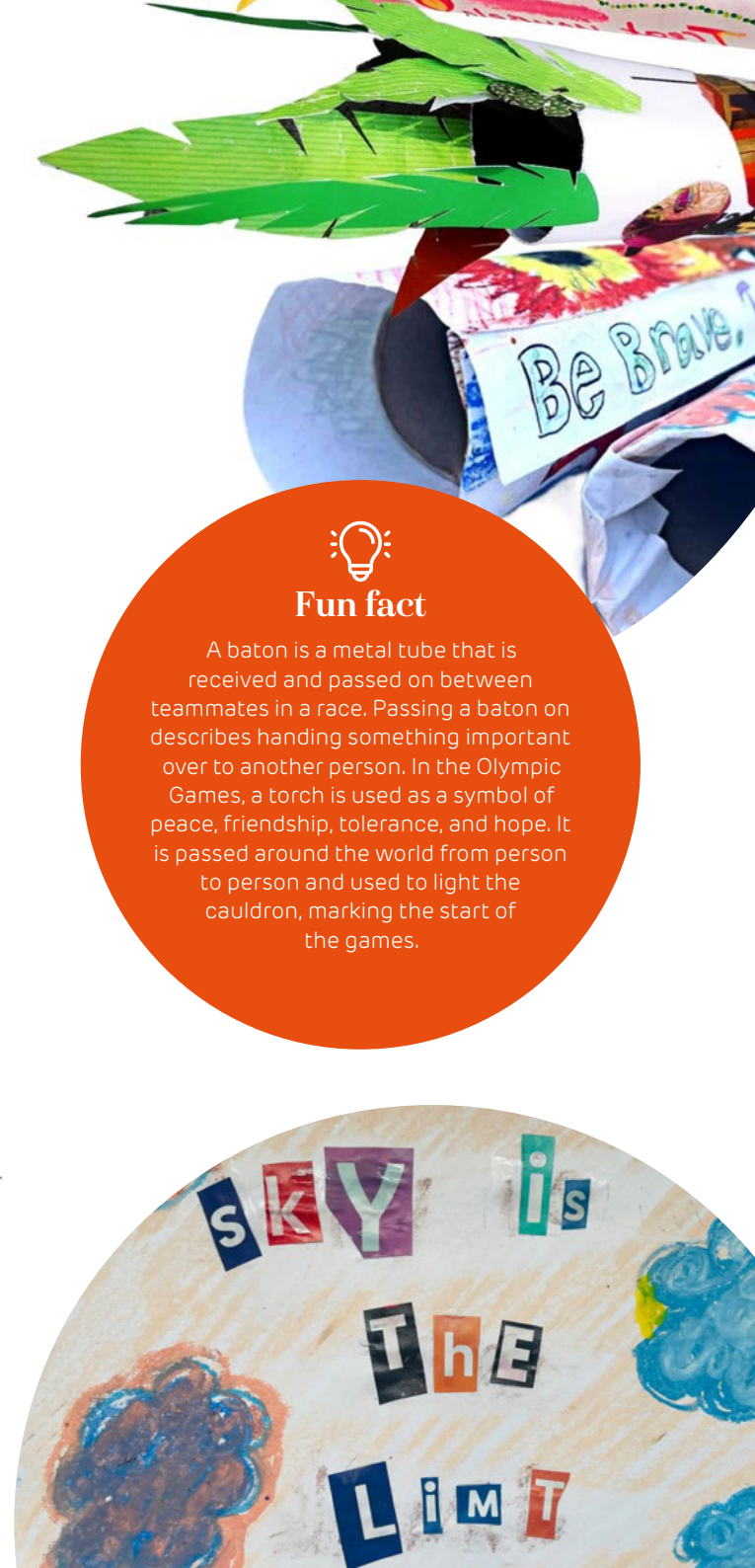
There is one art activity for young people in secondary or high school.

Check out our **Who Inspires You?** project for primary school aged children.



Fun fact

A baton is a metal tube that is received and passed on between teammates in a race. Passing a baton on describes handing something important over to another person. In the Olympic Games, a torch is used as a symbol of peace, friendship, tolerance, and hope. It is passed around the world from person to person and used to light the cauldron, marking the start of the games.



Inspiration

Find your trailblazer!

Who inspires you? To start this activity, first find someone in Black British history and culture who you consider a trailblazer. This could be an inspiring pioneer who has paved the way for others. Below are some examples of trailblazers, books and videos that may inspire you. It may be someone from the past or present. Perhaps there is even someone from your own life who you see as a trailblazer?

Here are some ideas to get you started...

☆ Present trailblazers

Xavi Art

Xavi (pictured bottom right) took to [painting](#) to express himself through the pressures of isolation due to the Covid-19 pan-demic and the struggles of racial injustice sparked by the death of George Floyd.

Check out other Black British visual artists [here](#). Choose your favourite artist and find out more about them online.

Marcus Rashford

A British professional footballer who experienced food poverty as a kid knows many children are still going to bed hungry every day. Marcus raises awareness by helping charities provide food for vulnerable people across the UK and wants to give the next generation the opportunity to read. Check out his story [here](#).

Lemn Sissay

[Lemn Sissay OBE](#) is an award-winning poet, writer and broadcaster. He of Ethiopian decent and was brought up in the North West of England. You can listen to his poems on YouTube.

YolanDa Brown

[YolanDa Brown](#) is a saxophonist and composer. She was born to Jamaican parents in Barking, London. Her music is influenced by jazz, soul music and reggae. She is a 2008 MOBO "Best Jazz" winner and UMA nominee. [Hear her talking about music here](#).

Clio

Clio's spoken word piece won first place in the 'Show Racism the Red Card' England School Competition. You can watch Clio's spoken word piece [here](#).

Nicola Adams

[Nicola Adams OBE](#) (pictured above) is a former professional boxer who competed from 2017 to 2019. She retired with an undefeated record and held the WBO female flyweight title in 2019.

Letitia Wright

[Letitia Michelle Wright](#) is a Guyanese-born British actress. She began her career with roles in the television series Top Boy, Coming Up, Chasing Shadows, Humans, Doctor Who and Black Mirror; for the latter, she received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination.

📖 Books

- [Ready Steady Mo!](#) by Mo Farah & Kes Gray
- [Work It, Girl! Become a leader like Michelle Obama](#) by Caroline Moss
- [Young, Gifted and Black: Meet 52](#)

Black Heroes from Past and Present by Jamia Wilson

- [Black British books: fiction to cultural history](#)

📺 Videos

- [Netflix Junior: Bookmarks on YouTube](#)
- [The Black Curriculum youtube channel](#)
- [Alt History: Black British History We're Not Taught in Schools - BBC Stories](#)
- [Mary Seacole](#)
- [The Story of John Blanke](#)
- [Mary Prince](#)
- [Lilian Bader](#)



Listen on Spotify

Check out our [Celebrating Diversity playlist here](#)



Activity

Pass it forwards!



Activity aims

- To develop positive self-esteem and resilience by imagining your trailblazer communicating something encouraging to you during a challenging time.
- To celebrate Black British culture and history by identifying the aspects about your trailblazer which inspire you.
- To build a sense of confidence, belonging and social empowerment by thinking of what you can pass on to and inspire in others.



Listen
on Spotify

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playlist [here](#)



Create

You will need:

- Paper or card
- Paint, crayons, pens or pencils
- Recycled items (kitchen/ toilet roll)
- Scissors
- Glue, tape, string, elastic band

Creative activity steps:

1. Choose a trailblazer from the list provided or someone of your own choice.
2. Read a story or watch a video about your chosen trailblazer. Think about how you relate and connect to this person. What inspires you about them?
3. Imagine your trailblazer passing a baton or torch on to you. What might your trailblazer communicate to you as encouragement during tough times?
4. On one side of your paper, put down what you imagined your trailblazer communicated to you. This can be in the form of a poem, letter, song, word, drawing, symbol, pattern and/ or trinket.
5. Now it is time to pass the baton/ torch on to others in your community. What would you like to show on the surface of the baton as inspiration to others who receive it?
6. On the other side of your paper or surface, use your choice of words, patterns, shapes or drawings to represent what you imagined showing on the outside of your baton/ torch for others to see.
7. If you like, you can roll your paper up as a scroll to create a baton/ torch. You can fix it in place with glue, tape, string or an elastic band. If you used kitchen or toilet roll, then you can also place your paper inside or around it.



Explore

- What do you find inspiring about your trailblazer? Do you connect or relate to them in anyway?
- What was it like to imagine being a trailblazer? What thoughts and feelings came to mind?
- What are some of the ways you would like to inspire change and inclusivity?
- What is it like to draw inspiration from your chosen trailblazer? How might it be helpful to hold someone inspiring in mind?



Blaze a trail for others



End of project reflection

- What part of Black British history and culture does your art celebrate?
- Do you want to give your baton or torch to someone else to inspire them? Or, if you want to keep it for yourself, where might you keep it to inspire you?
- How might you blaze a trail for others? Are there ways you hope to empower and inspire other people in the future?

More from The Art Room

Have you seen our other Activities from The Art Room? Visit the [Activities from The Art Room website](#) to see our other projects for families and teachers, including projects on Growth, Superheroes, Calm, Colour, Animal Homes, Space, Seasons, Weather and Portals. They are free to download and can be done at home or in the classroom!



Share your creations

We'd love to see your artwork!
Share photos of your creations with us on social media:



Royal Patron HRH The Duchess of Cambridge

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