

# Mary Church Terrell and Her Quest for Social Justice



## A Curriculum Adaptable for K-12

Conceived, written and prepared in conjunction with  
Frederick Douglass Day 2021

by

the Colored Conventions Project  
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**IMAGE: Mary Church Terrell, age 89, seated in front of a bust of Frederick Douglass.**

Featured on the program of the National Association of Colored Women, 1962.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/mss425490297/>

# Mary Church Terrell and Her Quest for Social Justice



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**IMAGE:** Mary Church Terrell as a young woman; 1954: photos owned by her family.  
[No Date Recorded on Caption Card] Photograph.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2004677319/>

## Introduction

Welcome to the Mary Church Terrell Unit Plan! We are so glad you are taking the time to read and learn about Mary Church Terrell using this resource. We hope that you and your students will enjoy what we present and will be spurred to learn more about Terrell, her connection to Frederick Douglass, and the work of other nineteenth-century Black women who were her contemporaries in organizing, teaching, writing and speaking about equity, access, justice and freedom in America.

### Honoring Terrell's Life and Legacies

We are honoring Mary Eliza Church Terrell (1863-1954) in this document, aware that she keeps company with women like Maria Stewart (1803-1879), Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964), Ida B. Wells Barnett (1862-1931), Nannie Helen Burroughs (1879-1961), Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (1825-1911) and many, many more. We believe that reading and thinking deeply about Terrell's life, and especially her written and spoken work, has much to offer in this contemporary moment.

We are also bringing forward the story of Terrell's inception of Douglass Day, a special day to honor her good friend and mentor, Frederick Douglass. Through the last fifteen years of his long, international fight for African American liberation, Douglass had been an elder to Terrell. Born into slavery a generation before her, self-emancipated by age twenty, an author, orator and advocate of extraordinary stature, Douglass passed the mantle of leadership to Terrell and her peers as they brought the liberation struggle into the next era.

Mary Church Terrell's life was full of paradoxes. In 1863, she was born free in Tennessee to parents who were formerly enslaved, her father later becoming among the first African American millionaires of the South. She grew up during the Civil War and Reconstruction and benefited from both their affluence and influence, securing a full education, attaining a Master's degree and becoming a teacher. In one way, Terrell's trailblazing achievements could have set her apart. But she also lived under Jim Crow segregation, and as it dominated most of her adult life, she poured her higher learning and privilege into her unwavering determination to lift up her people. Terrell became instrumental in the birth of the modern Civil Rights movement, helping found and shape the NAACP and the National Association of Colored Women, two of the many enduring contributions of her 91 years.

### "The Changing Same"

Though Terrell lived and worked from the time of slavery into the early twentieth century, much of what organized and animated Terrell's life continues into the twenty-first century--namely, the fight for justice for Black people in America. Studying Mary Church Terrell's life and legacy gives us the chance to explore and discuss one of the most important philosophies of the Black experience, "the changing same." This well-known African American proverb was transported into broader popular use and scholarly knowledge when the late poet and activist, Amiri Baraka, referenced it in his 1967 essay on the Black Arts Movement. The "changing same" offers a framing for what Terrell faced and for this curriculum, *Mary Church Terrell and Her Quest for Social Justice*.

As a thoughtful commentary "the changing same" reminds us that though some things do change—the singular experiences and conditions—the structures which give rise to those experiences and conditions often do not. In other words, the same problem surfaces in a different guise, or from a different direction sometimes just wearing a new face or different clothes.

When dealing with a society or a nation, structural change is necessary to create meaningful differences in the majority of people's lives. This kind of deep change requires long and determined work over time in order to produce the results. Many of the problems Terrell confronted in her activism are as relevant today as they were in the 1800s: securing the vote for African Americans, especially women; removing segregation in education and socially; health disparities; the politics of Black women in public discourse, especially visual media; the importance of learning and celebrating Black history and equity. The “the changing same” is, however, the backdrop to Terrell's life. The through-line of her work is an indefatigable dedicated activism.

### **Our Possibilities for Good in the Future are Unlimited**

When Mary Eliza Church Terrell wrote, “our possibilities for good in the future are unlimited”<sup>1</sup> it was a declaration of a defiant hope which her lived experiences pressed hard to deny. She witnessed the rising hopes of Reconstruction, the shambles and ashes of the American Jim Crow era into the birth of the modern Civil Rights movement. Terrell would have been justified to declare that the American experiment in creating a nation that promised freedom and justice for all was a lie. Instead, Terrell fought to define and shape America to assume the form of her highest ideals. Her life and work reveal a relentless faith in America and American people as good, kind, intelligent and capable of becoming the very best version of our aspirational ideals.

It is for this reason that we chose to center the **Essential Question** of *hope* as the idea driving this Unit plan and consequently each lesson. Mary Church Terrell's life is a study of activism grounded in hope that in turn created lasting change and institutions that bear the prints of her hands, the timbre of her voice, the dedication of her heart and the integrity of her thoughts. We hope you discover Mary Church Terrell and in that discovery find that hope— in the face of disappointment, hard facts and setbacks— can and does endure.

### **Tracking the Arc of Social Justice through the Generations**

In the following set of lessons, students will participate in a variety of activities that will spark a connection between twentieth and twenty-first century social justice initiatives led by Mary Church Terrell.

Terrell dedicated herself to suffrage, equal rights and a lifetime of activism following the lynching of her good friend, Mr. Thomas Moss, a businessman and postman who was killed by white business owners because they wanted to eliminate the competition of his store, The People's Grocery in Memphis, Tennessee. Terrell responded to this violence and sadness by choosing to act. She never turned back.

As the students analyze and synthesize a variety of primary sources about Terrell's life and works, they will gain a better understanding of the reasons for the success and failure of social justice movements and campaigns during her lifetime.

Throughout the unit students will discuss equity, suffrage, Black femme style, Black maternal health, state sanctioned violence, and the importance of education and organizing. The overall unit plan is anchored by a brief biography of Terrell's life. Each lesson plan has a set of key words and terms with

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<sup>1</sup> (An Especial Appeal From The President Of The Association written by Mary Eliza Church Terrell, 1863-1954, in National Association Notes, Vol. 3, no. 1, June 1899, p. 2, 1 page(s) )

definitions, a framing, resources, discussion question and proprietary activities. Students will engage in critical inquiry as they learn how the topics relate to historical events and their own lives. When students feel empowered to contribute honestly in a safe space where they wrestle with multiple perspectives in addition to their own, such discussions can be positive and life-changing.

## Lesson Plan: Inquiry

**We encourage teachers to begin each lesson explaining** to students that they are about to begin a unit exploring *Mary Church Terrell and Her Quest for Social Justice*.

**Describe and explain** the idea of the changing same and the activist through-line of “our possibilities for good in the future are limitless” cuts through and re-shapes this by creating endless places and opportunities for change, growth and transformation.

Ask the students the **Essential Question**: Does hope always triumph over despair?

**Explain** that you want them to think about this idea in the back of their minds as they learn about Terrell and her activism. **Distribute or display** the [brief biography of Mary Church Terrell](#). You might choose to adapt this narrative instead of using the one we have provided. Either way, **read aloud as a group**, as students highlight or note any words or phrases that stand out to them and help them to understand her life and its import.

## Lesson Plan: Methodology

**Introduce the concept of transcribing** by telling the students what is involved, and explaining to the students that they will actually be doing the work of historians in this lesson!

**Take them** collectively **or direct them** individually to the collections on the Library of Congress (LOC) website—the links are located within each lesson and on the resource page. The video links are from the LOC site and will explain the differences between primary and secondary documents and the value that this work of [transcribing](#) will offer. This is a useful way to help students understand why using primary and secondary sources to unveil moments in the past and present allows them to analyze and write up their own understanding of the past for themselves, just like grown-up historians.

**Note:** Prior to exploring the historical case study of this unit—*Mary Church Terrell and Her Quest for Social Justice*—it is important that students and teachers spend some time establishing and nurturing classroom [boundaries](#) and expectations of mutual respect and open-mindedness. Building a culture and setting expectations will equip students with the skills to engage with each other in important and sometimes uncomfortable conversations.

## Context: The Life of Mary Church Terrell (Brief Biography)

Mary Eliza Church Terrell was a prominent African American activist and social justice leader. Born into the Black elite of Memphis on September 23, 1863, she was the oldest child of Mr. Robert Reed Church and Mrs. Louisa Ayers-Church. Mary Church Terrell excelled in school. She attended Antioch College laboratory school and Oberlin College in Ohio. After graduating from Oberlin in 1884 she took a teaching position at Wilberforce University in Ohio. The following year Mary Church Terrell took a teaching position at M Street High School in Washington, DC. It was there that she met her future husband, Robert H. Terrell.

In 1892, her childhood friend Thomas Moss was lynched in Memphis. Moss was the owner of The People's Grocery, a successful wholesale grocery outside the city. He, like Terrell, represented progress, which many whites at the time felt was a direct threat to their own commerce and livelihood. Mary Church Terrell, along with journalist Ida B. Wells, who also knew Moss, organized anti-lynching campaigns to mobilize advocates and generate awareness.

Mary Church Terrell helped found the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) and became its first president in 1896. This self-help organization offered support for its members and created programs that addressed racial problems through the elevation of Black women. Terrell's advocacy of African American women led to opportunities to comment on broader issues facing her race. She made many speeches on the living conditions of African Americans and highlighted their progress in spite of discrimination. In a stirring address delivered in 1904 at the International Congress of Women in Berlin, she vividly described the numerous contributions of African Americans. She delivered the speech in German (she spoke three languages fluently), receiving accolades for her depictions of African American life and her intellectual abilities. Her speeches boosted African American morale during this era. Terrell would later protest President Theodore Roosevelt's 1906 discharge of 167 African American soldiers for unfounded conspiracy claims in Brownsville, Texas. She wrote columns and essays espousing the importance of dignity and respect for the soldiers and demanded a fair trial.

Mary Church Terrell continued to fight for social justice well into her 80s and 90s, even engaging in an act of "civil disobedience" at the age of 83. On February 28, 1950, Mary Church Terrell, accompanied by one white and two Black collaborators, entered Thompson Restaurant in Washington DC. They were refused service. Immediately afterward Terrell and her friends filed affidavits with the federal court, and the *District of Columbia v. John Thompson* became a national symbol against segregation in the United States. Her direct-action tactics of picketing, boycotting, and sit-ins proved successful, because on June 8, 1953, the court ruled that segregated eating establishments in Washington, DC. were unconstitutional. Mary Church Terrell continued to see Civil Rights legislation successfully change in the United States for another year after the desegregation of public schools in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Two months later, on July 24, 1954, she died.



## **Facts about Mary Eliza Church Terrell**

Mary Church Terrell was born on September 23, 1863, in Memphis, Tennessee, to formerly enslaved people.

Mary Church Terrell's father, Robert Reed Church, was a successful businessman and one of the South's first African American millionaires.

Mary Church Terrell's mother, Louisa Ayers Church, was a successful business owner of a chain of beauty salons.

Mary Church Terrell attended the Antioch College laboratory school and Oberlin College.

Mary Church Terrell was one of the first African American women to attend college.

Mary Church Terrell taught at the M Street Colored High School, now known as Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, in DC.

Mary Church Terrell was the first African American woman in the United States to be appointed to a school board.

Mary Church Terrell believed that the end to racial discrimination could be achieved through education, work, and community activism.

Mary Church Terrell's activism was sparked by the lynching of an old friend, Thomas Moss, in 1892.

Mary Church Terrell used her position to fight racial and gender discrimination.

Mary Church Terrell participated in anti-lynching campaigns alongside Ida B. Wells-Barnett.

Mary Church Terrell led the fight to desegregate eating places in the District of Columbia.

Mary Church Terrell was 86 at the time she launched the campaign to enforce civil rights laws in Washington, DC.

# Introductory Lesson Plan

## Unit/Lesson Objectives and Standards

Mary Eliza Church Terrell	
OBJECTIVES: What will your students be able to do by the end of this lesson?	
<p><b>Students will be able to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify three important aspects of leadership and activism in Terrell's life.</li> <li>2. Identify important events in Terrell's life which contributed to her values/ethics.</li> <li>3. Identify, describe and connect to contemporary issues at least two contributions to society made by Terrell and write them in a reflective journal with references to primary and or secondary sources.</li> <li>4. <b>Conduct</b> a media analysis of articles, graphs, blogs, pictures and videos in order to research information, think critically about resources and analyze the ways that information is presented.</li> <li>5. <b>Explain and identify</b> primary and secondary sources.</li> <li>6. <b>Transcribe</b> primary documents using a web application at the Library of Congress and explain why this work is important.</li> </ol>	
Standards Information: Students will be able to identify key ideas in accordance with Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Site Information for Primary/ Secondary Source Analysis
<p><b><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1</u></b> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.</p> <p><b><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2</u></b> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</p> <p><b><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3</u></b> Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).</p>	<p><a href="https://www.kidcitizen.net/episodes-blog/what-are-primary-sources">https://www.kidcitizen.net/episodes-blog/what-are-primary-sources</a> (K-5 elementary school)</p> <p><a href="https://mycasemaker.org/">https://mycasemaker.org/</a> (Grades 6-8 middle school)</p> <p><a href="https://www.eagleeyecitizen.org/">https://www.eagleeyecitizen.org/</a> (Grades 9-12 high school)</p> <p><b>Children's Media Analysis Kit</b>  <a href="https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx">https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Media-and-Children.aspx</a></p> <p><b>Standard(s) Information</b>  <a href="http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/introduction/">http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/introduction/</a> (K-5, Extension 6-12)</p>



**QUESTION(S):****What questions will you ask to facilitate learning?**

1. What were the issues that Mary Church Terrell devoted her life to?
2. Why did Mary Church Terrell pursue a life of activism?
3. Why do you think Terrell chose those issues instead of others? What else could she have chosen?
4. Was Mary Church Terrell unusual or do you think there were a lot of women like her during that time?



**Mary Church Terrell - undated**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Church\\_Terrell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Church_Terrell)

## Lesson 1: Mary Church Terrell and Segregated Education (Does hope triumph over despair?)

### Objective/Rationale

- **Examine** the history and context of segregated schools in the United States
- **Evaluate** reasons for segregation and desegregation
- **Identify** reasons Mary Church Terrell became an advocate for equity beyond education

### Materials

Links and or printouts, paper & pencil for students to take notes and/or screens (depending on whether the classroom structure is online, hybrid or in person).

### Suggested Biography

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-church-terrell>

### Primary Document

<http://americanfeminisms.org/ayou-cant-keep-her-out-mary-church-terrells-fight-for-equality-in-america/document-2-segregation-in-oberlin-college-dormitories/>

### Resource Links

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M0frbuenLyusw0H8CsYq4StSp7gyGj8qTky69Rhrf9w/edit?usp=sharing>

### Essential Question:

Is separate education ever equal?

### Teacher/Facilitator

**Directions:** Teacher, please **read and distribute** the bio on Mary Church Terrell (use active reading strategies in accordance with your students' levels and needs).

**Discuss** that America has a long history of segregating education. Black and Indigenous children were frequently separated from white children by law in many aspects of life, but especially in the classroom. Therefore Black and other children of color in America received a different education in different schools, with different teachers, fewer resources and often with very different outcomes.

Separation by race created segregation. And segregation was practiced in American classrooms. Segregation was enforced through taxation, school districts and social habits. Activists had to organize and work very hard to ensure that all people including children were afforded equal rights under the law.

**Explain** that Terrell was an activist who worked on several issues including desegregating education. Terrell worked to integrate schools and no matter how hard the fight she never gave up hope.

**The first primary document you will analyze** is a letter written by Terrell to the president of Oberlin College, her alma mater. Terrell is questioning the segregation of her daughters, now students at Oberlin themselves, into separate on-campus housing.

- **Letter by Terrell:** <http://americanfeminisms.org/ayou-cant-keep-her-out-mary-church-terrells-fight-for-equality-in-america/document-2-segregation-in-oberlin-college-dormitories/>

### **Suggested Activities:**

Note: This is a suggested list of activities which students can complete to explore this issue.

1. **Interactive vocabulary:** To create shared language and basic understanding, students should work with the list of terms-read the definitions, use them in complete sentences, look up the definitions on their devices, and learn them for spelling, etc., the day before or right before the class starts.
2. **Compare and Contrast Images:** Using the photographs compare and contrast what you notice in the photos. Does this matter?

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/brown/history/2-battleground/detail/paxville-schools.html>

### **Questions:**

- What do you notice about these two schools?
- Are they in the same state?
- Who built these two schools?
- How are they different?
- How are they similar?
- What do these differences mean?
- Which school would you want to attend? Why?
- What control did the students who went to those schools have over which school they attended?

3. **Watch videos on school desegregation** and discuss.

- Choose **one (1)** video to watch with your students.
  - **PBS Video on Desegregation in California** [8:37 minutes] (middle to high school)  
<https://wpsu.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/osi04.soc.ush.civil.mendez/mendez-v-westminster-desegregating-californias-schools/#.X4-iREJKhQJ>
  - **PBS Digital Studios Video on the history of Desegregation in Education** [5:23 minutes] (middle to high school)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v2TG9n0vc-4>
- **Discussion questions:**
  - Did you know the history of school desegregation before this movie?
  - How do you feel about what you have seen?

- How brave did these students have to be to work for a better education? Are schools better just because of the color of the students?
  - What actually makes the difference?
4. **Read/listen** to [the letter Terrell wrote](#). Students can listen or read or a combination of both to the letter. **Discuss.** What are some of the issues that Terrell raises to challenge segregation at Oberlin? What is the tone of her letter? Why? What do you think Terrell will do if the president of Oberlin will not integrate? Does this matter?
  5. **Visit** the Library of Congress' We The People site to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source.
    - Getting Started with Primary Sources: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/?&locl=recInk>
  6. **Transcribe:** Students will transcribe primary documents from Terrell's archives at the Library of Congress. Explain that the Library of Congress (LOC) is America's library, and that by doing this work they will contribute to the preservation of history. They are making history accessible for generations of present and future students. (See LOC's Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool page at <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>.)
    - Walk students through the process transcribing and logging on to *We the People* at <https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/>
    - Search through the Terrell papers at <https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/>, particularly the "Democracy in Action" collection, and conduct a search using keywords like "education," "desegregation," or "integration."
    - **After transcribing, discuss the experience.** What did you learn about segregation in education? What do you believe and why? Explain.

### Summative Exercise/Homework

Students will **watch** an [eight-minute documentary](#) that tells the story of how school districts are trying to desegregate schools or an [hour-long documentary](#) that tells the story of white parents trying to establish a separate school district for white students.

**Write** a letter/send a voice note/make a TikTok video where you explain to Mary Church Terrell what has happened to segregation and education since she died in 1953.

### Link to Teacher Evaluation of Curriculum

Google Form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNIhFGDyg2X8aJUm7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform>

### Vocabulary/Terms

1. **Segregation**—the act or practice of separating people, especially majority versus minority groups
2. **Integration**—the act or practice of combining/integrating groups together
3. **Plessy v. Ferguson**—1896 Supreme Court decision legalizing "separate but equal" in America

4. **Equality**—being equal in status, rights opportunities and state guaranteed privileges
5. **Prejudice**—negative opinions about people, places and or things not based on facts-often based on stereotypes.
6. **Racism**—a system of advantages based on race that privileges one race over another
7. **Protest**—statements or actions that expresses disagreement/disapproval of something
8. **Activism**—someone who does not let a situation or problems go without doing something to make it better
9. **Rights**—freedoms we have that are protected by laws
10. **Constitution**—a written set of rules that control how a country/organization is governed

## Lesson 2: Mary Church Terrell from Suffrage to Voter Suppression (Does hope triumph over despair?)

### Objective/Rationale

- **Examine** the history of voter suppression during the nineteenth and twentieth-century.
- **Evaluate** the reasons why Terrell fought for Black men and women to get the vote, but particularly for Black women.
- **Analyze** the motives whether or not the issues that Terrell faced in the 1800s are the same or similar to the ones many citizens are facing now.

### Materials

Links and/or printouts, paper & pencil for students to take notes and/or screens (depending on whether the classroom structure is online, hybrid or in person).

### Suggested Biography

<http://americanfeminisms.org/you-cant-keep-her-out-mary-church-terrells-fight-for-equality-in-america/>

### Resource Links

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M0frbuenLyusw0H8CsYq4StSp7gyGj8qTky69Rhrf9w/edit?usp=sharing>

- <https://www.tolerance.org/projects/voting-and-voices/classroom-resources>
- <https://people.howstuffworks.com/voter-suppression1.htm>
- <https://t.co/SqPqIQb4tB> <https://twitter.com/AaronRHanlon/status/1321460351167352832?s=20>
- <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/the-civil-rights-act-of-1964-title-i-who-gets-to-vote>  
(Primary documents)

### Essential Question:

Does voting matter?

### Teacher/Facilitator

**Directions:** Teacher, please **read and distribute** the bio on Mary Church Terrell (use active reading strategies in accordance with your students' levels and needs).

**Discuss:** Terrell was a suffragist and Civil Rights activist in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. Terrell fought for Black men and women to get the vote but particularly for Black women—Black men secured the right to vote first by way of the 15th Amendment in 1870. Women did not get the right to vote until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920.

### QUESTIONS:

- What are the connections between the past and the present that the students can see?
- Why does this matter?



- What do they think Terrell would think if she could see what is happening today with the vote? Why?

### Suggested Activities:

Note: This is a suggested list of activities which students can complete to explore this issue.

1. **Interactive vocabulary**—To create shared language and basic understanding, students should work with the list of terms—read the definitions, use them in complete sentences, look up the definitions on their phones, and learn them for spelling, etc., the day before or right before the class starts.
2. **Visit** the Library of Congress' We The People site to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source.
  - i. Getting Started with Primary Sources: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/?&locl=recInk>
3. **Read a primary source** written for Black voters in the South during Reconstruction in order to understand the restrictive voter suppression laws like poll taxes and literacy tests.
  - a. 1965 Alabama Voter Literacy Test: <https://www.crmvet.org/info/littest.htm>
  - b. Poll Tax Button and Flyer: <https://americanhistory.si.edu/democracy-exhibition/vote-voice/keeping-vote/state-rules-federal-rules/poll-taxes>
4. **Transcribe:** Students will transcribe primary documents from Terrell's archives at the Library of Congress. Explain that the Library of Congress (LOC) is America's library, and that by doing this work they will contribute to the preservation of history. They are making history accessible for generations of present and future students. (See LOC's Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool page at <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>.)
  - Walk students through the process transcribing and logging on to *We the People* at <https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/>
  - Search through the Terrell papers at <https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/>, particularly the "Democracy in Action" collection, and conduct a search using keywords like "suffrage," "voting," "voter" or "poll tax."
  - **After transcribing, discuss the experience.** What did you learn about suffrage and voter suppression? What do you believe and why? Explain.

### Summative Exercise/Homework

Students will watch this video on [current voter suppression](#) (15 minutes, Grades 6-12, *NY Times*) or this video on [voter suppression](#) (25 minutes, Grades 8-12, Netflix/YouTube).

After watching one of the videos, students will **write** a one-paragraph response to the essential question: Does voting matter? Or what can be considered a poll tax today?

## Link to Teacher Evaluation of Curriculum Form

Google Form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNIFGDyg2X8aJUm7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform>

## Vocabulary/Terms

1. **Primary Source**—immediate first-hand account about a topic or issue from people directly connected to it
2. **Secondary Source**—information created after an event happened by someone who was not there to experience it first-hand
3. **Suffragist**—a person seeking the right to vote through organized protest
4. **Vote**—a choice between two or more candidates expressed by a person or persons by ballot, voice, or other means
5. **Democracy**—a government by the people who hold supreme power which is exercised directly or by representation through free elections
6. **Gerrymander**—when a political group(s) changes the shape of a voting district to favor their candidate
7. **Candidate**— (politics) —person who has been chosen by a political party to run for political office
8. **Poll tax**—a tax/fine/fee which people had to pay in order to vote
9. **Ballot**—a piece of paper or other medium (computer) on which a voter marks her choice
10. **Amendment**—addition added to make an idea, concept or law better more accurate



Painting of Mary Church Terrell  
by [Betsy Graves Reyneau](#), 1888–1964

## Lesson 3: Mary Church Terrell and Politics of Black Femme Style (Does hope triumph over despair?)

### Objective/Rationale

- **Examine** the ways people of color used fashion as a form of liberation and resistance.
- **Evaluate** the style of Mary Church Terrell during her life span.
- **Analyze** past and present photos of women activists such as Mary Church Terrell.

### Materials

Links and or printouts, paper & pencil for students to take notes and or screens—depending on the classroom structure-online, hybrid or in person.

- Portraits of Mary Church Terrell
- One (1) portrait of Senator Kamala Harris
- Brittany Packnett
- Ayanna Pressley
- Stacy Abrams
- Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez (If your students are predominantly Latinx, please feel free to include the indomitable Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez in conjunction with one of the African American women political figures.)

### Suggested Biography

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/mary-church-terrell-papers/about-this-collection/>

### Resource Links

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M0frbuenLyusw0H8CsYq4StSp7gyGj8qTky69Rhrf9w/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://edited.com/resources/black-cultures-influence-on-fashion/>

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/black-fashion-designers-history#slide-1>

<https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/about/biography>

<https://whatkamalawore.com/>

**Smithsonian Portrait Analysis Guide for Teachers:** <https://npg.si.edu/learn/classroom-resource/reading-portraiture-guide-educators>

### Essential Question:

Is Black Femme style revolutionary?

## Teacher/Facilitator

**Introduction:** Teachers, please **read and distribute** the bio on Mary Church Terrell (use active reading strategies in accordance with your students' levels and needs).

**Distribute, read and discuss** the Mary Church Terrell bio and explain that Terrell was an African American activist who lived in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century who was very well-known for her gorgeous portraits. Today we are going to look at some historic images to try and understand who Terrell was.

We will look at her choice of style and try to figure out what she was trying to do with the pictures she sat for. We will think about the choices people make when they present themselves to the public.

Why do people dress in different ways to go to different places? We will examine these and the choices that other powerful Black women and women of color are making right now about how they are seen in public and why.

By conducting portrait analysis of Terrell and contemporary Black women political figures, you will start to interrogate not just the past but the present. You might also start asking questions about the future: about the choices we make when we freeze ourselves in time using pictures.

## Suggested Activities:

Note: This is a suggested list of activities which students can complete to explore this issue.

- 1) **Interactive vocabulary:** To create shared language and basic understanding, students should work with the list of terms—read the definitions, use them in complete sentences, look up the definitions on their phones and learn them for spelling, etc., the day before or right before the class starts.
- 2) **Create a Portrait Analysis:** Students should have already reviewed the terms the day before. Discuss the terms relating them to contemporary examples of selfies.
- 3) **Thirty second look:** Explain that you will now start analyzing Terrell's portrait. This process will take place in stages—quick look then a deeper look. Have the first image of Terrell posted on the teacher screen or distributed to the students. Allow students to look for thirty seconds—count down or run a timer. Discuss—identify and describe the elements the students saw. This is quick and intentionally superficial. Reveal the portrait again this time, ask students the meanings of the elements.
- 4) **Visit the Library of Congress' We The People site** to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source.
  - Getting Started with Primary Sources: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/?&locl=recInk>
- 5) **Transcribe:** Students will transcribe primary documents from Terrell's archives at the Library of Congress. Explain that the Library of Congress (LOC) is America's library, and that by doing this work they will contribute to the preservation of history. They are making history accessible for

generations of present and future students. (See LOC's Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool page at <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>.)

- Walk students through the process transcribing and logging on to *We the People* at <https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/>
- Conduct transcribing project at <https://crowd.loc.gov/>. Search through the Terrell papers at <https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/>, particularly the “Diaries and journals” and letters collections, and conduct a search using keywords like “fashion,” “portrait,” or “style.”
- **After transcribing, discuss the experience.** What did you learn about fashion as a form of liberation and resistance? What do you believe and why? Explain.

### Summative Exercise/Homework

**Pick** a fashion era and **prepare** a presentation on the politics of Black femme or femme style in that era.

Students will **discuss** the style choices Terrell made and contrast and compare them to those made by the women of their choice in the public eye.

Students will **identify and explore** the choices Terrell and the women made in the ways they dressed and the images they circulated and resisted. **Students will be able to integrate** elements of portrait analysis in their writing, engaging in a compare and contrast critical inquiry with key terms and incorporate their own argument about the essential question: Is Black femme style revolutionary?

### Link to Teacher Evaluation of Curriculum

Google form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNIFGDyg2X8aJUm7irsCbYlwdyVTtoJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform>

### Vocabulary/Terms

1. **Portrait**—a likeness or an image-painting, photograph of a subject or person
2. **Symbol**—something (an object) that represents something or someone else
3. **Subject**—the person or people in a portrait
4. **Facial expression**—the emotions of the subjects face and or body language
5. **Pose**—how the subject is positioned in the portrait, e.g. standing, sitting, kneeling
6. **Setting**—the objects and or scene of the portrait/the background
7. **Objects**—the things in the setting and on the subject, e.g. a book, jewelry, a pen
8. **Scale**—the size of the subject and objects in the setting
9. **Medium**—what the artist used to create the picture (painting, pencil, photography)
10. **Message**—what is the artist and subject trying to tell you, the intended meaning of the portrait

## Lesson 4: Mary Church Terrell and Black Maternal Health (Does hope triumph over despair?)

### Objective/Rationale

- Examine the health disparities that Terrell faced during her lifetime.
- Compare health issues faced by Black women and babies today to those faced by Terrell.
- Evaluate the ways Terrell responded to Black maternal and infant death.
- Analyze past and current issues that impact health among people of color.

### Materials

Links and or printouts, paper & pencil for students to take notes and/or screens (depending on whether the classroom structure is online, hybrid or in-person).

### Suggested Biography

<https://biography.yourdictionary.com/mary-church-terrell>

### Resource Links

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M0frbuenLyusw0H8CsYq4StSp7gyGj8qTky69Rhrf9w/edit?usp=sharing>

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2019/02/20/why-are-black-women-at-such-high-risk-of-dying-from-pregnancy-complications>

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>

<http://allencbrowne.blogspot.com/2020/07/mary-church-terrell.html> Mary Church Terrell and her daughter Phyllis in 1901 by *George V. Buck*

<https://explore.berkshitemuseum.org/digital-archive/she-shapes-history/lifting-as-we-climb-the-life-of-mary-church-terrell>

### Essential Question:

Is there a connection between race, medicine and healthcare?

### Teacher/Facilitator

**Introduction:** Teacher, please **read and distribute** the bio on Mary Church Terrell (use active reading strategies in accordance with your students' levels and needs).

**Discuss** that as a Black mother in the nineteenth-century Terrell was very concerned about the health challenges which Black women and babies faced. Terrell suffered a great illness shortly after her



marriage to Robert Terrell. Within five years of her marriage she had lost three babies shortly after their birth. Her fourth child, a girl named Phyllis, was born healthy in 1898. Terrell and her husband also adopted her ten-year-old niece, also named Mary, in 1905. Even though she was wealthy and could afford medical care, good housing and other comforts, she still lost her babies. Terrell's challenges with childbirth underscore the issues which Black women face today. Black mothers and their babies die at greater rates than white mothers and babies in America. Research has shown that one of the greatest contributors to infant and child death is racism in the delivery and receipt of healthcare. Terrell's decision to adopt her niece and raise her as her daughter highlights the fact that non-traditional families are important, common and valued. As we work to reduce Black mother and infant mortality today, it is important to recognize the experiences and activist legacies of Mary Church Terrell who fought the same fight more than a hundred years ago.

### Suggested Activities:

Note: This is a suggested list of activities which students can complete to explore this issue.

- 1) **Interactive vocabulary:** To create shared language and basic understanding, students should work with the list of terms—read the definitions, use them in complete sentences, look up the definitions on their phones and learn them for spelling, etc., the day before or right before the class starts.
- 2) **Visit** the Library of Congress' We The People site to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source.
  - Getting Started with Primary Sources: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/?&locId=recInk>
- 3) **Transcribe:** Students will transcribe primary documents from Terrell's archives at the Library of Congress. Explain that the Library of Congress (LOC) is America's library, and that by doing this work they will contribute to the preservation of history. They are making history accessible for generations of present and future students. (See LOC's Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool page at <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>.)
  - Walk students through the process transcribing and logging on to *We the People* at <https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/>
  - Conduct transcribing project at <https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/>, particularly the "Democracy in Action" collection, and conduct a search using keywords like "health," "injury," "illness," "pregnancy" and "mortality."
  - **After transcribing, discuss the experience.** What did you learn about health issues and disparities? What do you believe and why? Explain.

### Summative Exercise/Homework

Create a Bubble map detailing what contributes to your wellness and physical health. Remember to draw or put a picture of you in the middle of the bubble map to help you generate ideas on what keeps you healthy.

**Bubble Map Template:** <https://gitmind.com/thinking-maps.html>

## Link to Teacher Evaluation of Curriculum

Google form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNiFGDyg2X8aJUm7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform>

## Vocabulary/Terms

- 1) **Maternal mortality**—Is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of the end of her pregnancy.
- 2) **Health disparities**—A health disparity refers to a higher burden of illness, injury, disability, or mortality experienced by one group relative to another.
- 3) **Infant mortality**—Infant mortality is the death of an infant before his or her first birthday.
- 4) **Pre-term labor**—A typical pregnancy lasts about 40 weeks. Pre-term labor is labor that starts before 37 weeks of pregnancy. Pre-term labor needs medical attention.
- 5) **Health Care System**—A health care system, is the organization of people, institutions and resources that deliver health care services to meet the health needs of a community.
- 6) **Health Care Worker**—Health care workers are people whose job it is to protect and improve the health of their communities.
- 7) **Health Insurance**—Health Insurance is a means of protection from financial loss. Health insurance typically pays for medical, surgical, prescription drug and sometimes dental expenses.
- 8) **Preventative Screening**—Preventive screening/care helps detect or prevent diseases and medical problems before they can become major e.g. annual check-ups, immunizations and flu shots.
- 9) **Midwife**—A midwife is a health professional trained to support and care or women during pregnancy, labor and birth.



**IMAGE:** Mary Church Terrell was born in Memphis, TN, and was a charter member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives ID# 4732

<https://cdm15138.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll27/id/70>

## Lesson 5: Mary Church Terrell and State-Sanctioned Violence (Does hope triumph over despair?)

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### **IMPORTANT: Trauma-Informed Teaching**

#### ***Esteemed Educator,***

*Practicing **trauma informed pedagogy** means that we center deep care and love of our shared humanity in every aspect of our work as educators. We consciously choose to offer our students, parents, colleagues and ourselves safety, choice, collaboration, trustworthiness, empowerment and understanding in the educational experiences in and out of our classrooms.*

*Your health and safety as the educator is central. Please check with yourself to determine whether this is a topic which you are confident and capable of respectfully exploring in your classroom and the ways in which you must do this work to honor your needs. Please be careful to process this work after you have read, reflected and or taught the lesson plan.*

*Your feedback is valuable. Please complete the teacher feedback form that can be found at this [link](#) and the end of this lesson plan to let us know the strengths and weaknesses of this lesson plan.*

***Thank you,***

***Colored Conventions Project Curriculum Team***

***December 2020***

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**Trigger Warning:** violence, racism, death.

**This lesson plan may not be appropriate for younger children. Please read and consider the elements of the lesson for your students with regard to their age, maturity, support, context, class and neighborhood cultures.**

**Teachers must secure the explicit permission of school administration, fellow educators and parents. This lesson plan explores topics which discuss safety, violence and suffering. It deals with lynching and the deaths of Black people of various ages.**

Though the topic of state-sanctioned violence is common and current—replayed on TV and cell phone screens endlessly—it is not often placed in its historic context. This lesson plan attempts to do this work through the lens of the life and work of Mary Church Terrell and her fight against state-sanctioned violence.

After careful consideration of the above-mentioned factors, including explicit permission from your principal, please send or consider sending the following letter home to parents and receiving their responses before using this lesson plan.

.....

### Letter to the Parents/Guardians

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are teaching students about the history of state sanctioned violence against Black people through the life of activist, author and Civil Rights champion Mary Church Terrell. Terrell, who lived and worked in the nineteenth-century, fought against state sanctioned violence of all kinds, especially lynching.

Please see attached an outline of the lesson plan for your consideration. If you are not comfortable with your child participating in this lesson, please circle NO, sign and date the form. If you are comfortable with your child participating with this lesson plan, please circle YES, sign and date it.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please call/email me as soon as possible.

Thank you,

Signed .....

**Yes, I (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_ am comfortable with my child participating in the lesson plan on Mary Church Terrell.**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_**

**No, I (print your name) \_\_\_\_\_ am comfortable with my child participating in the lesson plan on Mary Church Terrell.**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_**

## Lesson 5: Mary Church Terrell and State-Sanctioned Violence (Does hope triumph over despair?)

### Objective/Rationale

- **Examine** the connections between past and present instances of state-sanctioned violence.
- **Evaluate** why Terrell campaigned aggressively to enforce anti-lynching laws?
- When the state says lynching is legal, **identify and analyze** what message that sends to both Black and People of Color (POC) communities and white communities in the past and the present.

### Materials

Links and or printouts, paper & pencil for students to take notes and/or screens (depending on whether the classroom structure is online, hybrid or in person).

### Suggested Biography

<https://biography.yourdictionary.com/mary-church-terrell>

### Resource Links

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M0frbuenLyusw0H8CsYq4StSp7gyGj8qTky69Rhrf9w/edit?usp=sharing>

Free write and/or draw

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/heres-how-artists-are-responding-killing-george-floyd-180975036/#:~:text=Syrian%20artists%20Aziz%20Asmar%20and,to%20an%20Arab%20News%20report>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/lifestyle/black-artists-america-racial-inequality/>

### Essential Question:

Does art help people to express pain and heal?

### Teacher/Facilitator

**Introduction:** Teachers, please **read and distribute** the bio on Mary Church Terrell (use active reading strategies in accordance with your students' levels and needs).

**Discuss** that Terrell is well-known as a suffragist and Civil Rights activist in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. But her activism was sparked in 1892, when an old friend, Thomas Moss and his two partners, were lynched in Memphis by white men because his successful

business, [The People's Grocery](#), competed with their store. Terrell joined the more famous journalist and activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett in anti-lynching campaigns.

Lynching was not illegal in America then or now. Because lynching is not illegal, it is a form of state-sanctioned violence. Over 200 attempts have been made to make lynching illegal in America. Each one has failed. In 1900, the first attempt was by one of the first African American U.S. Congressmen, [George Henry White](#). It was defeated by Southern congressmen who comprised the Solid South bloc.

White was friends with Mary Church Terrell and worked with her and others to establish the NAACP and other Civil Rights organizations. The current [Emmett Till Anti-Lynching Act](#) remains stalled in Congress. This means that lynching, a practice used to torture and kill African American men and women more than any other group of people in America, is still not a crime.

**Explain** to students that today they will explore struggles to get the state to oppose the violence experienced by African Americans that Terrell faced in the 1800s. They will need to explain whether or not these struggles have changed, or are they the same or similar to the challenges many citizens are facing now. To do so, students will need to step back in time and then forward into the present.

Art is expressed in many different ways. People use artistic media—drawing, painting, sewing, sculpture, writing and performance—to express their feelings and ideas about their lives and the things that they have experienced.

In this lesson plan, we are going to **look at artistic expressions** of people who have endured the loss of a loved one or a member of their community. We will look at the images they created, discuss them and then create our own images to honor the lives of people we have loved.

### Suggested Activities:

Note: This is a suggested list of activities which students can complete to explore this issue.

- 1) **Interactive vocabulary** -To create shared language and basic understanding, students should work with the list of terms—read the definitions, use them in complete sentences, look up the definitions on their phones and learn them for spelling etc. the day before or right before the class starts.
- 2) **Visit** the Library of Congress' We The People site to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source.
  - Getting Started with Primary Sources: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/?&locl=recInk>
  - **NOTE:** Before reading primary sources, please read with students and discuss the framing of anti-Black violence.
    - (1) One way of thinking about this topic is to consider the history of [lynching in America](#). After a discussion, students will **read a primary source** that explores state-sanctioned violence.
    - (2) Explain that as a class we will explore how people have responded to violence with art. We are choosing to explore these ideas through art because art gives people a means to express their feelings creatively even when dealing with something that is very hard and painful.



- 3) **Transcribe:** Students will transcribe primary documents from Terrell’s archives at the Library of Congress. Explain that the Library of Congress (LOC) is America’s library, and that by doing this work they will contribute to the preservation of history. They are making history accessible for generations of present and future students. (See LOC’s Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool page at <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>.)
- Walk students through the process transcribing and logging on to *We the People* at <https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/>
  - Conduct transcribing project at <https://crowd.loc.gov/>. Search through the Terrell papers at <https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/>, particularly the “Democracy in Action” collection, and conduct a keyword search using “lynching,” “killing,” “attack,” “shooting,” “fight” and “violence.”
  - **After transcribing, discuss the experience.** What did you learn about state-sanctioned violence? What do you believe and why? Explain.

### Summative Exercise/Homework

**Create and design** your own drawing, coloring or collage which expresses what you think about state-sanctioned violence and the ways this violence impacts Black people in the United States.

Can you connect what used to happen when Mary Church Terrell was alive to the present?

### Link to Teacher Evaluation of Curriculum

Google form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNiFGDyg2X8aJUm7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform>

### Vocabulary/Terms

- 1) **Lynching**—a form of violence in which a mob, under the pretext of administering justice without trial, executes a presumed offender.
- 2) **Protest**—To express disapproval of something by taking action or objecting in a strong way.
- 3) **Emmett Till**—A 14-year-old African American who was lynched in Mississippi in 1955 after being accused of offending a white woman in her family's grocery store.
- 4) **Civil Rights**—the rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality
- 5) **NAACP**—The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is a civil rights organization in the United States, formed in 1909 as an interracial endeavor to advance justice for African Americans.
- 6) **Activist**— an especially active, vigorous advocate of a cause, especially a political cause.
- 7) **State-sanctioned violence**—State-sanctioned violence is violence that is not explicitly prohibited by the state. For example, lynching.
- 8) **Art**—diverse range of human activities involving the creation of visual, auditory or performing artifacts (artworks), which express the creator's imagination.
- 9) **Mural**—a painting or other work of art executed directly on a wall.
- 10) **Mourning**—the expression of deep sorrow for someone who has died.

## Lesson 6: Mary Church Terrell and Frederick Douglass (Does hope triumph over despair?)

### Objective/Rationale

- **Examine** one of the historical documents to understand why Douglass Day was created
- **Evaluate** the facts, conditions and character of a *hagiographic figure* to determine whether Douglass' hero status is appropriate
- **Analyze** and explain the reasons for national or regional celebrations of historic figures and or monuments

### Materials

Links and or printouts, paper & pencil for students to take notes and/or screens (depending on whether the classroom structure is online, hybrid or in person).

### Resource Links

Library of Congress Holding of Terrell Explaining Douglass Day

<https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/speeches-and-writings/mss425490606/mss425490606-3/>

Article which describes Frederick Douglass

<http://www.milwaukeeindependent.com/articles/frederick-douglass-day-february-14th-holiday-hallmark-makes-no-greeting-cards-celebrate/>

Press release from Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton regarding Mary Church Terrell Day

<https://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-reintroduces-mary-church-terrell-day-resolution-honoring-the-0>

### Essential Question:

Is celebrating historical figures hopeful?

### Teacher/Facilitator

**Introduction:** Teachers, please **read and distribute** the biography of Mary Church Terrell (use active reading strategies in accordance with your student's levels and needs).

**Discuss** that Terrell created Frederick Douglass Day two years after he died to keep alive the memory of his life and the incredible work he did as a statesman and Founding Father of America.

**Read and distribute** Douglass' biography. Do you know who Frederick Douglass was? Douglass was an activist and author who is famous for a number of sayings including, "**No man can put a chain about the ankle of his fellow man without at last finding the other end fastened about his own neck.**"

Do you think this quote is true? What do you think this quote means?

### [Frederick Douglass Biography](#)

#### **Mary Church Terrell & Frederick Douglass**

After Douglass' death in 1895, Terrell wanted to make sure that no one would forget the contributions Douglass had made to the development of America as a land of freedom and opportunity for all. She decided that the best way to do this was to create a holiday which honored Douglass' life. In Washington DC, the first Frederick Douglass Day was held on February 14, 1897. School children in DC and eventually all across the eastern sea-board recited Douglass' speeches, learned about his activism and remembered him singing happy birthday and eating birthday cake on his special day! Today we are joining Terrell and people all over the world to celebrate Douglass on his birthday and recognize Terrell's efforts to make sure we never forget Douglass or his passion for freedom.

Currently, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton represents Washington, DC. She is a powerful Black woman politician who understands Terrell's importance and is trying to get September 23rd recognized as Mary Church Terrell Day, to celebrate the day Terrell was born. Congresswoman Norton has said about Terrell, "Her education empowered her to speak against the flaws of segregation and voter suppression. Our history books are littered with the accomplishment of men, but not enough of women who, like Mary Church Terrell, have worked to change the world." Congresswoman Holmes Norton wants us to honor Mary Church Terrell. What do you think?

#### **Suggested Activities:**

Note: This is a suggested list of activities which students can complete to explore this issue.

- 1) **Interactive vocabulary:** To create shared language and basic understanding, students should work with the list of terms--read the definitions, use them in complete sentences, look up the definitions on their phones and learn them for spelling etc. the day before or right before the class starts.
- 2) **Visit** the Library of Congress' We The People site to learn the difference between a primary and secondary source.
  - Getting Started with Primary Sources: <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/?&locl=recInk>
- 3) **Transcribe:** Students will transcribe primary documents from Terrell's archives at the Library of Congress. Explain that the Library of Congress (LOC) is America's library, and that by doing this work they will contribute to the preservation of history. They are making history accessible for generations of present and future students. (See LOC's Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool page at <https://www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/>.)

- Walk students through the process transcribing and logging on to *We the People* at <https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/>
- Conduct transcribing project at <https://crowd.loc.gov/>. Search through the Terrell papers at <https://crowd.loc.gov/campaigns/mary-church-terrell-advocate-for-african-americans-and-women/>, particularly the “Democracy in Action” collection, and conduct a search using keywords like “Douglass,” “activist,” “holiday,” “hero,” and “celebration.”
- **After transcribing, discuss the experience.**
  - i. What did you learn about segregation in education? What do you believe and why? Explain.
  - ii. What do you think about Douglass Day? What have you learned about Douglass and Terrell, do you think their lives are important to remember? What are some of the issues today that you think they would get involved, why? Make sure to include specific references to the primary documents you looked at when you make your case.

### Summative Exercise/Homework

#### Questions:

- How would you create a celebration of the life of Mary Church Terrell?
- Why would this be important?
- What would you include?
- What day would you choose? September 23rd?
- What would you want people to know or learn about Terrell?
- How would you connect this celebration to Douglass?

Working individually or as a group, **write a rationale** of your argument. If you would, please share with us what you come up with for your celebration of the life of Mary Church Terrell.

Email us at: [douglassdayorg@gmail.com](mailto:douglassdayorg@gmail.com). Thanks!

### Link to Teacher Evaluation of Curriculum

Google form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNIhFGDyg2X8aJUm7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform>

### Vocabulary Terms

1. **Activist**—person who works to effect political change
2. **Abolitionist**—person who wants to destroy an institution ex slavery
3. **Author**—person who writes a book/report/text
4. **Suffragist**—advocates that the right to vote be extended to everyone especially women
5. **Founding Father**—male who starts, contributes to or helps in the creation of an institution
6. **Statesman**—skilled respected political leader and or figure
7. **Honor**—high respect, great esteem or regard
8. **Memorial**—something established to remind people of a person, place or event
9. **Republican**—a person who advocates or supports republican form of government
10. **Orator**—person who is very eloquent, skilled at public speaking

## Resource Links

### **Biographies of Mary Church Terrell**

#### **Historical biographies**

<https://biography.yourdictionary.com/mary-church-terrell>

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-church-terrell>

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/mary-church-terrell-papers/about-this-collection/>

#### **Activist Biographies**

<http://americanfeminisms.org/you-cant-keep-her-out-mary-church-terrells-fight-for-equality-in-america/>

<https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/terrell-mary-church-1863-1954/>

<https://www.biography.com/activist/mary-church-terrell>

### **Videos on Desegregation**

<https://www.nbcnews.com/video/bloody-sunday-a-flashback-of-the-landmark-selma-to-montgomery-marches-1191243331868>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/daily-videos/addressing-segregation-continues-in-u-s-schools/>

PBS Video on Desegregation in California [8:37 minutes] (middle to high school)

<https://wpsu.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/osi04.soc.ush.civil.mendez/mendez-v-westminster-desegregating-californias-schools/#.X4-iREJKhQJ>

### **Videos on Voter Suppression**

<https://youtu.be/WFJwoqrr7bU> (K-6)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yn36tY7rNUM>

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/elections/100000006810942/voter-suppression-georgia.html>

<https://www.tolerance.org/projects/voting-and-voices/classroom-resources>

<https://people.howstuffworks.com/voter-suppression1.htm>

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/the-civil-rights-act-of-1964-title-i-who-gets-to-vote> (Primary documents)

### **Articles on and images of Black maternal health**

<https://www.heart.org/en/news/2019/02/20/why-are-black-women-at-such-high-risk-of-dying-from-pregnancy-complications>

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>

<http://allencbrowne.blogspot.com/2020/07/mary-church-terrell.html> Mary Church Terrell and her daughter Phyllis in 1901 by George V. Buck

<https://explore.berkshireremuseum.org/digital-archive/she-shapes-history/lifting-as-we-climb-the-life-of-mary-church-terrell>

<b>Images and State sanctioned violence</b>
<a href="https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/heres-how-artists-are-responding-killing-george-floyd-180975036/#:~:text=Syrian%20artists%20Aziz%20Asmar%20and,to%20an%20Arab%20News%20report">https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/heres-how-artists-are-responding-killing-george-floyd-180975036/#:~:text=Syrian%20artists%20Aziz%20Asmar%20and,to%20an%20Arab%20News%20report</a> <a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/lifestyle/black-artists-america-racial-inequality/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/lifestyle/black-artists-america-racial-inequality/</a>
<b>Videos about Frederick Douglass</b>
<a href="https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/frederick-douglass">https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/frederick-douglass</a> <a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1539.html">https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p1539.html</a> <a href="https://www.loc.gov/collections/frederick-douglass-papers/about-this-collection/">https://www.loc.gov/collections/frederick-douglass-papers/about-this-collection/</a>
<b>Videos about Transcribing</b>
<a href="https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/">https://crowd.loc.gov/help-center/how-to-transcribe/</a>
<b>Teacher Evaluation of Curriculum</b>
<a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNiFGDyg2X8aJU7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNiFGDyg2X8aJU7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform</a>



## Portraits



Mary Church Terrell, age 89, seated in front of a bust of Frederick Douglass.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/mss425490297/>



Mary Church Terrell - undated  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary\\_Church\\_Terrell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Church_Terrell)



Courtesy of the Tennessee State Library and Archives  
 ID# 4732. <https://cdm15138.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15138coll27/id/70>



Painting by Betsy Graves Reyneau, 1888–1964.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mary\\_Church\\_Terrell\\_-\\_NARA\\_-\\_559207.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mary_Church_Terrell_-_NARA_-_559207.jpg)

# Teacher Evaluation Form

Please follow link to fill out evaluation form online. Below the questions are provided for reference.

**Google Form:** <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-dCpZhEgMNIFGDyg2X8aJUm7irsCbYlwdyVToJ7Jkumt2jw/viewform>

## Teacher Evaluation of Mary Church Terrell Curriculum

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback on the Mary Church Terrell Curriculum. We appreciate your contributions to let us know what worked well and to help us refine the materials. If you have any questions, please email [doulassdayorg@gmail.com](mailto:doulassdayorg@gmail.com).

- Full name
- Email address
- The evaluation is regarding:
  - The entire curriculum
  - Unit 1: Mary Church Terrell and Segregated Education
- Unit 2: Mary Church Terrell from Suffrage to Voter Suppression
  - Unit 3: Mary Church Terrell and Politics of Black Femme Style
  - Unit 4: Mary Church Terrell and Black Maternal Health
  - Unit 5: Mary Church Terrell and State Sanctioned Violence
  - Unit 6: Mary Church Terrell and Frederick Douglass
- This lesson/unit was taught at:
  - K-Grade 2
  - Grade 3-5
  - Grade 6
  - Grade 7
  - Grade 8
  - Grade 9
  - Grade 10
  - Grade 11
  - Grade 12
- Curriculum Content: Rate as Strong disagree • Disagree • Neutral • Agree • Strongly Agree
  - Learning objectives were clear
  - Course content was organized and well planned
  - Course workload was appropriate
  - Course organized to allow all students to participate fully
- How did this resource facilitate learning about Black history in your classroom? What would have made this a better resource for your room?
- How did your students respond to learning about this topic? How were the resources provided helpful in offering a different point of entry for your students?
- How did learning about Mary Church Terrell and her legacies expand/deepen your students' engagement with current events and issues that Black people must contend with?
- How was this resource an effective way to learn about the history of the Colored Conventions Movement, some of the people, and some of the places where these took place?
- What aspects of this curriculum were most useful or valuable?
- Any other comments?