

The Future is Now!

African Americans in Dentistry



Exhibit Guide for Teachers

Grades K—12



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY
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NATIONAL MUSEUM OF DENTISTRY



Smithsonian Affiliate

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Chart of Activities and Links to Standards

Activity	Grade	NSES*	NSELA*	Features of Activity
Words to Remember Pre-Visit Activity & Scavenger Hunt Visit Activity	6-8	Ild, Ile, IVh, Va	1, 4, 5, 7, 8	Themes of the Exhibit Key names, features and dates of the history of African Americans in dentistry
African Americans in Dentistry	6-8	Ild, Ile, IVh, Va	1, 4, 5, 7, 8	African American dental professionals
Rise of Equality in Dental Profession	9 – 12	Ild, Va	1, 4, 5, 7, 8	Changes in role of African Americans in dentistry

* National Social Studies Education Standards from The National Council for Social Studies

* National Standards for the English Language Arts from The National Council of Teacher of English

The Future is Now! Words to Remember

When we study the history of African Americans in dentistry, certain words come up over and over. We call unifying ideas like these *themes*. Before you visit, it is important that you think about these words. What does the dictionary say that they mean? What do they mean to you? Why do you think you'll see them in this museum?

Theme	Definition	The word means to me (Draw a picture or write)	Predict how it relates to the history of African Americans in Dentistry
Inequality	The existence of unequal opportunities and rewards for different social positions or statuses within a group or society.		
Discrimination	The unjust treatment of different categories of people or things, especially because of race, age, or gender.		
Progress	Forward or onward movement toward a destination.		
Leadership	The state of being a leader (a person who is an example for others to follow).		
Solidarity	Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among people with a common interest; support.		
Advancement	The promotion of a person in rank or status; development or improvement.		
Perseverance	Continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition.		

The Future is Now! Scavenger Hunt

Find and fill in as many answers as you can! Hint: The exhibit is organized *chronologically*, or by year. You do not need to go in order in answering the questions.

- _____ graduated in 1869 from Harvard University School of Dental Medicine. (Robert T Freeman).
- Find the picture of the original 1886 dental infirmary of the Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry. Name one thing you wouldn't see in a dental office today: _____ (spittoon, use of natural lighting).
- _____ was the first African American woman in the United States to receive her dental degree. (Dr. Ida Gray Nelson Rollins).
- Find the logo with the big snake in the center. What organization does this represent? _____ (Robert T. Freeman Dental Society). It was the first organization of _____ (African American dentists).
- Who is the "Father of the Oral Hygiene Movement? _____ (Dr. Charles Bentley).
- This major legal decision gradually forced open the doors of all-white dental schools in 1954: _____ v. _____. (Brown v. Board of Education)
- The American Dental Association was formed in _____ (1859).
- Find the picture of Dr. Martin Luther King at the top of the 1945-1969 board. Which famous dentist is he with? _____ (Dr. Reginald A. Hawkins).
- On the 1945-1969 board find the picture of a man carrying a protest sign. It says: "Scientific Knowledge is for _____!". (ALL humans).
- There is a photograph of the Howard University College of Dentistry dental hygiene class of 1934 and another of the class of 1996. Name one difference you see: _____ (There is a man graduating in 1996).
- The first female dean of a U.S. dental school was _____ (Dr. Jeanne Sinkford).
- Find the 1998 class photo of the Howard University College of Dentistry. In the front row how many women do you count? _____ (12). How many men? _____ (9).
- Fill in this quote:
"There can be no mystery about the role we must play in this millennium. We are the _____ (role models). We are the _____ (mentors). We are the gatekeepers and stewards of the _____ (progress) and _____ (hope) for the next generation. There is no one to whom we can 'pass the buck,' but many to whom we must pass the torch." - Hazel J. Harper, DDS, MPH 2000.
- On the board labeled *Continuing the Legacy in the 21st Century*, four organizations are listed: _____ Association, _____ Association _____ Association, and the _____ Association. (National Dental Association, National Dental Hygienists' Association, The National Dental Assistants Association and the Student National Dental Association)
- Find this picture in the exhibit. What is her name? _____ (Dr. Juliann S. Bluit). She became the first woman president of _____ (The Chicago Dental Society).



African Americans in Dentistry

Key Learning Point:

- Despite segregation, many African Americans overcame adversity to enter the dental profession.

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Encyclopedias, biographies, or internet access
- Poster board (one for each group)
- Markers, colored pencils

Pre-Visit

- Have a class discussion about segregation and discrimination. Ask students if they know of events in United States history where certain groups of people were not given the same rights as others. Make sure to introduce the Civil Rights Movement. Talk about how segregation pertained not just to public issues (transportation, restaurants, bathrooms, etc.) but to professions as well. Ask students how this would affect some people's career choice.
- Have students work in groups to talk about how they think African Americans had to overcome adversity in the United States as well as the dental profession.
- Have each group share their ideas with the class.

Post-Visit

- Have students recall what they learned at the exhibit. As a class, try to list as many African American dental professionals as possible (see list of dental professionals on p. 12).
- Have students work in small groups to research African American dental professionals. Each group will choose a different African American dentist and write a report about their life, including: date of birth and death, occupation, adversities he/she overcame, legacy of the person, accomplishments, and contributions to the dental profession. Each group will also create a poster about the person.
- Each group will give an oral report about their chosen dental professional to the class. While the report is being given, the rest of the class will take notes.
- Once all presentations are given, have students each write a paragraph about what they learned about the African American dental professionals researched by other groups. Students will include in their writing: the names of the professionals, achievements, and why the achievements were important to the dental profession.
- As homework, have the students write a paragraph comparing their life to one of the African American dental professionals. Make sure they write about their future career goals and how they want to be successful in life.

Rise of Equality in the Dental Profession

Key Learning Point:

- Through individual accomplishments, educational advancement, and organizational success, African Americans shaped their future in dentistry.

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pencils
- Encyclopedias, biographies, and/or internet access

Pre-Visit

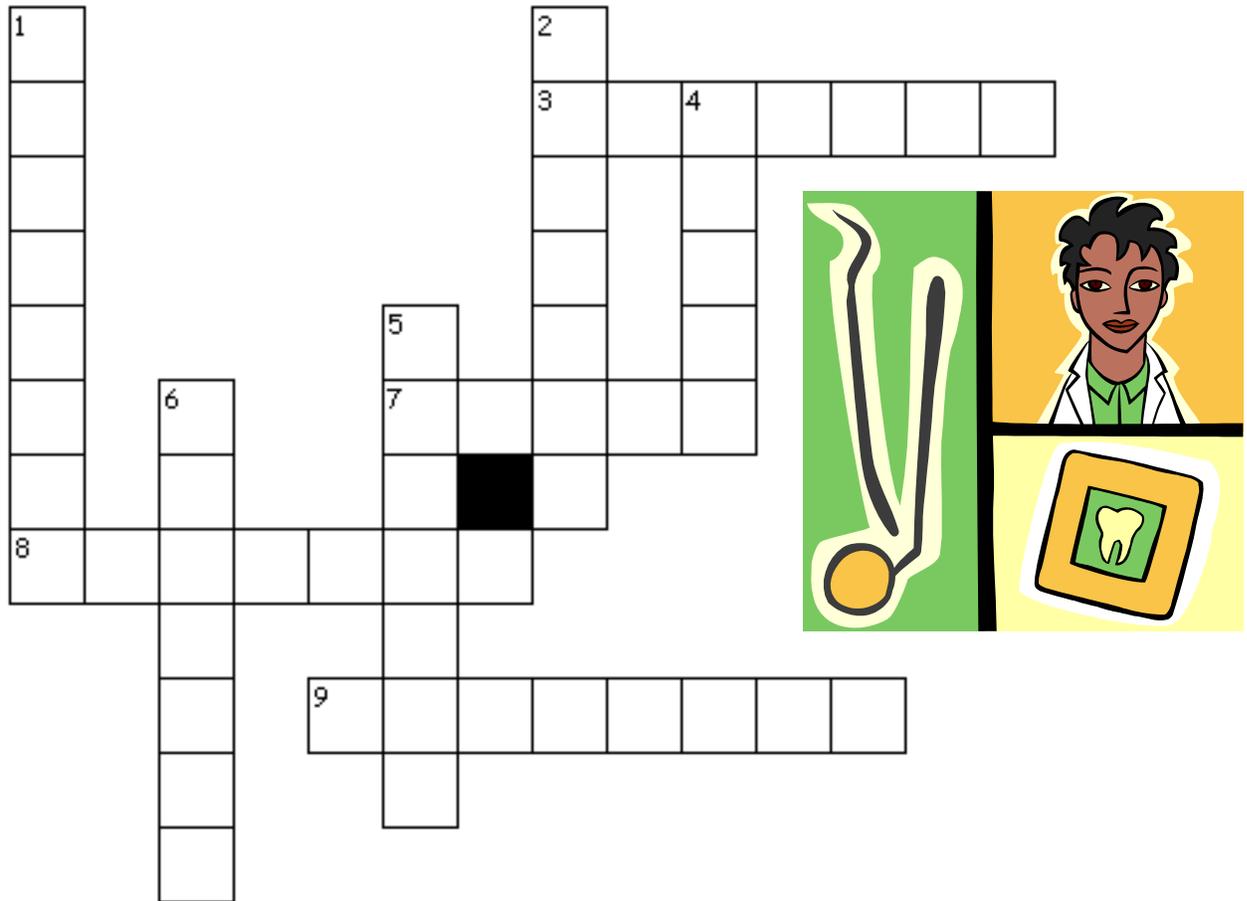
- Have students recall a time period in American History that portrayed inequality and segregation. Ask students what happened during these time periods and what events happened to change society.
- Discuss how professions have not always had equal opportunities for various people. Ask how gender and race used to determine what you would become. Introduce the dental profession to students. Have them work in small groups to predict what may have happened if an African American wanted to become a dentist in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Post-Visit

- In a class discussion, have students talk about what they learned after viewing the exhibit. Discuss how African Americans persevered and found opportunities to succeed. Ask students to think about specific individuals they learned about at the exhibit and how they overcame adversity.
- Have each student write an essay about how African Americans used individual accomplishments, educational advancement, and organizational success to shape their future success in the dental profession. Students may use encyclopedias, biographies, the internet, or notes taken at the exhibit, to provide supporting details in their essay.
- Once students have written their essays, have them talk in small groups about their writings.
- Gather the students back together for a class discussion about the changing role of African Americans in dentistry. Talk about different dental careers including: hygienist, assistant, lab technician, and scientist. Ask students what may be some issues that face African Americans still today (i.e. financing school and building a practice). Discuss how the issues may affect the profession and what has been done to alleviate current problems.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Famous African Americans Crossword



Across

3. First African American female to receive a dental degree
7. Dentist interested in public health
8. Youngest dean of any dental school
9. Helped found the Tri-State Dental Association

Down

1. First female dean of a U.S. dental school
2. First African American to graduate from dental school
4. Started the Bulletin NDA
5. Father of Oral Hygiene Movement
6. Leader in dental research

African American Dental Professionals

1. **Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman**
 - a. In 1869, he became the first African American to graduate from an accredited dental college in the United States.
2. **Dr. Ida Gray Nelson Rollins**
 - a. In 1890, she was the first African American woman in the United States to receive her dental degree.
3. **Dr. Charles E. Bentley**
 - a. He was the most prominent African American dentist of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He is known as the “Father of the Oral Hygiene Movement.”
4. **Dr. David A. Ferguson**
 - a. Dr. Ferguson was a pioneer of organized dentistry. In 1913, he helped found the Tri-State Dental Association (Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland).
5. **Dr. Stephen Johnson Lewis**
 - a. Dr. Lewis was a respected dental editor and in 1941, he founded the *Bulletin NDA*, the official publication of the National Dental Association.
6. **Dr. Russell A. Dixon**
 - a. Dr. Dixon was a respected dental administrator. He joined the Howard University College of Dentistry faculty in 1929 and was appointed full dean in 1934.
7. **Dr. Clifton Dummett**
 - a. Dr. Dummett is a preeminent dental educator and historian. When he was only 28 years old he became dean at Meharry, making him the youngest dental dean in the United States.
8. **Dr. Benjamin F. Hammond**
 - a. Dr. Hammond is a leader in dental research and education. He became the first African American president of the American Association for Dental Research.
9. **Dr. Jeanne Sinkford**
 - a. In 1975, Dr. Sinkford broke the glass ceiling in dental education by becoming the first female dean of a U.S. dental school when she was appointed dean of Howard University College of Dentistry.
10. **Dr. Roosevelt Brown**
 - a. In 1990, Dr. Brown became the president of the National Dental Association Foundation and implemented new foundation policies to assure fiscal responsibility, provide scholarships to bolster minority student recruitment, and produce videos to reemphasize dental education and research in the African American community.
11. **Dr. Caswell A. Evans, Jr.**
 - a. Dr. Evans is a dedicated and honored dentist specializing in public health. He has served as the Director, National Oral Health Initiative within the office of the U.S. Surgeon General and is currently Associate Dean for Prevention and Public Health Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago.
12. **Dr. Rueben Warren**
 - a. Dr. Warren is a former dean of Meharry College School of Dentistry. From 1988-1997, he served as Associate Director for Minority Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

African American Dental History Timeline

An Uphill Climb – 1869-1945

- African Americans excluded from professional dental education that began in 1840 with the opening of the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, the oldest dental school in the world
- Success stories such as Robert Tanner Freeman (1869) graduated from Harvard University, School of Dental Medicine. He was the first African American to graduate from an accredited dental college.
- 1880s found of Howard University Dental College (1881) and Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry (1886) created a successive wave of African Americans in the dental profession. Other early graduates from accredited dental schools were:
 - Robert T. Freeman – 1869, Harvard
 - George F. Grant – 1870, Harvard
 - Charles E. Bentley – 1887, Chicago College of Dental Surgery
 - William A. Jackson – 1889, Philadelphia Dental School
 - Ida G. Rollins – 1890, University of Michigan
 - John A. Sommerville – 1907, University of Southern California
- Howard and Meharry against tremendous odds, managed to amass an admirable record of preparing young professionals, nurturing their skills and talents of faculty, supporting African American dental organizations, and promoting oral hygiene and disease prevention.
- The American Dental Association was formed in 1859 but for over a century African Americans were excluded from all-white dental societies on the state and local levels. Since membership on the local levels was a prerequisite to be a member of the ADA, African American dentists were denied membership into the parent organization.
- Between 1880 and 1940, African American dentists organized dozens of local, state, and regional societies, most noteworthy, The National Dental Association which was formed in 1932 (originally organized in 1913 as the Tri-State Dental Association).

Conflict, Confrontation, and Change – 1945-1969

- Post World War II years witnessed expansion, education, and opportunity for African Americans as federal money helped fund tuition, dental research, and grant programs.
- Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas gradually forced open doors of all-white dental institutions.
- Howard and Meharry continued to lead the way.

- New generations sought more participation within the profession for networking as well as social reasons.
- Civil Rights Bill of 1964 helped eliminate restrictions in joining segregated dental organizations.
- In 1969, African Americans won a victory when the ADA prevailed on local and state dental associations to end exclusionary practices.

1970s to Present – The Future is Now!

- More African Americans entered the profession than ever before.
- Secured appointments on state dental boards.
- Assumed leadership positions in academics.
- Increase in African Americans studying and entering the dental specialties.
- African American women made strides as leaders in administration and faculty membership.
- Predominately white schools begin admitting African Americans.
- Still unresolved issues:
 - Financial barriers to professional education
 - Lack of dental health care in African American communities
- Success of African Americans in Dentistry
 - Education
 - Individual determination
 - Professional solidarity
 - Field open to dentists, hygienists, assistants and technicians
 - Personal satisfaction within the profession
 - Professional camaraderie