

# HBCU Lesson Plan



## An Introduction to HBCUs



HBCU stands for “**Historically Black Colleges & Universities**,” institutions of higher learning founded before 1964.

Their primary mission was originally to provide a safe space where African Americans could receive an education following the Civil War, though students of any race or ethnicity may attend an HBCU.

There are currently 103 HBCUs in America—half public, half private institutions.

### The History – Before HBCUs

Before the mid-1900s, it was nearly impossible for black students to receive an education. The law prohibited the education of African Americans in many areas across the United States. Only a handful of institutions allowed African Americans to enroll into college.

Oftentimes, black churches were responsible for the elementary and secondary education of African Americans to prepare them for greater advancement in society.

During this time, black Americans like **Frederick Douglass** had to rely on self-education and informal educational settings in order to receive any sort of schooling.



*“Some know the value of education by having it. I know its value by not having it.”*



Frederick Douglass was an abolitionist and orator who escaped slavery after teaching himself how to read and write. Douglass became an integral national leader in the campaign towards ending slavery.

## History – The First HBCUs

The first HBCUs were actually created before the Civil War, and most were founded in the late 1800s.

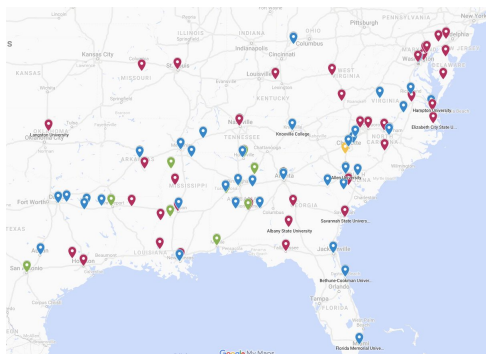
Between 1861 and 1910, the American Missionary Association (AMA) and the Freedmen's Bureau were primarily responsible for creating colleges and universities for African Americans.

HBCUs were created as a place where African Americans could pursue higher education and gain professional skills. Most were founded in the South, but some were also created in the Midwest and Northeast, where there was still limited access to quality higher education for black students.



Cheyney University of Pennsylvania was founded in 1837 as the first institution of higher learning for African Americans, originally called the African Institute.

## History – HBCUs Today



Today, 9% of all African American college students attend historically black colleges and universities.

The number of students enrolled in HBCUs has increased by **35%** since 1976!

These days, HBCUs are also open to any students that want to attend. Today, 22% of all students enrolled at HBCUs are of other races.

## Why Attend an HBCU?

- HBCUs typically have smaller class sizes. Students attending HBCUs report feeling socially and academically supported by their institution and their peers.
- African American students at HBCUs report feeling culturally connected and that attending an HBCU gave them the opportunity to learn more about their history.
- The average cost of attendance at an HBCU is 26% lower than the average total cost at all four-year non-profit institutions.
- HBCU generate a significant number of all bachelor's degrees earned by African Americans in STEM (science, technology, engineering, & mathematics) fields. They also graduate the most African Americans seeking doctoral and engineering degrees in the nation.
- The alumni association is very active and engaged, providing great opportunities for networking that can help you develop your future career.

## Worksheet: The HBCU Research Report



Using the RaiseMe College Search, you have the ability to learn about a college or university. Log into your account, click the Colleges tab, and filter College Type by 'Historically Black College'.

Choose an HBCU, then gather the following information:

College Name	
Location of the HBCU	
Most popular major at the HBCU	
Estimated Cost of Attendance	
Total Undergrads	
Acceptance Rate	
Average SAT Score and ACT Score	
A famous alumni from the HBCU & notable achievements	
Any other cool information you find on the HBCU!	

### Example

Clark Atlanta University

- **Location:** Atlanta, GA
- **Most popular major:** Radio, Television, & Digital Communication
- **Estimated Cost of Attendance:** \$37,382 per year
- **Total Undergraduate Population:** 3,384 students
- **Acceptance Rate:** 58%
- **Average SAT Score and ACT Score:** 990 SAT / 17 - 22 ACT
- **Famous Alumni:** Kenya Barris - Creator of the show black-ish
- **Other fun facts:** Did you know that the movies "Drumline" and "Stomp The Yard" were both filmed at Clark Atlanta University?



## **REFLECT**

1. Why are HBCUs important?
2. Did you learn more about an HBCU that you had never heard of before?
3. Did this activity make you want to visit an HBCU?
4. Who is your favorite HBCU grad and why?