

The Golden Thirteen

K-8 Teacher Guide

This document is addressed to the instructor. Other documents in this lesson packet are addressed to students.

Overview:

Who were the first Black officers in the navy? How did segregation affect the military? Students will learn about thirteen Black forerunners/trailblazers, the obstacles they faced, and the commitment they made to help each other persevere.

The Woodson Center's lesson on the first class of Black Navy officers, known today as the Golden 13, affords the educator a great deal of flexibility in its implementation. The resources featured may be used to implement a comprehensive class lesson (20-40 min over two days), supplement pre-existing curriculum with both individual and group activities.

Lesson Objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- Learn how the Navy dealt with racial diversity during WW2
- Understand why the US entered WW2
- Reflect on the role of Blacks in the Navy
- Compare segregation in and out of the military
- Learn the "behind-the-scenes" decisions that hindered equality for these black soldiers
- Discuss exemplary responses to adversity
- Examine the disposition of these forerunners
- Learn the post-military success of the Golden 13

Prompt:

Have you ever wondered about who were the first Black men to serve in the Armed Forces? Or about how Blacks in the military were treated during the era of segregation?

Share the included PowerPoint presentation with students. Select activities from the accompanying Activity Pack according to your time allowance and student appropriateness. Some of the supplemental materials can be used to spark group discussion and allow independent classwork. Included in the Activity Pack are:

[Activities and Assignments](#) (grades 2-8)

[Multiple Choice Questions](#) (grades 2-8)

[Critical Thinking Questions](#) (grades K-5 with guidance; 6-8 unassisted)

[Crossword](#) (grades K-3)

[Matching Quiz](#) (grades 2-8)

[Documents-Based Questions](#) (grades 7-8)

[The Woodson Principles Applied](#) (grades 6-8)

Vocabulary:

Words assigned, and how many, can be based on grade level.

Admiral	amiable	boisterous	ensign
fleet	indoctrination	machinist	Morse code
Pearl Harbor	quartermaster	rapport	rigorous
semaphore	trailblazer		

Selected Videos:

[26th July 1948: Executive Order 9981 abolishes racial segregation in the US military - YouTube](#) (2 min 37 sec)

[The Golden 13: The Story of The First African American Naval Officers - YouTube](#) (4 min 30 sec)

Additional Support: [Robert Smalls](#) – Free with registration.

As either an introduction to, or an extension of, this lesson, teachers and/or students can check out the collection of oral histories assembled by Paul Stillwell, *The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers* (1993), and Dan Goldberg's popular history *The Golden Thirteen: How Black Men Won the Right to Wear Navy Gold* (2021).

Related Topics: World War II-era America: the ordeal of the Great Depression and the contemporary Great Migration of Black Americans from the South to the North; the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal; the American experience of WWII at home and abroad. The Library of Congress has an [exhibit on the Great Depression and WWII, 1929-1945](#).

Standards of Learning (SOLs)

Mapped to The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards

Grades K-2

English Language Arts:

D1.3.K-2. Identify facts and concepts associated with a supporting question.

Civics:

D2.Civ.1.K-2. Describe roles and responsibilities of people in authority.

D2.Civ.2.K-2. Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community.

D2.Civ.8.K-2. Describe democratic principles such as equality, fairness, and respect for legitimate authority and rules.

D2.Civ.10.K-2. Compare their own point of view with others' perspectives.

D2.Civ.14.K-2. Describe how people have tried to improve their communities over time.

Economics:

D2. Eco.2. K-2. Identify the benefits and costs of making various personal decisions.

D2. Eco.3. K-2. Describe the skills and knowledge required to produce certain goods and services.

D2.Eco.6.K-2. Explain how people earn income.

D2.Eco.10.K-2. Explain why people save.

D2.Eco.14.K-2. Describe why people in one country trade goods and services with people in other countries.

Geography:

D2. Geo.7.K-2. Explain why and how people, goods, and ideas move from place to place.

History:

D2. His.1. K-2. Create a chronological sequence of multiple events.

D2. His.2. K-2. Compare life in the past to life today.

D2. His.3. K-2. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.

D2.His.4.K-2. Compare perspectives of people in the past to those of people in the present.

D2.His.9.K-2. Identify different kinds of historical sources.

D2.His.10.K-2. Explain how historical sources can be used to study the past.

Grades 3-5

Civics:

D2.Civ.4.3-5. Explain how groups of people make rules to create responsibilities and protect freedoms.

D2.Civ.6.3-5. Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, workplaces, voluntary organizations, and families.

D2.Civ.8.3-5. Identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide government, society, and communities.

D2.Civ.10.3-5. Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

D2.Civ.12.3-5. Explain how rules and laws change society and how people change rules and laws.

Economics:

D2. Eco.1.3-5. Compare the benefits and costs of individual choices.

D2. Eco.2.3-5. Identify positive and negative incentives that influence the decisions people make.

D2. Eco.3.3-5. Identify examples of the variety of resources (human capital, physical capital, and natural resources) that are used to produce goods and services.

D2.Eco.6.3-5. Explain the relationship between investment in human capital, productivity, and future incomes.

History:

D2. His.2.3-5. Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.

D2. His.3.3-5. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities.

D2.His.4.3-5. Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.

D2.His.11.3-5. Infer the intended audience and purpose of a historical source from information within the source itself.

D2. His.14.3-5. Explain probable causes and effects of events and developments.

D2.His.16.3-5. Use evidence to develop a claim about the past.

Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions:

D4.4.3-5. Critique arguments.

D4.5.3-5. Critique explanations.

Grades 6-8

Civics:

D2.Civ.1.6-8. Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts.

D2.Civ.6.6-8. Describe the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.

D2.Civ.10.6-8. Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

D2.Civ.14.6-8. Compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies, "and promoting the common good."

Economics:

D2. Eco.1.6-8. Explain how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and society.

History:

D2. His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

D2. His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

D2. His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.6-8. Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.

D2.His.6.6-8. Analyze how people's perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.

D2.His.13.6-8. Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

D2. His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

D2. His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions:

D4.4.6-8. Critique arguments for credibility.

D4.5.6-8. Critique the structure of explanations.