

NAME

DATE

CLASS



# YOUNG HISTORIANS PROJECT

A Hidden History: African Women and the British Health Service,  
1930-2000  
SCHOOL WORKSHOP BOOKLET

## WHO ARE WE?

We're a team of young people aged 16-25 working on dynamic projects, documenting pivotal and often overlooked historical moments.

## WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

We hope that through this school work booklet, more young people of African and Caribbean heritage will rediscover history and develop the skills to become the historians of the future. Each one, Teach one

## WHAT'S IN THE BOOKLET?

The booklet is based on our project about African Women and the Health Service during the 20th century.

Each activity gives you a taster of this project, and our process as historians when carrying out this project.

This includes looking at transcripts, analysing social policies and primary sources such as cartoons and newspaper clippings.



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# OUR PROJECTS

## GLOSSARY WORDS

**ACTIVISM:** ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT POLITICAL OR SOCIAL CHANGE.

**COLONIALISM:** A SYSTEM OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY DOMINATION BY A COUNTRY OVER OTHER COUNTRIES, GENERALLY ACHIEVED BY MILITARY CONQUEST. BRITISH COLONIALISM EXTENDED OVER LARGE PARTS OF AFRICA IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY.

**COLONIAL OFFICE:** A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT THAT WAS SET UP TO OVERSEE THE AFFAIRS OF THE BRITISH COLONIES.

**COLOUR BAR:** A SOCIAL SYSTEM IN WHICH NON-WHITE PEOPLE ARE DENIED ACCESS TO THE SAME RIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND FACILITIES AS THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS.

**COMMONWEALTH:** AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION CONSISTING OF THE UK TOGETHER WITH STATES THAT WERE MAINLY PREVIOUSLY PART OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

**DIASPORA:** THE DISPERSAL OR SPREAD OF ANY PEOPLE FROM THEIR ORIGINAL HOMELAND.

**FOSTERING:** TAKING CARE OF A CHILD, WITHOUT BEING THE CHILD'S LEGAL PARENT.

**MIGRATION:** MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE TO A NEW AREA OR COUNTRY IN ORDER TO FIND WORK OR BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS.

**PAN-AFRICAN:** RELATING TO ALL PEOPLE OF AFRICAN BIRTH OR DESCENT.

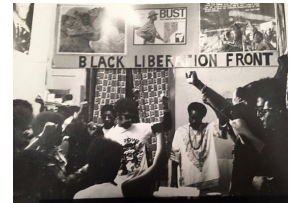
**RACE:** A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT THAT ARTIFICIALLY DIVIDES PEOPLE INTO DISTINCT GROUPS BASED ON REAL OR IMAGINED PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES (PARTICULARLY SKIN COLOUR).

**RACISM:** SYSTEMATIC DISCRIMINATION AND ANTAGONISM DIRECTED AGAINST MEMBERS OF A GROUP DEEMED INFERIOR ON THE BASIS OF REAL OR IMAGINED DIFFERENCES (E.G. SKIN COLOUR).

**SICKLE CELL:** A RED BLOOD CELL DISEASE THAT DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT.

## BLACK LIBERATION FRONT

The Black Liberation Front was founded in 1971. They were important as they helped to create supplementary materials for schools, community bookshops, affordable housing and support for Black prisoners. They helped to develop Black political identity in Britain.



## AFRICAN WOMEN IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

Women of continental African heritage have largely been absent in British history. A significant number of African women have been involved with the British Health Sector even before the existence of the NHS. The project aims to create a positive and more accurate social history.



# Quiz

To ease everyone into the history of African women in the Health Sector we'll begin with a quiz. The questions will range in difficulty. Just try your best and have fun. You can either try the quiz online on kahoot with the game pin 07703159 or you can circle your answers. Good Luck!

## 1. WHEN WAS THE NHS FORMED?

(a) 1945 (b) 1948 (c) 1952 (d) 1963

## 2. WHICH GOVERNMENT FOUNDED THE NHS?

(a) Conservative (b) Labour (c) Whig (d) Liberal Democrat

## 3. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE HEALTH SECRETARY BEHIND THE CREATION OF THE NHS?

(a) Winston Churchill (b) Enoch Powell (c) Aneurin Bevan (d) David Lloyd George

## 4. WHEN DID THE COLOUR BAR END IN ALL LONDON'S TRAIN AND UNDERGROUND STATIONS?

(a) 1989 (b) 2009 (c) 1903 (d) 1966

## 5. WHICH GENERAL ELECTION FEATURED A RACIST SLOGAN FROM TORY CANDIDATE PETER GRIFFITHS, CONTAINING THE N-WORD?

(a) 1964 (b) 1951 (c) 1918 (d) 1979

## 6. WHICH US-BASED BLACK POWER GROUP INSPIRED THE CREATION OF A MOVEMENT WITH THE SAME NAME IN THE UK?

(a) UCPA (b) NAACP (c) Black Liberation Front (d) Black Panther Party

## 7. WHO WAS THE FIRST BLACK AFRICAN MP?

(a) Paul Boateng (b) David Lammy (c) Oona Kelly (d) Chuka Umumna

## 8. WHEN WAS THE FIRST BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT PASSED?

(a) 1999 (b) 1948 (c) 1066 (d) 1800

## 9. WHAT KIND OF DISCRIMINATION DID THE RACE RELATIONS ACT (1965) ADDRESS?

(a) Race (b) Colour (c) Gender (d) National Origin

## 10. WHO WAS ONE OF THE FIRST BLACK AFRICAN NURSES IN THE NHS?

(a) Mojibola Pratt (b) Mary Seacole (c) Kofoworola Abeni Pratt (d) Florence Nightingale

## 11. WHAT COUNTRY WAS PRINCESS TSEHAI HAILE SELASSIE FROM?

(a) Bastutoland (b) Ethiopia (c) The Gold Coast (d) Kenya

## 12. THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING WAS FORMED IN 1916. WHEN WAS THE GHANA NURSES ASSOCIATION FORMED?

(a) 1967 (b) 1993 (c) 1929 (d) 2018

### TIPS

Some questions have multiple answers - just pick one!

Use information you already know to work out the answer!





# WIDER CONTEXT AND SOCIAL POLICIES

What major themes do you see in these photos? Write them down below around the images using arrows. Also, write down what more information you would want to fully understand the image.



Princess Ademola in a still from her film, "Nurse Ademola" (1943)



The West African Students Union (WASU) in the 1940s



Nurses protesting over pay outside Bethnal Green Hospital (1970s)



Protestors in Notting Hill in 1959



Nigerian Progress Union in 1924



Irene Ighodaro (first Sierra Leonean woman to qualify as a medical doctor) with her family (1949/50)



Pamphlet for the League and Abyssinia public meeting (1936)



Mabel Dinah being awarded by her fellow nurses at Chase Farm Hospital in the 1950s



Delegates from Pan African Congress held in Manchester (1945)



# SHORT TIMELINE

Here is a short timeline of social policies and Black British history. We've chosen events you may know and may not know but are extremely important in the way they have impacted British society today. Choose 3 events and write down how you think it affected Black British people underneath it.

1898

The Pan-African Association was formed by Henry Sylvester Williams and Alice Kinloch, an African woman from South Africa. It organised the first Pan-African Conference in London in 1900.

1918 and 1919

In 1918, the African Progress Union was founded in London. Cecilia Amado Taylor (Sierra Leonean midwife) attended the inaugural meeting. It was active until 1927 and was a Pan-African organisation.

In 1919, race riots occurred in major seaports like South Shields, Liverpool, Cardiff, London and Glasgow. Those targeted included African, Arab, Caribbean, Chinese and South Asian sailors.

7th August 1925

The West African Student Union (WASU) was founded. It sought to connect and support West African students studying in the UK. It was founded to defend the rights of West Africans in Britain and in the colonies. Opeolu Solanke (Mama WASU) was a leading member.

15th-22nd October 1945

The 5th Pan-African Congress was held in Manchester. It was organised by George Padmore (Trinidadian Pan-Africanist) and Kwame Nkrumah (future leader of independent Ghana).

21 June 1948

SS Empire Windrush docks in Essex with around 800 Caribbeans, many of them ex-servicemen, on board.

e.g. Black people would have felt vulnerable in a new environment. They would have to adapt quickly to social conditions, weather etc

5th July 1948

NHS is officially born. At its inception, its staff included 68,000 nurses and 11,700 doctors.

Like many of Britain's post-war economies, the Health Sector did not have enough staff to meet demand.

1948, 1949 & 1958

In 1948, there were racist attacks in Liverpool.

In 1949, there were racist attacks in Deptford and Birmingham.

In 1958, there were racist attacks in Notting Hill.

1959

Claudia Jones (Communist and human rights activist) organised the first Caribbean Carnival in St Pancras Town Hall. This was in the aftermath of the Notting Hill race riots.

1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act

Sought to limit rights of citizens of former colonies to come to the UK. This Act was restrictive as it limited citizenship to only those who could prove they had a parent or grandparent who was either born in the UK or was already a citizen.

By 1964

1,748 Nigerian children are placed in foster homes throughout the South East of England. 768 African children are fostered in Kent. It was common for African children to be fostered as their parents studied and this practice began in the 1940s.

1965

The Race Relations Act is passed. It was the first set of laws addressing racial discrimination in the UK.

1968

Race Relations Act II is passed, making it illegal to refuse housing, employment, or public services to a person on the grounds of colour, race, ethnic or national origins in Great Britain. At the same time, the Second Commonwealth Immigration Act is passed, further restricting the entry of people from "New Commonwealth countries"- i.e. African and Asian former colonies.

1976 Race Relations Act III

Attempts to make fresh provision for preventing racial discrimination. The Commission for Racial Equality is established.

1979 and 1981

Victorian "sus" laws are reinstated, which gives police stop and search powers to enforce on anyone they suspected were in breach of the 1842 Vagrancy Act. This disproportionately targeted young black men.

In 1981, Pressure groups, such as Scrap Sus Campaign emerged. Sus Laws are repealed...

1993 and 1999

In 1993, Stephen Lawrence was murdered by racists in South East London.

This led to the Macpherson Report in 1999 which found the police to be institutionally racist.

# MATCH THE POLICY WITH ITS SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES

WRITE A SMALL EXPLANATION FOR YOUR CHOICE BELOW

The NHS commenced on 5th July 1948 and it was free at the point of use. This meant that demand rapidly increased. However not one extra doctor or nurse was supplied.

In 1954, the British Colonial Office stated that married students planning to stay more than nine months could bring their wives. In 1955, the Colonial Office allowed policies that permitted West African families to be together.

By 1955 selection and recruitment agencies were established in sixteen colonies to bring nurses to Britain to work and train.

The 1966 Cogwheel Report studied the organisation of doctors in hospitals and suggested specialist teams. This allows for the specialisation of "Black issues" like Sickle cell.

In 1919, the Nurses Registration Act establishes a register for nurses for the first time.

the 1945 Pan-African Congress in Manchester had in attendance Kenyan independence leader, Jomo Kenyatta and Kwame Nkrumah, who went on to become the first President of Independent Ghana. 87 delegates were in attendance representing the Anglophone working people of Africa and the Caribbean.

In 1960, there were 11,000 recognised students and thousands of private students studying in Britain from Africa.

By 1966-67, there were 16,745 foreign nurses and midwives training in the United Kingdom.

In 1948, the Ministry of Health estimated that the NHS lacked 48,000 staff. By 1949, there was a shortage of 54,000 nurses.

This led to the General Nursing Council which was founded in 1920 and they kept a register of nurses.

This conference brought together so many Anti-Colonial activists and proceedings at this meeting led to the liberation of several African nations.

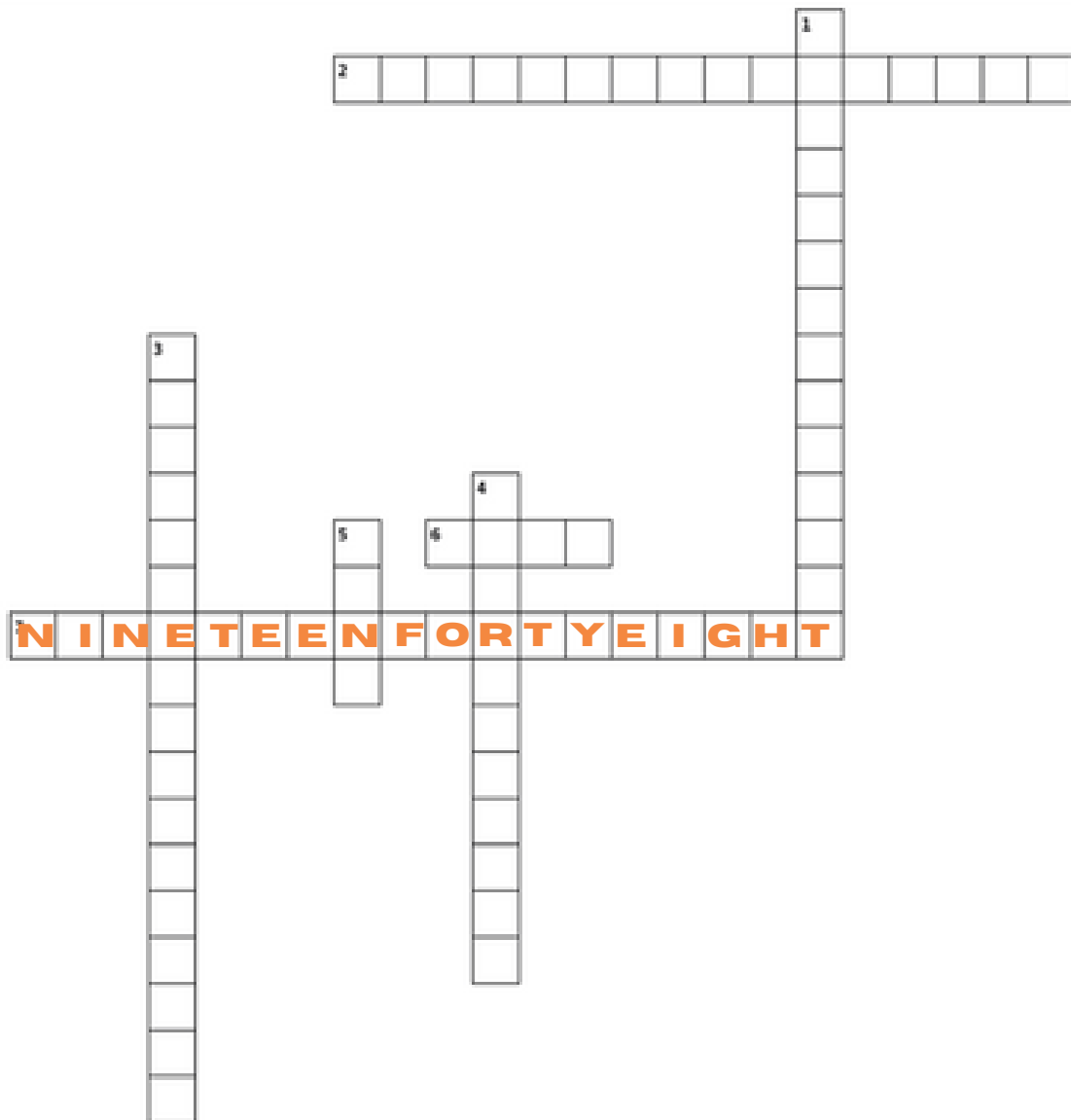
In 1979, Elizabeth Anionwu contributed to opening the first Sickle cell and Thalassemia centre in Brent.

e.g. Policies to recruit and train foreign nurses and midwives meant that the NHS was sustained by people who were born overseas.

# CROSSWORD

What can you remember from wider context and social policies?

TIP: There are no spaces between words!



## Across

- 2.the first set of legislation that sought to address racial discrimination in the UK.
- 6.name of union that connected students from West Africa formed in 1925.
- e.g. 7.the year the NHS opened ✓

## Down

- 1.the 1966 report which allowed for the specialisation of Sickle cell.
- 3.the year the British Colonial Office allowed married African students to bring their wives.
- 4.name of the 1842 Act which gave police stop and search powers.
- 5.name of the County where 768 African children were fostered to in 1964.





# PRIMARY SOURCES



To use visual images to infer meaning

To effectively apply your own knowledge to visual primary sources

To understand why political cartoons are important to historical investigations

Primary sources are an important part of historical investigations. They can be images, newspaper clippings, cartoons or even videos that were made at certain points in history.

Primary sources can be especially useful as we are not physically able to travel back in time to get the answers we need.

When looking at primary sources, it is important to try and figure out what was happening at the time that the primary sources were being made. This is called **context**. By paying attention to context, we should be able to figure out the hidden messages in the sources.

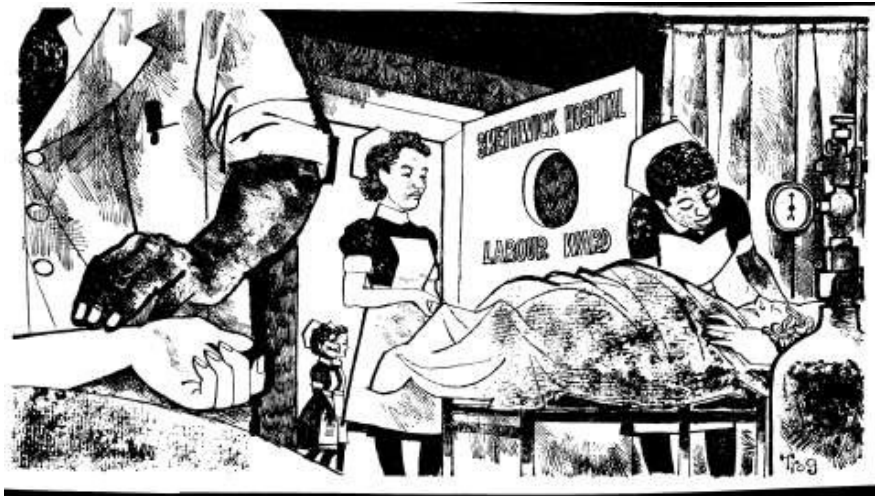
On the following pages there will be some primary sources and questions for you to answer about them. Make sure to **assess each image carefully** to try and untangle its **purpose and importance**.





## EXAMPLE

THIS POLITICAL CARTOON WAS PUBLISHED IN 1964 IN THE NEW STATESMAN.



DESCRIBE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS CARTOON:

The cartoon shows a labour wards of a hospital. The picture seems to focus on the two people - who look like nurses - treating someone who is about to give birth. In the corner of the image is a Black person who is also treating someone. The Black person in the corner looks like a doctor due to the jacket and tie that they are wearing.

WHAT DOES THIS CARTOON TELL (AND NOT TELL) YOU ABOUT ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFRICAN HEALTH STAFF IN 1964?

At first it seems, like there is indifference towards African health staff because the Black doctor is not the focus of the cartoon and the caption is not criticising their presence at the hospital. However, from my own knowledge, I know that many African people had to deal with the colour bar in the 1960s.

WHAT OTHER SOURCES WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR FINDING OUT ABOUT THE COLOUR BAR DURING THIS TIME?

I think that it would be helpful to know how many African health staff worked in each hospital and what their positions were. This is because the numbers could tell us how much the colour bar affected African health staff.





THIS POLITICAL CARTOON WAS PUBLISHED IN 1959 IN THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

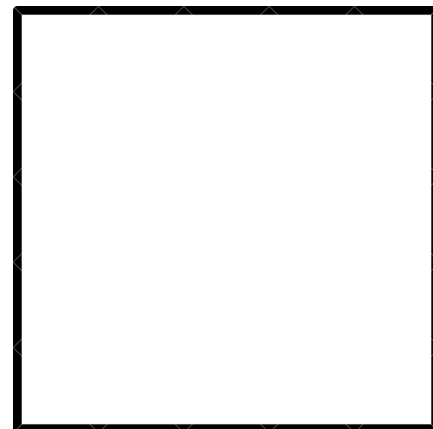
THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEDNESDAY JULY 15 1959



THE CAPTION READS:

'After Notting Hill, The New Zealand all-white All-Blacks and the Forest Hills tennis club, we now have the Salisbury hospital where an African medical officer is prohibited from "working on" European patients in case he finds out they have the same insides as Africans'

WHAT IS THE COLOUR BAR?



DESCRIBE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS CARTOON:

WHAT DOES THIS CARTOON TELL (AND NOT TELL) YOU ABOUT ATTITUDES TOWARDS AFRICAN HEALTH STAFF IN 1959?

WHAT OTHER SOURCES WOULD BE HELPFUL FOR FINDING OUT ABOUT THE COLOUR BAR DURING THIS TIME?





THIS POLITICAL CARTOON WAS PUBLISHED IN 1969 IN THE LONDON EVENING STANDARD.



THE CAPTION OF THIS  
CARTOON READS:  
'You're sure he  
speaks English? I  
only came in for  
my tonsils!'



DESCRIBE WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE CARTOON

HOW IS THIS CARTOON SIMILAR TO THE ONE FROM 1959? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

WHY DO YOU THINK THESE CARTOONS ARE IMPORTANT IN LEARNING ABOUT AFRICAN WOMEN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEALTH SERVICE?





ONE OF THESE IMAGES IS FROM 1943. THE OTHER IS FROM 1958. WHICH ONE IS WHICH?

Think about events that were happening during 1943 and 1958. The second world war happened from 1939-1945. How would the war have influenced attitudes towards African health staff? Do you think there would have been more negative or positive attitudes towards them working in hospitals? Why?

1



"Now there's an embarrassment for yer, Tosh."

THIS IS A CARTOON THAT WAS PUBLISHED IN THE SUNDAY EXPRESS.

THE CAPTION OF THE CARTOON READS:

'Now there's an embarrassment for yer, Tosh.'

2



This image shows Nurse Adenrele Ademola. She came to the UK from Nigeria to study nursing in 1935. There was a film made about her during her time as a nurse in Britain because she was also a princess in Southern Nigeria.







ONE OF THESE IMAGES IS FROM 1943. THE OTHER IS FROM 1958. WHICH ONE IS WHICH?

SOURCE 1: WHAT YEAR? WHY?



SOURCE 2: WHAT YEAR? WHY?

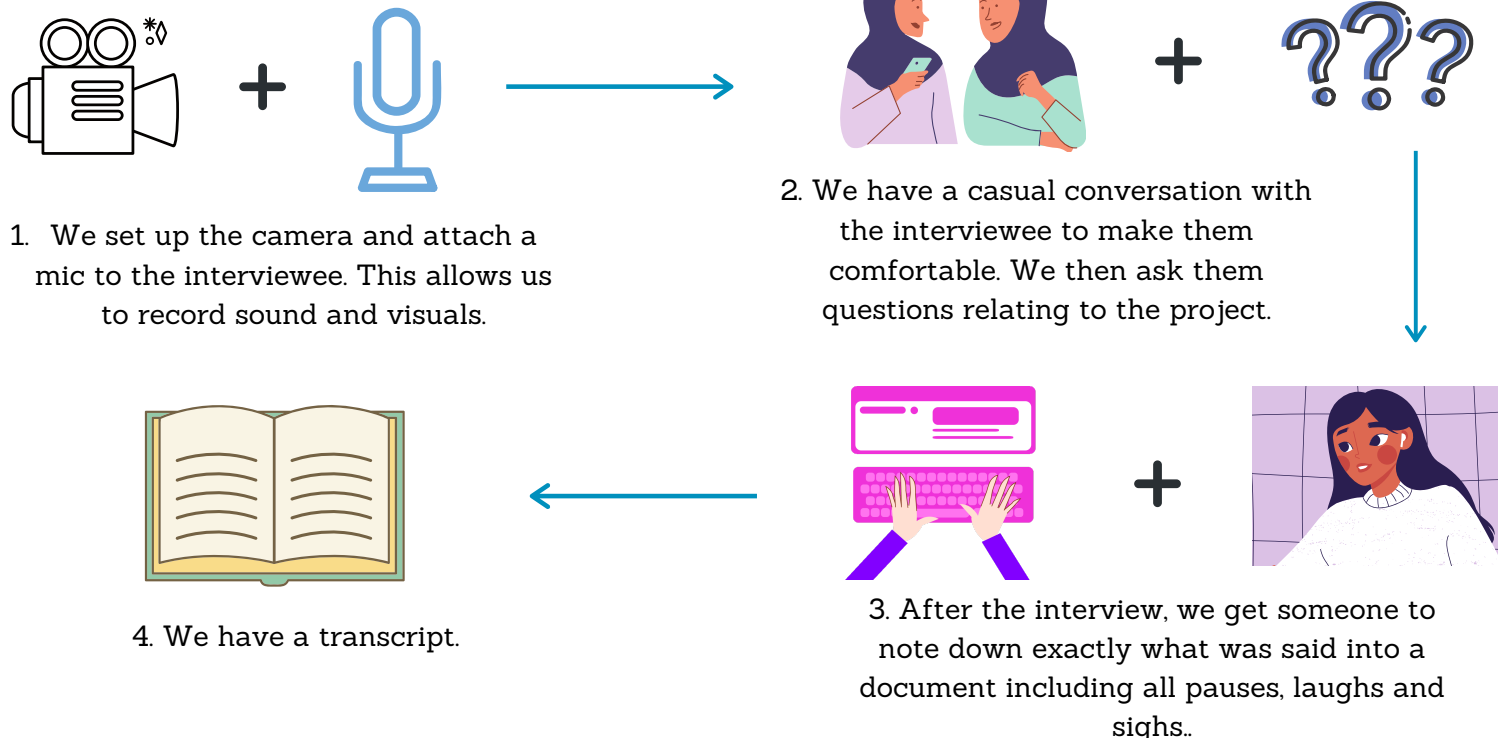




# WORKING WITH ORAL HISTORY

ORAL HISTORY IS THE COLLECTION AND STUDY OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, IMPORTANT EVENTS, OR EVERYDAY LIFE USING AUDIOTAPES, VIDEOTAPES, OR TRANSCRIPTIONS OF PLANNED INTERVIEWS.

## THE INTERVIEW PROCESS



1. IMAGINE YOU ARE INTERVIEWING A WOMAN WHO CAME TO BRITAIN TO WORK AS A NURSE IN THE 1950S. CAN YOU THINK OF 3 QUESTIONS THAT YOU WOULD ASK HER ?

2. OTHER THAN ORAL HISTORIES WHAT OTHER SOURCES MIGHT YOU USE WHEN RESEARCHING THE HISTORY OF AFRICAN WOMEN?





# WORKING WITH ORAL HISTORY

**Below are 3 excerpts taken from interviews with African women who have worked in healthcare in the UK. All of the interviewees spoke about how they found themselves in the healthcare profession**

## **a) How did you find yourself in the nursing profession?**

**(Esther)** Well, that's... Going into nursing, that's a very different experience. I went and trained as a nurse outside of London. I actually trained in Kent. Partly because I had a brother and sister in Kent who were fostered out to white people. This was quite common amongst African communities in those days because, for Africans, education is everything and.... They're trying to do the best for their children. Our parents would often believe that, you know, Europeans – or the British – knew best and were better educators than them. That's the kind of mentality they had in those days. So I had a brother and sister who were fostered out to a white couple. So I guess partly I went to be near them, to be honest, because we didn't grow up together... So we didn't know each other very well. And I'm the first of the family so I try to get to know them and you know... And partly because it was something I wanted to do

## **b) By the time you were in secondary school, did you find a passion in science and medical care, did your mother inspire you?**

**(Lola)** I've always wanted to do nursing, my mother was a nurse before she died, she only did nursing for a year or two before she went into midwifery, she went into midwifery quite early, it was always her intention not nursing. But in those days they didn't do direct entry midwifery, they had to do nursing before you could go into midwifery so she did the nursing as a way into midwifery, but once she became a midwife she stayed a midwife. All I remember as a child was her uniform, that was the thing that made me want to do nursing, it was the dress and the broad belt, the hat and the puff sleeves, things like that, the apron, oh the apron was to die for. That was it, that was me, I was going to look like that one day. So from a young age, I always wanted to do nursing, my mother tried very hard to stop me and I think the main reason was all the racism and what have you, that she experienced in the nursing profession. She vowed that she would never allow any of her children to do nursing.

## **c) And so just going back to your arrival in England, was there a specific reason other than to join your dad, that you came?**

**(Joyce)** No, no, I came specifically to England to do nursing. (Oh, okay). You know, to do my general and midwifery. And my aim was generals, three years, and maybe midwifery one year. And I was going to go back, work for one year, and go back for five – go back on my fifth year. When we live in home they pray for you, and this is, this is most Sierra Leoneans. If they coming to do a three-year course, or a five-year course, or a degree course, we-- they always say oh, I'm doing a three-year course, hoping you get all your exams, you pass your exams, you lucky to pass. You think, oh, the-- I work for one year and then the next year I'm home. But here I am now, 60 years in England. (Laughs)





# WORKING WITH ORAL HISTORY: QUESTION TIME



1) WHY DID THESE WOMEN ENTER THE PROFESSION?

2) WHAT COMMON THEMES DO YOU SEE?

3) IN **EXCERPT A** CAN YOU IDENTIFY A COMMON PRACTICE THAT TOOK PLACE IN AFRICAN COMMUNITIES?

4) IN **EXCERPT B** CAN YOU IDENTIFY WHY THE INTERVIEWEE'S MOTHER DID NOT WANT HER TO BECOME A NURSE?

5) IN **EXCERPT C** CAN YOU IDENTIFY HOW LONG THE INTERVIEWEE HAS LIVED IN ENGLAND?



6) DO YOU THINK THE QUESTIONS ASKED WERE EFFECTIVE? EXPLAIN WHY OR WHY NOT.

7) WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXCERPTS?

8) A) IF YOU WERE TO DESIGN AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT WHAT GROUP IN HISTORY WOULD YOU CHOOSE TO FOCUS ON ?

B) HOW WOULD YOU ADAPT THE QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE EXCERPTS ABOVE TO YOUR OWN PROJECT ?





# REFLECTIONS

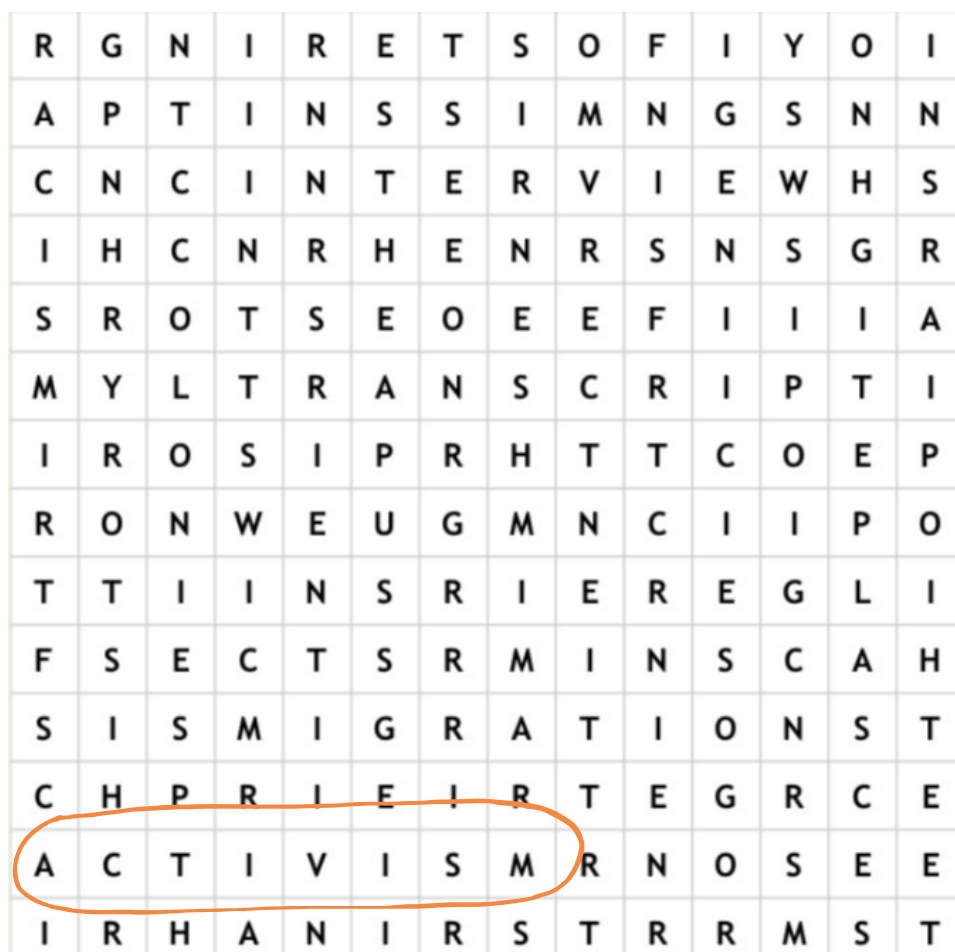
Here is our logo illustration for our project made by a talented member of our team. Here you have the chance to add to the illustration which could be used in one of our murals. Add words, phrases, colour, patterns etc. to demonstrate what you've learnt from this work booklet.





# WORD SEARCH

Find the words listed and write the definition or any relevant information about it below. Try to use your own words and not copy the glossary definition!



**E.G. ACTIVISM:** Raising awareness through campaigns to bring about change.

Black British people campaigned against police brutality.

**INTERVIEW:**

**TRANSCRIPT:**

**HISTORY:**

**COLONIES:**

**FOSTERING:**

**MIGRATION:**

**RACISM:**

**NURSES:**

**NHS:**



# REFLECTIONS

## A Hidden History: African Women and the British Health Service, 1930-2000

This workbook is a taster of what the Young Historians Project does.

If you've enjoyed today please do get in touch with your teachers or contact us through our website.

**We hope** you now have received a better understanding of interventions made by African women in British healthcare.

**We hope** you have become more aware of the different mediums including films, interviews, journals, exhibitions that can capture historical narratives.

And **we hope** you have reached an understanding of why oral history is paramount to exploring overlooked histories.

### Got any questions - get in contact

email: [younghistoriansproject@gmail.com](mailto:younghistoriansproject@gmail.com)

website: [younghistoriansproject.org](http://younghistoriansproject.org)

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