



**BLACKS IN CANADA: TRUTHS, TRIUMPHS, & EXCELLENCE**  
**Presented by Gregory Birkett and Coleen Birkett**  
**SummerUp 2022**  
**Course Description**

**Course Name:** Blacks in Canada: Truths, Triumphs, & Excellence

**Who Should Apply:** You are a Black youth, Ontario resident, and you are motivated to explore the Black experience in Canada. As well, you will:

- be enrolled in any of Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 in September 2022, or
- be enrolled in post-secondary studies in September 2022.

**Visit the SummerUp Website:** <https://lileaders.com/summerup/>

### **What**

Black Canadian doctors in the 1800s? The first female police officer in Canada was Black? Black Canadian athletes invented shadow boxing and the slapshot in hockey? The first Black talk show host in all of North America was a Black woman from Vancouver? Why don't we know any of this and where can we go to find out more? *Blacks in Canada: Truths, Triumphs, and Excellence* is a 4-week multi-media, interactive course that uses videos, spoken word, guest speakers, and more to teach you all about the Black Canadian experience in a way that you will never forget! You will learn about the Black Canadian identity (language, culture, music), how long Black people have been in this country, and how they came to be here, as well as the amazing contributions that Black people have been making in Canadian society for hundreds of years. You will learn about things that will surprise you and inspire you to become confident leaders now and in the future. Register and get ready to learn things that you did not know and things that you did not know that you needed to know. *Blacks in Canada: Truths, Triumphs, and Excellence*- let's do this!

### **Why this Matters**

For many students, growing up Black in Canada is to be unaware of the rich history of Black persons in Canada. Invariably, the substantial contributions Black persons have made to the development and growth of this country are not often told and rarely are celebrated. So, why not be proactive and act to discover Black history...to discover the many stories of Black triumphs and excellence that contribute to the fabric of your country? SummerUp's *Blacks in Canada* course is a great way to continue your journey of discovery and self-empowerment. Want to reinforce your self-pride? Want to shed those confidence-bleeding moments of feeling like you don't belong? Want to be the one in your social circle who can articulate the importance of Black Canadian history? Want to lead a Black history Club at your school? This course is for you. Then too, you get to share this journey with other youth, building peer relationships. What a way to SummerUp!

### **Your Blueprint to Discovery**

SummerUp's *Blacks in Canada* course is centred around three themes: truth, triumphs, and excellence.

- I. Truths**—This section brings to light the many truths about Blacks in Canada and acknowledges their longevity and identity in this country. It also illuminates truths that have been excluded from the narrative of Canadian History.

**II.**

## Topics

1. First Arrivals
  - Mathieu da Costa
  - Enslaved Blacks
  - Black Loyalists
  - Jamaican Maroons
2. Canadian Blacks: From the Underground Railroad to the Coal Mines of Nova Scotia
3. Waves of Immigration: The Growing Caribbean and African Presence
4. Canada's History of Anti-Black Racism

**II. Triumphs**—This section focuses on the many triumphs that emerged despite hardships and racism, and the legacy that shapes the Black Canadian identity and contributions today.

## Topics

1. Diversity in Historic Black Canadian Communities
  - Amber Valley, Hogan's Alley, Africville, Elgin Settlement, Little Burgundy, Little Jamaica
2. Cultural Diversity in Current Black Canadian Populations
  - "Toronto slang"-Is it slang or is it language?
  - Hair Politics
3. Black Canadian Resistance and Civil Rights Movements
4. Trailblazers: Past Black Canadian Contributions and Achievements

**III. Excellence**—This section highlights the fact that Black Canadians continue to shine and make significant contributions in all areas, reinforcing the fact that the media representation is largely based on stereotypes.

## Topics

1. Current Black Canadian Achievements in The Arts, Sports, and Business
2. Current Black Canadian Achievements in Science and Medicine, Law and Politics, and Education
3. Current Black Canadian Achievements in Writing, Journalism, and Media

## Admissions Information

**Who:** You are a Black youth, Ontario resident, and you are motivated to explore the Black experience in Canada. As well, you:

- will be enrolled in any of Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 in September 2022, or
- will be enrolled in post-secondary studies in September 2022.

You are willing to commit to attending all scheduled learning sessions (see dates and times below).

**Admissions Process:** All eligible applicants will be considered for admission. Refer to application deadlines at <https://llileaders.com/summerup/>. Applicants will be required to attend a course orientation.

**Start/Stop Dates:** SummerUp will offer *Blacks in Canada: Truths, Triumphs, and Excellence* in virtual mode over a span of four weeks starting on Wednesday, July 13, and ending on Friday, August 5. Each class is two-hours in duration and runs from 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

**Meeting Pattern:** This course will meet for two hours (2.00 – 4.00 p.m.) on each of the following ten days.

Week 1: Wednesday, July 13; Thursday, July 14 (2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 2: Tuesday, July 19; Wednesday, July 20; Thursday, July 21 (2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 3: Tuesday, July 26; Wednesday, July 27; Thursday, July 28 (2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

Week 4: Wednesday, August 3; Thursday, August 4; Friday, August 5 (2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.)

**Mode:** Virtual (Zoom). Students must have a suitable computer and reliable internet access. (**Note:** *In order to foster 'community' among participants, we are open to having one of the August sessions an in-person session with a guest speaker and reception. Course registrants will be consulted regarding their opinions.*)

## Cours Leaders

### Gregory Birkett

Greg Birkett is a published co-author (*Black History: Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas* – Emond Montgomery Publications, *The Great Black North Poetry Anthology-Frontenac House Poetry*), poet, and recognized educator (Governor-General Award for Teaching Excellence Finalist, 2011, A.H.E.N. Excellence in Teaching Award winner, 2016). He has served as a curriculum consultant for the OBHS (Ontario Black History Society) and has written curriculum for the Ontario Ministry of Education. He has also written freelance for the *Toronto Star*, and was featured in an article in *Sway Magazine* highlighting his innovative approach to classroom teaching and education. Two plays that Greg wrote, *Do You Remember Me* and *Pieces of a Black Woman's Soul*, were performed at the Toronto Fringe Festival, Toronto's largest theatre, and performance festival, and for sold-out audiences at the Sandbox Theatre in downtown Toronto respectively. Greg is the founder of G.I.A. Productions, a youth-focused organization that uses the artistic mediums of spoken word, drama, dance, and music to stage original productions that promote education, history, and positivity in the community. He is a Senior Writer for the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) Kids website and the co-developer and co-presenter of *See Us, Learn Us: Teaching the Black Canadian Experience*, a nationwide webinar for educators in partnership with Nelson Education.



### Coleen Birkett

Coleen Birkett is an educator with the Toronto District School Board. She has over twenty years of classroom experience. In addition to teaching, Coleen has, as a freelance writer, written many articles for community publications. She has also co-authored the textbook *Black History: Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas*, which is in use in school boards throughout the GTA, Nova Scotia, and Bermuda. She has been involved with the Ontario Black History Society as a curriculum writer and consultant. Additionally, Coleen is instrumental in providing leadership in the development, organization, and facilitation of very successful educational forums for youth during Black Heritage month.



Coleen's experience as an educator is quite diverse as she has taught in Central America, Toronto, and Bermuda in both public and private schools. She has developed and presented workshops to educators in West Africa and Bermuda. Additionally, Coleen was selected to be a member of an evaluation team to assess the eligibility of a private school in New York for accreditation. In 2009, she was a recipient of the Award for Excellence in Teaching for her work in Bermuda. Miss Birkett has also worked as an Instructional Coach for the Toronto District School Board's Literacy and Numeracy initiative. Coleen is a co-developer and co-presenter of *See Us, Learn Us: Teaching the Black Canadian Experience*, a nation-wide webinar for educators in partnership with Nelson Education.

### Special Note:

**SummerUp** is a program designed to serve and support the personal and professional aspirations of Ontario's Black youth. The program is developed and presented by the **Lifelong Leadership Institute** (LLI), and it is primarily funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The quality of the SummerUp experience is assured by the contributions of a diverse group of individuals, educators, institutions, and corporations – all of which are committed to championing the well-being, development, and advancement of Black youth.

The Lifelong Leadership Institute also offers the **Leadership by Design** program which provides extensive leadership-development opportunities to Black youth.

The **SummerUp** 2022 program is primarily funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

