

Coming Home – The Musical Curriculum Worksheets

Curriculum Worksheets | Grades 7–12

For Black History Month & International Women's Month

Worksheet 1: Historical Timeline

Instructions: Place the following events on a timeline. Then, add at least 3 more Canadian events that connect to Black history or women's rights.

- Nina Simone releases *Mississippi Goddam* (1964)
- Josephine Baker speaks at the March on Washington (1963)
- Jessye Norman wins the National Medal of Arts (2009)
- Civil Rights Act signed in the U.S. (1964)
- Viola Desmond challenges segregation in a Nova Scotia theatre (1946)
- The Underground Railroad brings thousands of Black families to Canada (early 1800s)
- The Black Loyalists settle in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution (1780s)
- The Sir George Williams Affair student protest against racism erupts in Montreal (1969)

Student Reflection:

➡ Which Canadian event do you think had the biggest impact on the way Black people live in Canada today?

➡ How do these Canadian events connect to the struggles of Nina Simone, Josephine Baker, and Jessye Norman?





Worksheet 2: Discussion Questions (Post-Show)

1. Which woman's story—Nina Simone, Josephine Baker, or Jessye Norman—felt most connected to Canadian Black history?

2. How do you see parallels between the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. and movements in Canada (e.g., Viola Desmond's protest, the Montreal protests of 1969, or the activism of Rosemary Brown)?
3. How did the play use music (jazz, blues, opera, classical) to tell a story of both struggle and triumph?
4. Why do you think stories of Black women are sometimes missing from Canadian history classes?
5. How can you as a student make sure these stories are remembered?

Worksheet 3: Creative Response

Choose **ONE** of the following projects:

-  **Spoken Word/Poetry:** Write a poem connecting themes of resilience, justice, or empowerment from the play with a Canadian Black figure such as Viola Desmond, Carrie Best, or Lincoln Alexander.
-  **Song/Lyrics:** Write a verse or chorus blending U.S. Civil Rights voices (like Nina Simone) with Canadian voices (like Faith Nolan, a Canadian Black folk/jazz musician).
-  **Visual Art:** Design a poster that celebrates *both* one of the women in the play and a Canadian Black leader (e.g., Rosemary Brown, Canada's first Black female politician).
-  **Short Scene/Monologue:** Imagine Nina Simone or Josephine Baker giving advice to a young Black Canadian activist today. What would she say?

Reflection Prompt:

 How does seeing both international and Canadian Black women together in history change your perspective?

Worksheet 4: Reflection Journal

Instructions: After watching *Coming Home – The Musical*, write a 1–2 page journal entry answering the following prompts:

- Which woman's story moved you most, and why?

- How did their struggles and triumphs compare with Canadian Black women's experiences?
- What connections do you see between Nina Simone's activism through music and Canadian artists like Portia White or Molly Johnson?
- What lessons from the play and from Canadian Black history will you carry into your own life?


Teacher Note: Curriculum Links

These activities align with curriculum expectations in:

- **History/Social Studies:** Civil Rights, Canadian Black history, women's rights, civic activism.
- **Arts (Music/Drama/Visual Arts):** Performance analysis, creative responses, historical storytelling.
- **Equity & Citizenship Education:** Anti-racism, diversity, representation, justice.

Canadian Black History Integration:

- Viola Desmond (Nova Scotia, civil rights)
- Black Loyalists & Underground Railroad (early Black communities in Canada)
- Portia White (Canadian contralto opera singer, international recognition)
- Rosemary Brown (political leader, women's rights advocate)
- Sir George Williams Affair (student protest in Montreal, 1969)
- Lincoln Alexander (Canada's first Black Member of Parliament, later Lieutenant Governor of Ontario)

 *Coming Home – The Musical* is a bridge between international Black icons and Canadian Black history, helping students see how struggles and triumphs in the arts, politics, and justice are interconnected across borders.