An Active Partnership with the Woodson Center

Located in Washington, DC, the Woodson Center has a long history of empowering community-based leaders, revitalizing underserved communities and creating economic opportunities. We value their approach, especially their strong focus on highlighting achievements by Black Americans, and believe students across the US and worldwide will find these individuals inspiring. Recently, we decided to take a piece of their existing curriculum and design it as an active learning project for students to work on their own, with peers or in their schools.

ACTIVE LEARNING: THE OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION APPROACH

At Opportunity Education, we believe students should take an active and leading role in shaping their own learning. All of our projects are built on interactive and open-ended activities that empower students to choose their own directions while engaging with materials. This approach frees teachers to take on a mentoring role, framing materials and walking alongside students throughout the learning process.

PUTTING IT IN PRACTICE: BOOKER T. WASHINGTON AND THE ROSENWALD SCHOOLS

We built on a piece of Woodson Center curriculum focused on schools for Black children created by Booker T. Washington and Julius Rosenwald. We designed our curriculum in the form of a quest, where students learn about Washington and Rosenwald, why they felt compelled to create these schools and the impacts these schools had.

Students will examine information about the Rosenwald Schools, including interviews with Rosenwald family members, photos of the schools and a study of life in the southern US in the early 20th century. Teachers will draw from a general lesson plan and specific learning objectives to guide students through critical reflection questions.

Students will design the architecture for a model school and explain how the campus layout fits the needs of students, educators and the larger community. They'll also create their own ideal curriculums and articulate the purpose and value of those materials. Throughout, teachers will provide additional resources about the terrible impacts of segregation, including a study of Jim Crow laws, Brown vs Board of Education, and more.

www.opportunityeducation.org/woodson-center-curriculum
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ACCESS THESE AND OTHER RESOURCES

To learn more about the Opportunity Education approach — including this project and others built upon the Woodson Center’s existing curriculum — visit our website at www.opportunityeducation.org/resources/.