

2024 Black History Month Poster

Past, Present, and Future: Symbols of Strength and Style

Concept

The 2024 ETFO Black History Month poster is a transgenerational representation of the strength and style of Blackness. The accessories worn by both young people include a variety of symbols from across the African diaspora – past, present, and future – highlighting African Canadian culture and society. “Black joy” is captured in the demeanor and beauty within this visual, reflecting Black communities locally, provincially, nationally, and across the world. The gold and opulence on display in the poster intentionally highlight the natural resources and wealth present in African countries. For the first time, the poster features a QR code that takes viewers to a legend that explains many of the symbols featured in the image.

Symbols of the Past

This poster features ancient, traditional African Adinkra symbols from West Africa that represent joy, liberation, and freedom. From Africa, we come closer to home with pendants from Africville in Halifax and a brooch from Hogan’s Alley in Vancouver. These well-established African Canadian communities were both systematically destroyed starting in the 1960s, leading to the migration of many African Canadians to Ontario.

Symbols of the Present

The impact of Black culture on popular culture is so palpable, the two are almost synonymous. Regardless of how many Black students or staff are in your local community, the influence of Black music, inventions, and creativity is present within your school. The inclusion of the Doctor Bird, the national bird of Jamaica, recognizes the influence of that country and the Caribbean in general on Canadian culture through mass migration in the 1960s and 1990s. The “Legacy” pendant is an acknowledgment of the Legacy Awards, a celebration of Canadian Black talent that airs annually on the CBC.

Symbols of the Future

While there are various symbols present in the poster that honour Afro-futurism, the main thing we hope you see in this poster is a representation of the bright, joyous future that is possible for all young African Canadians. Learning more about the past contributions and recognizing the influence of Black culture all around us will contribute deeply to the understanding and consciousness needed to create a truly just, inclusive society.

Black History Month Symbols and Legend

No.	Symbol	Description
1	Joy braided into hair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Braids as a method of communication and expression - Myth of maps to freedom being braided into the hair of enslaved people
2	Nocta glide shoe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Related to hip hop and streetwear culture - Designed by Drake. - An emblem of Black Canadian culture
3	Basquiat crown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Famous pop culture image created by well-known Black artist Jean-Michel Basquiat - Symbol of black creativity and imagination
4	Doctor bird	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National symbol of Jamaica - Connection to ancestors
5	Red, Black and Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pan African colours, a symbol of solidarity for the African Diaspora
6	Hogan's Alley brooch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historic Black community in Vancouver - In conjunction to the Africville reference demonstrates the presence of historic Black communities in Canada from coast to coast
7	Adinkra symbol mpuannum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ghanaian Adinkra - symbol for joy
8	Kente cloth pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional fabric from West Africa featuring pan-African colours (red, green, black and gold)
9	Adinkra symbol fawohodie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ghanaian Adinkra symbol of freedom and independence
10	Legacy pendant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Represents the Legacy Awards that honour Black Canadian talent annually
11	African Mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Symbol of masquerade culture - Tradition that connects many communities across the diaspora - Celebrated in Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, UK, and South America
12	Africville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Historic Black community in Halifax, Nova Scotia, established in the 1840s - Once demolished, many displaced Nova Scotians moved to Ontario