



BLACK FUTURES

— 2026 —

— WHAT WE CARRY FORWARD —

MetroMorphosis®
Transforming Urban Communities from Within

Black Futures 2026 School & Library Toolkit

www.metromorphosis.net/blackfutures

Overview

Black Futures 2026 is a month-long celebration of the history, culture, and contributions of the Black Diaspora. Guided by the Ghanaian principle of *Sankofa*—the idea that we must look back to move forward—this year’s theme invites students and communities to reflect on the small acts that have shaped our world.

What We Carry Forward: Small Acts That Shaped Our World centers on everyday actions—teaching, organizing, caring, creating—that helped Black communities respond to their circumstances and build what exists today.

This toolkit offers educators, librarians, and facilitators simple ways to engage young people in reflection, storytelling, and creativity while honoring the wisdom passed across generations.



Story Passing (Oral History)

Purpose

To introduce students to oral history and intergenerational storytelling as ways in which knowledge is carried forward.

Description

Students talk with an elder, family member, or trusted community figure about a small act from their past that shaped their life or community.

Guiding Prompts

- What is a lesson you learned growing up?
- Was there a habit, rule, or practice that mattered?
- How did people take care of one another?

Suggested Formats

- Written summary
- Audio recording (if appropriate)
- Class discussion
- Storyboard or timeline

Note for Educators

This activity focuses on listening, not documentation quality. Participation matters more than polish.





Black Futures 2026 Reading List

The books listed below support the Black Futures 2026 theme, What We Carry Forward: Small Acts That Shaped Our World. Together, they highlight how everyday actions—storytelling, care, creativity, resistance, and community—have shaped lives across generations and across the Black Diaspora.

This list is designed to help students and readers of all ages explore history, identity, and culture through stories that center memory, lived experience, and intergenerational wisdom. Each book offers an opportunity to reflect on how small acts can have lasting impact—and what lessons are worth carrying forward today.

Elementary School:

- “Front Porch Stories at the One-Room School” by *Eleanora E. Tate*, illustrated by *Eric Velasquez*
- “All Because You Matter” by *Tami Charles*
- “The History of We” by *Nikkolas Smith*

Middle School:

- “Brown Girl Dreaming” by *Jacqueline Woodson*
- “Stamped (for Kids)” by *Jason Reynolds* and *Ibram X. Kendi*
- “Freedom Soup” by *Tami Charles*

High School:

- “The Fire Next Time” by *James Baldwin*
- “Between the World and Me” by *Ta-Nehisi Coates*
- “Homegoing” by *Yaa Gyasi*

Educators, Facilitators & Adult Readers:

- “The Warmth of Other Suns” by *Isabel Wilkerson*
- “Braiding Sweetgrass” by *Robin Wall Kimmerer*
- “Resist” by *Rita Omokha*

Small Acts Scavenger Hunt

Purpose

To help students recognize how small acts of care, creativity, and responsibility show up in everyday spaces and help communities function.

Description

Students participate in a guided scavenger hunt—inside or outside the classroom—to identify small acts that help a shared space work. Rather than searching for objects, students look for actions, behaviors, and systems of care.

This activity encourages observation, movement, and discussion while reinforcing the idea that small acts shape our world.

Examples of What Students Might Find

- Someone cleaning or maintaining a shared space
- A sign that helps people navigate safely
- A person helping another person
- A routine that keeps a space running smoothly
- Evidence of care, responsibility, or cooperation

Suggested Formats

- Individual or small group activity
- Outdoor walk (school grounds, neighborhood, campus, library)
- Indoor version for classrooms or libraries

Reflection Prompts

- What small acts did you notice?
- Who benefits from these actions?
- What would happen if these acts stopped?

Age Adaptation

- Elementary: Draw or list what you observed
- Middle/High School: Write a short reflection or discuss in groups

Note for Educators

The goal is not speed or competition. The goal is awareness.



The Black Futures Kuumba Youth Creative Contest invites students ages 12–18 to submit original creative works inspired by the 2026 theme:

What We Carry Forward: Small Acts That Shaped Our World.

Rooted in the principle of Kuumba (creativity), this contest encourages young people to reflect on the everyday actions, traditions, lessons, and acts of care that have shaped families, communities, and cultures across the Black Diaspora. Through art, writing, or performance, students are invited to explore how small acts can have lasting impact.

Selected winners will receive \$500 in prizes and have their work featured as part of Black Futures 2026.

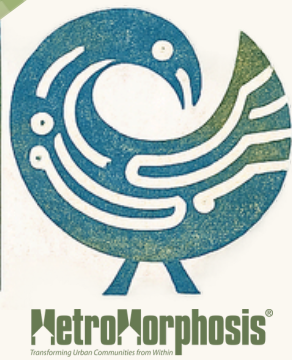
Contest Categories:

- Digital Art: Original 2D or 3D works created digitally (AI use prohibited).
- Writing: Essays, fiction, or poetry created without AI tools.
- Performance: Spoken word, dramatic readings, or recorded pieces.

How Schools & Libraries Can Support the Contest:

- Sharing contest details and deadlines with students
- Hosting reflection sessions or creative workshops tied to the theme
- Providing time and space for students to develop and share their work
- Displaying student submissions in classrooms, libraries, or common areas to celebrate creativity

For more submissions and details, visit www.metromorphosis.net/blackfutures



Are You a Young Creative?

The **Kuumba! Youth Creative Contest** invites young creatives to submit original creative work inspired by *What We Carry Forward: Small Acts That Shaped Our World*.

Ages 12-18

Through art, writing, or performance, youth are encouraged to use creativity to reflect on the everyday acts that shape our world and carry meaning forward.

\$500
Cash + Prizes

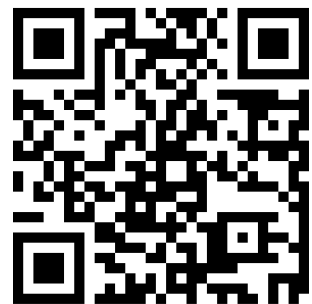
Accepted Submissions:

- **Art** (digital or drawn)
- **Writing** (poetry, stories, or essays)
- **Performance** (spoken word, acting, or storytelling)

submit your work to the black futures Kuumba! contest

Deadline February 19th

at 11pm



Scan for Submission Details
metromorphosis.net/blackfutures

Sponsors



Carry It Forward: Conversation Cues

History is not only something we learn — it's something we carry.

These conversation cues are designed to help educators, caregivers, families, and community leaders create space for reflection, storytelling, and connection across generations. Rather than teaching a lesson, they offer simple prompts that invite listening, sharing, and remembering what matters.

Use these cues to help young people and adults reflect on the small acts that have shaped their lives, families, and communities — and consider what is worth carrying forward.

Look Back Cues

Reflecting on memory and history

- What is something you were taught growing up that still matters today?
- Who taught you how to care for others or your community?
- What small habit, tradition, or rule shaped your family or neighborhood?

Notice Now Cues

Connecting the past to the present

- Where do you see people showing care or responsibility today?
- What small actions help this space or community function?
- What traditions or routines are still shaping how we live?

Carry Forward Cues

Stewardship and shared responsibility

- What is something worth passing on to the next generation?
- What small act do you want to keep alive?
- How can we practice this in everyday life?

These prompts can be used in classrooms, libraries, homes, churches, or community spaces. Choose one or two cues to guide a conversation, journaling activity, or group discussion. There are no right or wrong answers — the goal is connection, reflection, and shared understanding.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit is designed to be flexible and easy to use across classrooms, libraries, and community spaces.

Educators, librarians, and facilitators are encouraged to engage with the materials in ways that best fit their students, readers, and communities. Activities can be used together or individually and adapted across age groups and settings.

There is no required order or expectation to complete every activity. The goal is to create space for reflection, conversation, creativity, and connection—centered on the idea that small acts shape our world.

You may choose to:

- Use one activity as a standalone lesson or program
- Build a short series around storytelling and reflection
- Support student participation in the Kuumba Youth Creative Contest
- Adapt activities for group discussions, journaling, or creative expression

Black Futures is not about perfection or performance. It is about noticing, listening, and learning what is worth carrying forward.



Thank you for taking part in Black Futures 2026.

Your role as an educator, librarian, or facilitator matters. The spaces you hold—and the conversations you make possible—help young people see themselves as part of a longer story shaped by care, creativity, and shared responsibility.

By using this toolkit, you are helping students reflect on the small acts that shape communities and understand how everyday actions can carry meaning across generations.

We are grateful for the time, intention, and care you bring to this work.

For any questions or additional support, please contact us at
info@metromorphosis.net