



Black History Month! – Michael Henderson

When Americans think of February, two things come to mind. First is Valentine's Day, but the other is Black History Month! In America, the entire month of February is called Black History Month, which is dedicated to the legacy of Black people throughout American history. There are many different things I could talk about regarding Black History Month, but I'll focus on one thing today – Jazz Music.

Jazz music started in New Orleans, Louisiana in the early 1900s. It blends together traditional African-American music (such as blues and ragtime) with European classical music. A lot of aspects of African-American music comes from West African music, as slaves brought their musical traditions with them when they came to America. New Orleans was very diverse at the time, so all these people came together and mixed their music together.

One of the most famous jazz artists is Louis Armstrong. His song "What A Wonderful World" is extremely popular even today in America. His trumpet playing is very unique, and he helped spread jazz music to other cities in the U.S.

Nowadays, jazz is everywhere; it's even the music of Charlie Brown & Snoopy! New York City is considered the jazz capital in America. When I hear jazz, I always imagine I'm in New York, either walking through the busy streets or sitting in a café on a rainy day. This impression of jazz can even be seen in the Disney movie "Soul", which is about an African-American jazz music teacher living in New York City. I hope that if you watch this movie, you'll be able to understand and feel the history of jazz. (๐)



Poster for the
Disney movie
"Soul"

What is love? – Katelyn Sondereker

As Valentine's Day approaches, people often start thinking about love (愛) – but, scientifically, what is love?

Interestingly, scientists still do not really understand love. But they do know that love starts in the brain (脳髄), and that there are a few important molecules (分子) and chemicals (化合物) involved.

The first is oxytocin (オキシトシン). This chemical is released when a mother gives birth to a baby. It helps her to bond with her new child and makes sure that she takes care of it, since babies are a lot of work! Oxytocin is also released in people who are in long-term relationships, like my parents, who have been married for 31 years.

The second is dopamine (ドーパミン), which is released when you first start to like someone. Dopamine can make you feel excited and happy. It also causes the release of adrenaline (アドレナリン), which can make you so excited that you cannot eat or sleep!

But romantic relationships are not the only important relationships. All kinds of love are important. Spending time with people that you love, like your friends, coworkers, and family members, also increases dopamine in your brain. This is why we feel happy when we are with the people that we love.

In Japan, I think that saying "I love you" (大好き or 愛している) is much less common than it is in America. We say "I love you" to our family, partner, and even our friends all the time! Every time I talk on the phone with my mom, my sister, or my best friends, I tell them that I love them. It's usually how we end the conversation! What do you think about how often we say "I love you" in America? Come tell us!

Kate-sensei enjoys
spending time with
the people that she
loves, especially her
sister, Kierra.



Valentine's Day Cards



In elementary school (小学校), kids give each other *valentines* and candy at Valentine's Day parties, like this one from Attack on Titan (進撃の巨人)!

What do you think "colossal" means?

Valentine's Day Idioms

- to "wear your heart on your sleeve"
 - to wear clothes with hearts on the sleeves
 - to hide away your feelings
 - to always show exactly how you feel
- to say that "love is blind"
 - to think that love cannot see
 - to think people in love don't see their partner's / boyfriend's/girlfriend's faults
 - to think that love doesn't care what someone looks like
- to fall "head over heels" for someone:
 - to be completely in love with someone
 - to be over or done with someone
 - to fall into a relationship with someone
- to be a "match made in heaven"
 - to match with someone on a dating app
 - to feel like you're in heaven when you're with someone
 - to be the perfect couple

Love Songs by Black artists

"Killing Me Softly With His Song" - *Fugees*

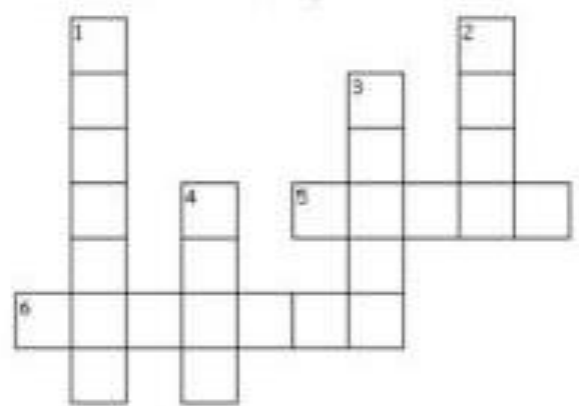
"好きだから" - *Umi*

"Get You" - *Daniel Caesar*

"If I Ain't Got You" - *Alicia Keys*



Valentine's Day Crossword Puzzle



Down:

- living plant gifts which are pretty and smell nice; usually given to girls on Valentine's Day
- colorful, folded pieces of paper with a note inside that tells someone how you feel
- the organ that beats in your chest; where people think feelings come from
- a physical display of love typically given on the lips or cheek

Across:

- sweet things which are wrapped in cute red, pink, and white packaging around Valentine's Day; chocolate, for example
- something that is given to someone in a box with a bow on Valentine's Day

Come talk to us to check your answers!