



Valentine's Day—Michael Henderson

I can't believe Valentine's Day already passed! Of course, it is celebrated in both America and Japan...BUT you may be surprised at some of the differences. Let's talk about them!

First is the gifts. In Japan, girls often give chocolates to their friends and lovers. In America, we give chocolate but also flowers, stuffed animals, and expensive jewelry! Often this is only to your partner (boyfriend, girlfriend, etc.), though sometimes people will get flowers for moms or little gifts for their friends. Also, in America, there's no gender expectation; both men and women will buy gifts for others.

Second is eating out. In America, Valentine's Day is the second busiest day of the year for restaurants! Couples will often go to expensive restaurants in nice clothes, so making a reservation can be difficult. However, people will also go out with their friends to more casual restaurants.

Third is Valentine's Day parties! In elementary schools, students often have parties. Students will bring Valentine's Day cards and candy, and give it to all the other students, similar to 義理チョコ. Students will also eat snacks, do Valentine's Day themed activities, and watch movies!

There are many expectations for couples on Valentine's Day. Many people plan things far in advance so that they can enjoy spending time together with their partner. Next Valentine's Day, try to plan something fun with your friends if you can!



Kids eating snacks
at a Valentine's
Day party at school

Black Inventors —Katelyn Sondereker

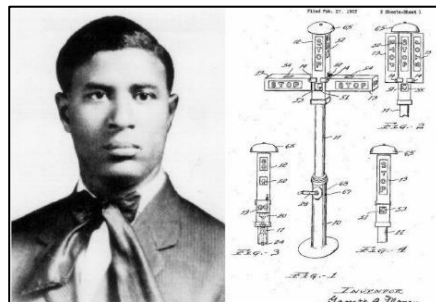
In America, February is Black History Month, which honors the history (歴史), struggles (奮闘), and triumphs (勝利) of Black Americans. So, I thought I would talk about important inventions (発明) that Black people made throughout history.

The first invention is the traffic light. Nowadays, traffic lights have three lights, right? Red, yellow, and green. But before Garrett Morgan, the traffic signals only told people to *stop* and *go*. Around 1923, Morgan saw a horrible traffic accident (交通事故) in Cleveland, Ohio and he made a third option : *yield* (一時停止する), which would later become the yellow light.

The second invention is automatic (自動) elevator doors, which were invented by Alexander Miles in 1887. Before Miles' invention, people had to close the outside elevator doors *and* the inside elevator doors by hand (手動)! Oftentimes, many people would forget to close both doors and it caused terrible accidents. As a result, Miles invented automatic doors, and his designs (設計) are still used in elevators today.

The third is the light bulb. You may think that Thomas Edison invented the light bulb (電球), and he did, but his light bulbs would burn out (燃え尽きる) in only a few days. However, Lewis Latimer invented a carbon filament (カーボンフィラメント) in 1881 that makes light bulbs last for months if not years. Latimer's invention is the reason why you don't have to buy a new light bulb at the store every week!

So next time you see a traffic light, use an elevator, or turn on a light, remember that Black people created these things and so many others that make our lives better.



Garrett Morgan
and his three-way
traffic signal design



Take a break from studying and color this fun Black History Month coloring sheet! If you have time, please look up the names of these famous Black Americans and learn more about them!

BLACK HISTORY MONTH COLORING SHEET

