DAY 1 | ORIGINS AND EDUCATION

Dr. Benjamin E. Mays

Education, Mentorship and Civic Leadership

First and Last Name _____

Date _____ Class _____

Standards

NJSLS Social Studies 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3, 6.1.12.CivicsDP.13.a. NJSLS ELA RI.CR.6.1, RI.CI.6.2, W.AW.6.1, RI.CR.11–12.1, W.AW.11–12.1. Common Core RH.6–8.1, RH.9–10.1, RH.11–12.1, WHST.6–8.1, WHST.9–10.1, WHST.11–12.1. Mathematics 7.RP.A.3. Science and engineering practice: planning and carrying out investigations.

Central inquiry

HOW DID BENJAMIN E. MAYS TURN EDUCATION INTO CIVIC LEADERSHIP?

Objective

Corroborate biographical and primary sources to explain Mays’s mentorship, scholarship and institutional leadership.

Demonstration of Learning

Defend a claim with three sources, one quantitative interpretation and an evaluation of what the evidence can establish.

Day 1 Do Now

What might make it difficult for a capable student to continue school? Name one barrier and one support.

Sources A and B | Early life and education

Benjamin Elijah Mays was born in 1894 and grew up near Ninety-Six, South Carolina, the youngest of eight children of Hezekiah Mays and Louvenia Carter, who had been enslaved and worked as tenant farmers after emancipation. Under Jim Crow, segregation and racial discrimination restricted where Black students could study and what resources they could access. Mays briefly attended Virginia Union University before transferring to Bates College in Maine. He earned his bachelor’s degree in 1920 and went on to graduate study at the University of Chicago, completing his master’s degree in 1925 and doctorate in 1935. His studies and his work as a teacher overlapped. He taught at Morehouse and South Carolina State College and worked with civic organizations while pursuing advanced study.

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DAY 1 | SCHOLARSHIP AND MINISTRY

From student to institutional leader

Source B | Scholarship, ministry and international exchange

Mays brought the tools of social inquiry to the study of African American religious institutions. He and Joseph Nicholson published The Negro’s Church in 1933, examining the institution’s history and practices. In 1934, Mays became dean of Howard University’s School of Religion, where he worked to strengthen the program. He met Mohandas Gandhi in India in 1936, in a period when people across the world were debating how organized resistance could confront injustice. In 1938, he published The Negro’s God, as Reflected in His Literature. As a minister, scholar and administrator, Mays could reach people through classrooms, research, public speech and institutions. The fact that two leaders met establishes contact. Tracing the movement of an idea requires additional evidence, such as correspondence or later accounts.

1. Use A and B to explain one barrier Mays faced and one action he took to continue his education. Cite a specific detail.

2. Build a three event timeline from Bates through Howard and the University of Chicago. Explain why the order complicates the idea that a person finishes education before beginning a career.

3. Use B to explain how Mays’s study of Black churches and his work at Howard reached different audiences. Identify one claim his 1936 meeting alone cannot establish.

Day 1 Quick Write

Which part of Mays’s early career best prepared him to lead an educational institution? Use evidence and explain the connection.

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