

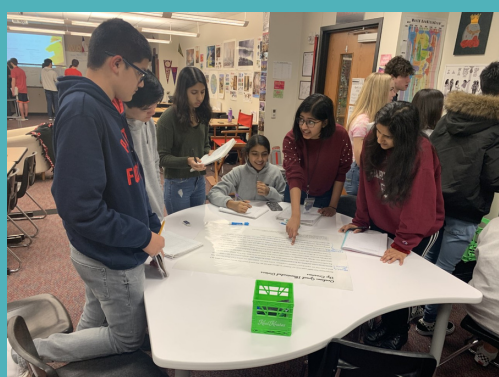
TIPS FOR ADDRESSING RACISM IN THE CLASSROOM

MY SCHOOL

In 2015, I started working at Liberty High School in Frisco, TX, which is a majority-minority school. Last year, only 27% of my GT Humanities students were white, non-Hispanic and not Jewish.



With my co-teacher and students



My students collaborating

MY SHORTCOMINGS

It became quickly apparent that my personal experiences as a white gifted student were not enough to understand my students. I began listening to what they had to say and then reading and researching on my own. I learned about systemic racism and how it affects public education.

MY JOURNEY

My journey became more purposeful after I spent a summer digesting Ibram X. Kendi's *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*. I learned about the differences between anti-racism and assimilationism, and realized how many of my well-intended behaviors as a teacher were potentially harmful to my non-white students.



Discussing in Class



At the TX Youth and Government Conference

MY DREAM

I believe passionately in the power of a free and fair public education. I want school to be a transformative experience opening minds and doors for all students. As individuals, we can be a force for change by embarking on journeys to learn more and do better for our students.

MY TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGE

Nothing worth doing can be solved with a single book or podcast or PD session. I challenge you to undergo radical transformation by seeking clarity on race in education. Like me, you can educate yourself--and your students along the way!

The following steps and resources are curated from my own ongoing trial-and-error journey to become an antiracist educator.



Transforming myself at TAGT 2019

READY? KEEP SCROLLING!

From "Tips for Addressing Racism," published in TEMPO+, by Sarah Wiseman
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CREATED FOR TAGT BY SARAH WISEMAN, M.ED.
BASED ON HER ONGOING TRIAL-AND-ERROR JOURNEY TO BECOME AN ANTIRACIST EDUCATOR

TIPS FOR ADDRESSING RACISM IN THE CLASSROOM

**STEP 1: LEARN WHY
RACISM NEEDS TO BE
ADDRESSED IN EDUCATION**

**STEP 2: START A
CONVERSATION WITH
YOURSELF**

**STEP 3: CREATE A SAFE
SPACE FOR ALL STUDENTS**

**STEP 4: PROVIDE
STUDENTS WITH SKILLS
FOR TOUGH
CONVERSATIONS**

**STEP 5: START THE
CONVERSATION WITH
RESOURCES FOR
SECONDARY STUDENTS**

**STEP 6: KEEP LEARNING,
REFLECTING, AND
ADJUSTING**

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STEP 1: LEARN WHY RACISM NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED IN EDUCATION



Social Studies Department at Liberty HS, Frisco

MOST TEACHERS ARE WHITE

According to “Characteristics of Public School Teachers” by the National Center for Education Statistics, 79% of American Teachers in 2017-2018 were white.

RACISM DID NOT END WITH THE INTEGRATION OF SCHOOLS OR THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

EVERY TEACHER CARRIES PREJUDICES BASED ON THEIR BACKGROUND

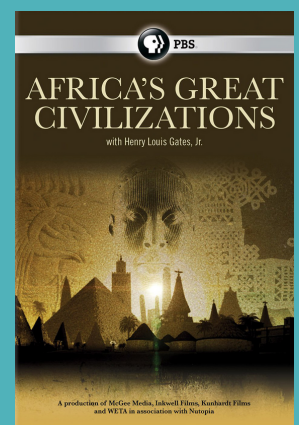
How does your race inform your judgments? Class? Educational background? Religious or philosophical beliefs? Gender? Sexual orientation? Ethnicity? Nationality?



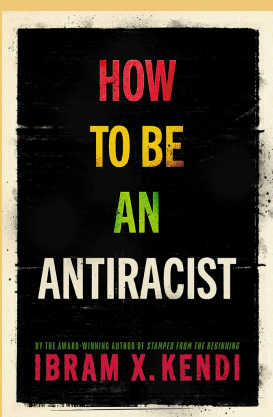
STEP 2: START A CONVERSATION WITH YOURSELF

WATCH MOVIES / DOCUMENTARIES / SERIES

Africa's Great Civilizations by Henry Louis Gates
Reconstruction: America After the Civil War by Henry Louis Gates
13th by Ava DuVernay
Jackie Robinson by Ken Burns
Just Mercy by Destin Daniel Cretton
Selma by Ava DuVernay
Malcolm X by Spike Lee
Little Fires Everywhere by Liz Tigelaar



READ BOOKS AND LISTEN TO PODCASTS



Stamped From the Beginning or How to be an Anti-Racist by Ibram X. Kendi
Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? by Beverly Daniel Tatum
Caste by Isabel Wilkerson
Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation by Latasha Morrison
Academic Profiling by Barbara Ochoa
One Person, No Vote by Carol Anderson
Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates
White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo
Code Switch from NPR
1619 from The New York Times

WORK ON YOURSELF

Share your background. This allows you and your students to identify what factors may create prejudice that comes to bear in your teaching.

Reflect on your prejudices when you have a knee-jerk reaction to a student or situation.

Name race when relevant including whiteness.

STEP 3: CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL STUDENTS

CONSIDER YOUR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Communicate the core values you expect to be followed instead of listing rules. This does a better job of communicating your expectations and allows you to coach instead of punish when a student has difficulty following the norms. "In this classroom, we are respectful, responsible, caring, and honest."

De-escalate instead of digging in when possible. Send students out of class only as a last resort.

Enforce dress code violations with care. Ask yourself if this dress code violation genuinely disruptive or creating a safety problem? Traditional dress codes are based on white American cultural norms.

BE MINDFUL WITH LANGUAGE

Avoid speaking about the past with the collective “we.” Instead, acknowledge the differences that white people and people of color experienced in context.

Stop asking “Where are you from?” This question alienates people of color.

Stop labeling racially segregated spaces like schools or neighborhoods as “bad” or “good.” This habit, perpetuated by school ratings, creates a harmful myth.

Pronounce students’ names correctly! Let them know that you love them through this simple act.

AVOID TOKENISM

Instead of celebrating outstanding people of color as the first of their race or ethnicity to be “good enough,” include the parts of their story that highlight how they overcame institutional racism.

For example: Jackie Robinson was not the first black baseball player good enough to play in the major leagues. Jackie Robinson was the first black baseball player allowed to play in the major leagues by all-white owners and league commissioners. He is a hero not for his outstanding talent--which is undeniable--but for his willingness to speak out for racial justice with the platform he was given as a famous baseball player.

ESTABLISH NORMS FOR DISCUSSING SENSITIVE TOPICS.

Acknowledge the diversity of beliefs and backgrounds before beginning. Establishing this fact will allow students the opportunity to orient themselves for discomfort.

Foster civility in the classroom. Keep the discussion based on the topic at hand, using evidence drawn from common sources from multiple points of view. Redirect the conversation when it becomes focused on an individual.

Intervene when you hear potentially hurtful remarks. When a student says something that could be offensive, immediately address it by moving the conversation to a discussion of why words matter.

Create the expectation that all voices are heard. You want everyone to participate to foster greater understanding.

Provide sentence stems to foster a civil discussion. Students may not know how to start civilly, and sentence stems are a huge help.

- Clarify and Summarize
 - Could you please say your argument in a single sentence?
 - To be clear, you are saying _____?
 - I am confused by what you meant by _____. Can you explain.
 - So you're saying that _____?
 - My whole point is _____.
- Agree
 - I agree with _____ because _____.
 - The point about _____ was important because _____.
 - Another piece of evidence that supports _____ is _____.
- Disagree
 - While I understand your argument, I believe _____ because _____.
 - The evidence I have gathered leads me to believe something different.
 - We see _____ differently because _____.
- Build an argument
 - Yes, and _____.
 - To build on what you said, _____.
 - That claim is interesting because _____.

STEP 4: PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH SKILLS FOR TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

EXPOSE YOUR STUDENTS TO DIVERSE VOICES AUTHENTICALLY

Read primary sources from diverse sources to expose students to authentic voices from history.

- Ask students "What is America?" in a concept development lesson. Read "Let America Be America Again" by Langston Hughes and revisit the concept of America.
- Read "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" by Frederick Douglass alongside the Declaration of Independence.
- Compare "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech by Malcolm X, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, and "What We Want" by Stokely Carmichael to provide a deeper understanding of the Civil Rights Movements of the 1960s.
- Compare and contrast the Iroquois Confederacy's *Great Law of Peace* and the US Constitution to examine how Indigenous culture influenced the Founding Fathers.
- Examine the Alcatraz Proclamation of the Indians of All Tribes when discussing the settlement and development of the United States.
- Check out the Asian American immigration stories from Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation.
- Study Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez's speeches from the Delano Grape Strike. Compare their concerns with the African American Civil Rights movement.

Examine art, music, and literature from diverse sources. What is made emotional to students will leave a lasting impression.

- View *the Migration Series* by Jacob Lawrence. Explore why black people left the south, where they went, and what challenges they faced and are still facing today.
- Use *The House on Mango Street* to teach short story writing. Ask students to model their work on Cisneros's style.
- Listen to "Strange Fruit" by Billie Holiday, analyze the lyrics by Abel Meeropol, and watch the choreography by Pearl Primus to take a deep dive into the topic of lynching in America without showing students gruesome, dehumanizing images.
- Watch Titus Kaphar's TED Talks about art amending history. Examine the works of Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sberal and develop plans for amending the history of public art and monuments.
- Listen to "Immigrants (We Get the Job Done)" from *Hamilton Mixtape* to open a discussion of immigration.
- Watch a clip from *Never Have I Ever* by Mindy Kaling to start a discussion of the Asian Model Minority myth.

TEACH CRITICAL THINKING

Teach what the College Board calls *sourcing* for the AP histories. Students need to develop the life skill of examining the source of information for point of view, purpose, historical context, and audience. Students learn to use sourcing information to determine the relevance and limitations of information and opinions.

Check out *Thinking Like a Lawyer* by Colin Seale. He asserts that teaching critical thinking skills to all students is a "pathway to racial justice." His book provides practical tips on how to do that.

Use the Artful Thinking routines developed by Project Zero from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. These simple routines can be used to tackle any complex material, especially visual art, music, and literature. The exploring viewpoints routines are especially useful.



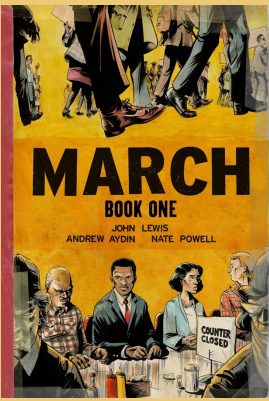
Draw a throughline of history to current events. Ask students to relate what they are studying in history to the news. Students will build empathy and understanding when history comes into their world of understanding.

Fact check children's books. Read a children's book about a historical figure and ask students to fact check it. This teaches them the skills they need to tackle misinformation in their education and on the internet.

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STEP 5: START THE CONVERSATION WITH RESOURCES FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

BOOKS ABOUT THE BLACK EXPERIENCE



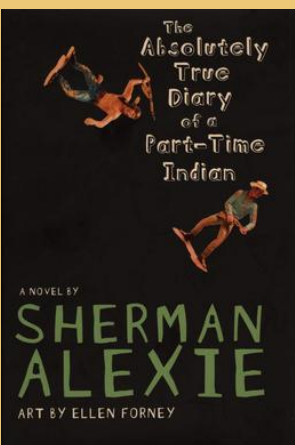
The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas
Born a Crime by Trevor Noah
One Person, No Vote: How Not All Voters are Treated Equally by Carol Anderson with Tonya Bolden
Just Mercy (Adapted for Young Adults): A True Story of the Fight for Justice by Bryan Stephenson
Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix by Jason Reynolds and Ibrahm X. Kendi
March Books 1-3 by Rep. John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell

BOOKS ABOUT THE LATINX EXPERIENCE

The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo
With the Fire on High by Elizabeth Acevedo
Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo
The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros
Bless Me Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya



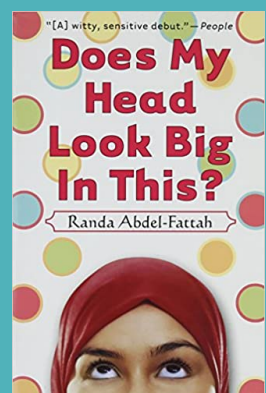
BOOKS ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCE



There, There by Tommy Orange
The Absolute True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie

BOOKS ABOUT THE ASIAN EXPERIENCE

Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card by Sara Saedi
Does My Head Look Big In This? by Randa Abdel-Fattah
American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang
To All the Boys I've Ever Loved Before by Jenny Han
They Called Us Enemy by George Takei, Justin Eisinger, and Steven Scott



AFRICAN AMERICAN ART TO EXPLORE



Napoleon Leading the Army over the Alps by Kehinde Wiley

Paintings by Kehinde Wiley
Paintings by Amy Sherald
Quilts and Paintings by Faith Ringgold
Paintings by Laura Wheeler Waring
Paintings, sculpture, and performance art by Theaster Gates
Paintings by Jacob Lawrence
Paintings by Aaron Douglas

OTHER ART TO EXPLORE

Paintings by Diego Rivera
Paintings by Frida Kahlo
Paintings by Che-se-quah (Joan Hill)
Paintings by Michael Kabotie and Delbridge Honanie
Paintings by Roger Shimomura
Paintings by Amrita Sher-Gil



Hopi Visions: Journey of the Human Spirit by Michael Kabotie and Delbridge Honanie