

# Talking About Race in the Classroom

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# Why Now?

Protests are being seen all across the country. Our students know what is happening and they need opportunities to express what they are feeling.

As educators, we must be part of the solution which requires providing access and exposure to antiracist curriculum that lifts up voices of marginalized populations.



Indy Star



Daily Herald



# Talking About Race

Why are we so  
uncomfortable talking  
about race?



# Talking About Race

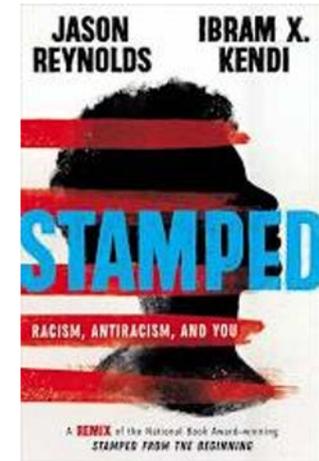
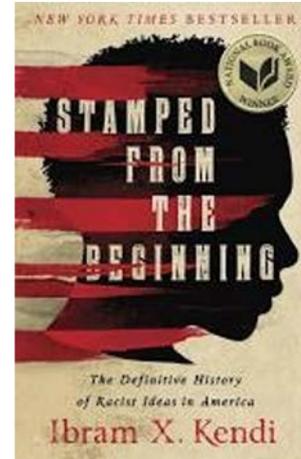
What you can expect:

- Build a foundation for understanding racial inequities in our society
- Gain a vocabulary to use with student and colleagues to be able to discuss race in a deeper way
- Example strategies to use in the classroom when incorporating fiction or nonfiction texts that address racial issues



# Giving Credit

- *Stamped from the Beginning* by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi - definitive history of racist ideas in America
- *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds- remix of original text for YA readers



# Indoctrination

the process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically

“We believe the one who has the power. He is the one who gets to write the story. So when you study history, you must always ask yourself, whose story am I missing? Whose voice was suppressed so that this voice could come forth?”

— Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing*



# Talking about Race

## Good vs. Bad Binary

“ If, as a white person, I conceptualize racism as a binary and I place myself on the ‘not racist’ side, what further action is required of me?” (DiAngelo 73).

Racist=Bad	Not Racist=Good
Ignorant	Progressive
Bigoted	Educated
Prejudiced	Open-minded
Mean-spirited	Well-intentioned
Old	Young
Southern	Northern



# Racism is on a Continuum



Kendi & Reynolds



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# Continuum of Racism

## Segregationist:

A person who supports the policy of enforced separation of different racial groups



# Continuum of Racism

## Assimilationist:

A person who advocates or participates in racial or cultural integration



# Continuum of Racism

## Antiracist:

A person who opposes racism and promotes racial tolerance



# Historical Events Promoting Assimilation

## Reconstructionist Amendments

Amendments that were intended to provide equal rights to Black and White people, but still we see major disparities on how these are enforced.



### 13th Amendment

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

### 14th Amendment

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

### 15th Amendment

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.



# Historical Events Promoting Assimilation

## Brown v. Board of Education

In 1954 the Supreme Court decided that schools would be integrated racially even if they were providing separate but equal educational experiences.



Why did only black students integrate into white schools and no white students integrated into black schools?

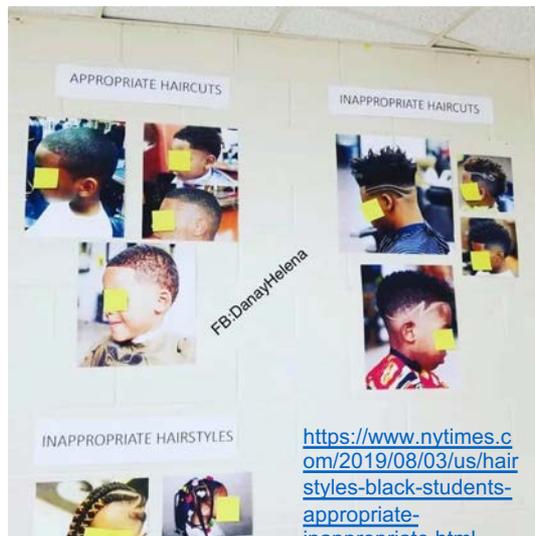
- All teachers of color lost their jobs
- All students were required to learn a curriculum built around white culture
- Acceptable rules and behaviours were determined by the default culture (White Supremacist) that was already in place



# Assimilation in Societal Norms

## Physical Appearance

### Hair styles



### Clothing



<https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2018/12/20/michelle-obama-can-wear-whatever-she-wants-now-what-she-wants-is-sparkly-thigh-high-boots/>

### Accessories



<https://twitter.com/PresidentPat/status/829447814065319936?s=20>



# Assimilation in Societal Norms

## Assimilation in Communication

Music



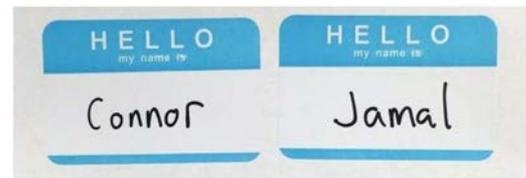
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/07/09/us/arizona-rap-teen-killed-hate-crime-trnd/index.html>

African American Vernacular (AAV)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1n3JrRhssQ&list=PL6voth3Rwo44FAByZNWA5byIEcynvq3es&index=17>

Names



[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-sounding-names-study\\_n\\_561697a5e4b0dbb8000d687f](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-sounding-names-study_n_561697a5e4b0dbb8000d687f)



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# Assimilation in Societal Norms

## Assimilation in the Media

- People who decide which TV shows we see: 93% white
- People who decide which books we read (publishers): 90% white
- People who decide which news is covered: 85% white
- People who decide which music is produced: 95% white
- People who directed the one hundred top-grossing films of all time, worldwide: 95% white

(DiAngelo 31)

Whose stories are being told?



# Assimilation in Societal Norms

## Assimilation in the Media



Black-ish

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5MUu\\_NKSWo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5MUu_NKSWo)

Mainstream  
News



Family Matters



# Reflection

**Think of examples of assimilation in your own school or community.**



# In Literature

## *Becoming* by Michelle Obama

“Cathy, one of my roommates, would surface in the news many years later, describing with embarrassment something I hadn’t known when we lived together: her mother, a school teacher from New Orleans, had been so appalled that her daughter had been assigned a black roommate that she’d badgered the university to separate us. Her mother also gave an interview, confirming the story and providing more context. Having been raised in a home where the n-word was part of the family lexicon, having had a grandfather who’d been a sheriff and used to brag about chasing black people out of his town, she’d been ‘horrified’ as she put it, by my proximity to her daughter” (Obama 75).

- Where on the spectrum of racism does this example fit: segregation, assimilation, or antiracism?
- Explain what led you to decide where this example falls on the spectrum of racism.
- How would this situation need to be different for it to move toward becoming antiracist?



# In Literature

## *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas

“It’s not my fault she can’t get over a joke from freaking freshman year! Just like it’s not my fault you can’t get over what happened to Khalil.’

‘So I’m supposed to ‘get over’ the fact he was murdered?’

‘Yes, get over it! He was probably gonna end up dead anyway.’

‘Are you serious?’ Maya says.

‘He was a drug dealer and a gangbanger,’ Hailey says.

‘Somebody was gonna kill him eventually.’

‘Get over it?’ I repeat

She folds her arms and does this little neck movement. ‘Um, yeah? Isn’t that what I said? The cop probably did everyone a favor. One less drug dealer on the--’” (Thomas 341).

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# In Literature

## *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi

“Once they rounded the block past an ice cream parlor, they noticed a hiring sign on a store door, and decided to go in so that Robert could talk to someone. As they walked in, Willie tripped on the lip of the door stoop, and Robert caught her in his arms. He helped her get steady, and smiled at her once she was on her feet, kissing her cheek quickly. Once they were inside, Willie’s eyes met those of the store clerk, and she felt a cold wind travel that sight line, from his eyes to hers, then all the way down to the coalpit of her stomach.

‘Excuse me, sir,’ Robert said. ‘I saw the sign outside there.’

‘You married to a black woman?’ the store clerk said, his eyes never leaving Willie’s. Robert looked at Willie.

Robert spoke softly, ‘I worked in a store before. Down south.’

‘No job here,’ the man said.

‘I’m saying I have experience with--’

‘No job there,’ the man repeated, more gruffly this time.

‘Let’s go Robert,’ Willie said. She was already halfway out the door by the time the man had opened his mouth the second time.” (Gyasi 107).

- Where on the spectrum of racism does this example fit: segregation, assimilation, or antiracism?
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# Assimilation

Is Assimilation ever necessary  
for survival or success?

- Interacting with the police
- Filling out a college application
  - Interviewing for a job

Assimilation is an armor one puts  
on to survive in the world; **it is  
not part of their identity.**



# Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on what we discussed today.

What is your biggest takeaway or question you still have?



# Sources

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# Thank You.

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