

READING



for Racial Justice



Do the best you
can until you
know better.
Then when you
know better, do
better.

-Maya Angelou

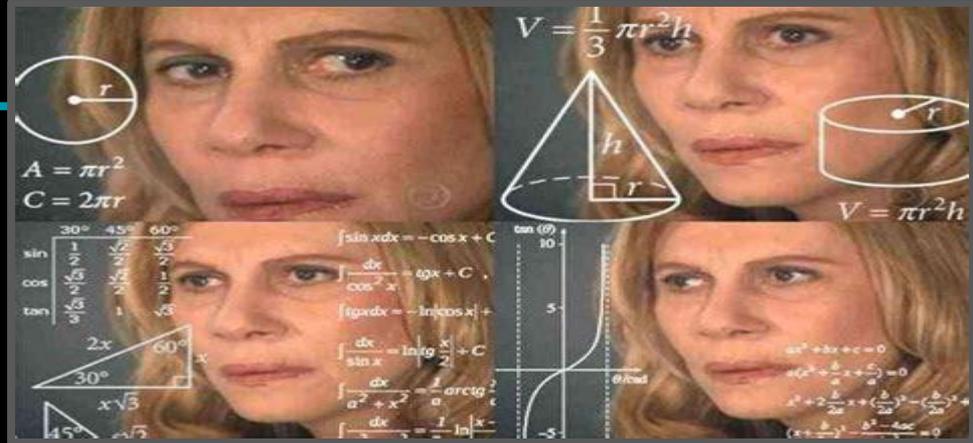
Racial Literacy

...racial literacy develops an understanding of how race shapes the “social, economic, political, and educational experiences of individuals and groups.”



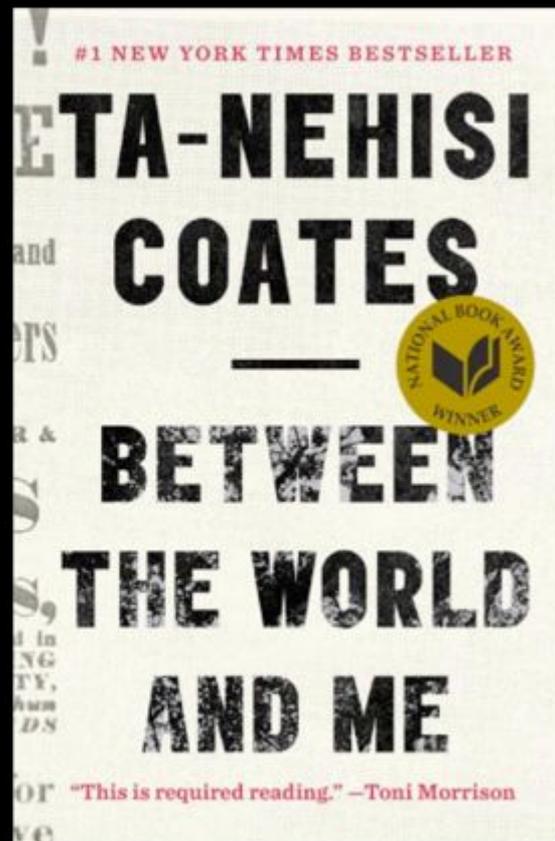
Racial Literacy

1. recognition of racism as a contemporary rather than historical problem,
2. belief in the constructedness and socialization of racial identity,
3. development of language practices through which to discuss race, racism, and antiracism



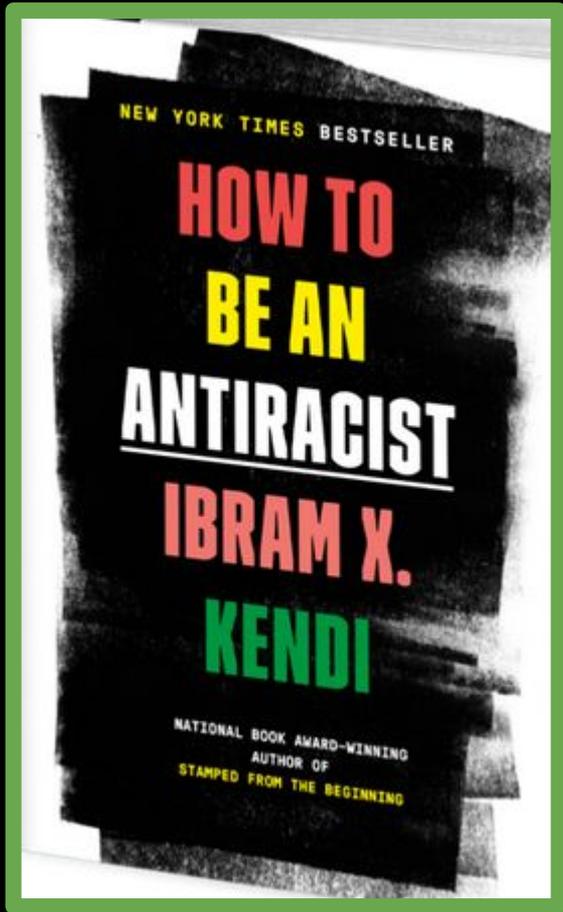
... race is the child of
racism, not the father.

Ta-Nehisi Coates
Between the World and Me



The concept of race deployed in the United States withstands no serious scientific rigor. There are no distinct "races" of humankind.





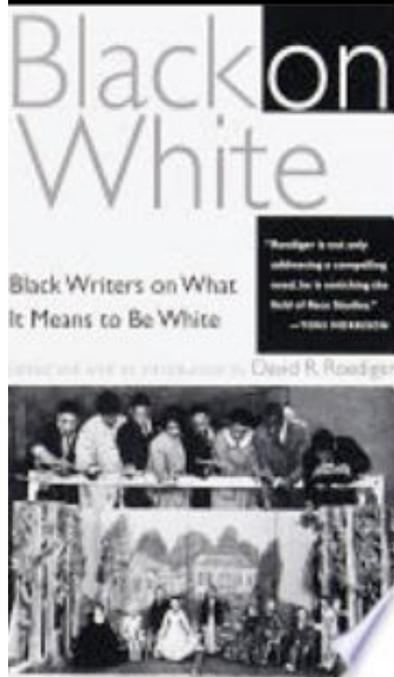
“Race is a mirage, but one we do well to see, while never forgetting it is a mirage, never forgetting that is the powerful light of racist powers that makes the mirage” (p. 37)

Ibram X. Kendi (2019) *How to Be An Antiracist*

Whiteness is defined as an ideology untied to certain bodies, but an articulation of disparate elements—some racial, some not—in order to build a racial cosmology that benefits Whites in absolute ways and minority groups relative only to one another.

Whites recruit class, gender, and sexual interests into the general phenomenon of race contestation and specifically into the logic of Whiteness. For instance, White women, working-class Whites, gay and lesbian Whites, and disabled Whites—groups that suffer in their own right despite their Whiteness—are consoled by the power and promise of Whiteness, what Du Bois (1935/1998) earlier called Whites' psychological and public wages (see also Roediger, 1991).

As such, there is no essence to Whiteness, which is a contingent category that morphs and shifts according to context and history (Prashad, 2000). It has no ultimate loyalty to this or that group belonging to Whiteness proper. Its membership changes over time and may include as brethren two groups with longstanding ethnic animosities toward one another, such as the English and Irish within a U.S. understanding. Like capitalism, Whiteness has no ultimate sense of loyalty and cares primarily about perpetuating race relations with Whiteness at the top of the hierarchy.



America became white—the people who, as they claim, “settled the country” became white—because of the necessity of denying the Black presence, and justifying the Black subjugation. No community can be based on such a principle—or in other words, no community can be established on a genocidal lie.

(Baldwin, p.178, in Roediger, 1998).

Implicit bias (also referred to as unconscious bias) is the process of associating stereotypes or attitudes towards categories of people without conscious awareness – which can result in actions and decisions that are at odds with one's conscious beliefs about fairness and equality.

BIPoC: An acronym used to refer to black, Indigenous and people of color. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.

People of Color: A collective term for men and women of Asian, African, Latinx and Native American backgrounds, as opposed to the collective “White”.

Co-conspirator

Describes someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of racial identity, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) Co-conspirators acknowledge disadvantage and oppression of other groups; take risks and supportive action on their behalf; commit to reducing their own complicity or collusion in oppression of those groups, and invest in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression

If you have come
to help me you are
wasting your time.
But if you have
come because your
liberation is bound
up with mine, then
let us work together.

ABORIGINAL
ACTIVIST'S
GROUP
QUEENSLAND, 1971.

Antiracist education is a theory of learning and action to help us do the important work of dismantling racism. It explicitly highlights, critiques, and challenges institutional racism. It addresses how racist beliefs and ideologies structure one-on-one interactions and personal relationships. It examines and challenges how institutions support and maintain disadvantages and advantages along racial lines.



Affirm the dignity and humanity of all people.

Antiracist educators put people, particularly students, at the center of instruction. The curriculum champions the diverse and complex human experience. Antiracist schools recognize the value and possibility in all students and ensure that no one feels unsafe, invisible, or unheard.



Embrace historical truths.

Antiracist educators reject incomplete narratives that hide more than they reveal and they are adept at confronting hard histories in the classroom. The curriculum counters dominant narratives by including multiple perspectives and balances stories of oppression with those of agency, resistance, and perseverance. In antiracist schools, students uncover the roots of present-day injustice.



Develop a critical consciousness.

Antiracist educators recognize how dominant narratives perpetuate marginalization. The curriculum explicitly addresses power and marginalization. In antiracist classrooms, humility and courage drive dialogues among students and educators that expose the hidden and visible ways racism manifests in individuals and societies.



Recognize race and confront racism.

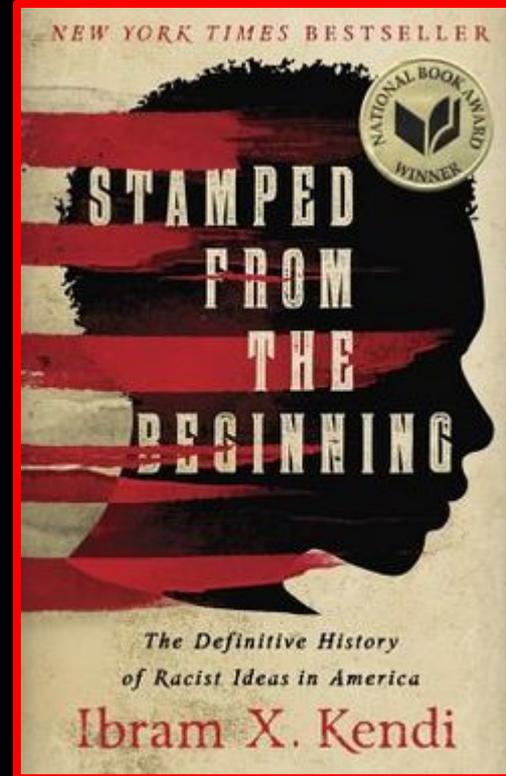
Antiracist educators understand intersectionality and recognize that all individuals are affected by living in a racialized society. The curriculum demystifies difference and demolishes stereotypes, encouraging students to see each other more fully. Confronting racism means explicitly addressing bias, racism, power, privilege, and oppression.



Create just systems.

Antiracist educators focus on the complexity of systems, particularly those in schools. The curriculum invites students to examine how policies and practices operate to impede or advance human potential. Antiracist schools dismantle inequitable systems and create new ones.

An antiracist America can only be guaranteed if principled antiracists are in power, and then antiracist policies become law of the land and then antiracist ideas become the common sense of the people, and then antiracist common sense holds those antiracist leaders and policies accountable. (from Epilogue, p. 510)



Questions to ponder as you read



What will you **stop** doing?

What will you **continue** doing?

What will you **start** doing?

In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be antiracist. (1979)

To Do

Go to this form and enter your name and email address:

[Sign up sheet](#)

You will receive an invitation in the next week or so to join our Canvas site.

Throughout the summer there will be various discussion prompts you can engage.

I will also post additional resources relate to various texts.