

Epiphany Racial Justice Group Reading and Media Resource List

BOOKS (YOUNG ADULT/TEEN)

(Organized By Last Name of Author)

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

1969

Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou's debut memoir is a modern American classic beloved worldwide. Her life story is told in the documentary film *And Still I Rise*, as seen on PBS's *American Masters*.

Here is a book as joyous and painful, as mysterious and memorable, as childhood itself. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* captures the longing of lonely children, the brute insult of bigotry, and the wonder of words that can make the world right. Maya Angelou's debut memoir is a modern American classic beloved worldwide.

Sent by their mother to live with their devout, self-sufficient grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the ache of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash." At eight years old and back at her mother's side in St. Louis, Maya is attacked by a man many times her age—and has to live with the consequences for a lifetime. Years later, in San Francisco, Maya learns that love for herself, the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas of great authors ("I met and fell in love with William Shakespeare") will allow her to be free instead of imprisoned.

Poetic and powerful, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* will touch hearts and change minds for as long as people read.

We are Not Equal: Understanding our Racial Divide

2018

Carol Anderson & Tonya Bolden

History texts often teach that the United States has made a straight line of progress toward Black equality. The reality is more complex: milestones like the end of slavery, school integration, and equal voting rights have all been met with racist legal and political maneuverings meant to limit that progress. *We Are Not Yet Equal* examines five of these moments: The end of the Civil War and Reconstruction was greeted with Jim Crow laws; the promise of new opportunities in the North during the Great Migration was limited when blacks were physically blocked from moving away from the South; the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was met with the shutting down of public schools throughout the South; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 led to laws that disenfranchised millions of African American voters and a War on Drugs that disproportionately targeted blacks; and the election of President Obama led to an outburst of violence including the death of Black teen Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri as well as the election of Donald Trump. Including photographs and archival imagery and extra context, backmatter, and resources specifically for teens, this book provides essential history to help work for an equal future.

Their Eyes Were Watching God

1937

Zora Neal Hurston

When first published in 1937, this novel about a proud, independent black woman was generally dismissed by male reviewers. Out of print for almost thirty years, but since its reissue in paperback edition by the University of Illinois Press in 1978, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* has become the most widely read and highly acclaimed novel in the canon of African-American literature.

With haunting sympathy and piercing immediacy, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* tells the story of Janie Crawford's evolving selfhood through three marriages. Light-skinned, long-haired, dreamy as a child, Janie grows up expecting better treatment than she gets until she meets Tea Cake, a younger man who engages her heart and spirit in equal measure and gives her the chance to enjoy life without being a man's mule or ornament. Though Janie's story does not end happily, it does draw to a satisfying conclusion. Janie is one black woman who doesn't have to live lost in sorrow, bitterness, fear, or foolish romantic dreams, instead Janie proclaims that she has done "two things everybody's got tuh do fuh theyselves. They got tuh go tuh God, and they got tuh find out about livin' fuh theyselves."

This Book Is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do the Work

2020

Tiffany Jewel

Who are you? What is racism? Where does it come from? Why does it exist? What can you do to disrupt it? Learn about social identities, the history of racism and resistance against it, and how you can use your anti-racist lens and voice to move the world toward equity and liberation.

Gain a deeper understanding of your anti-racist self as you progress through 20 chapters that spark introspection, reveal the **origins of racism that we are still experiencing**, and give you **the courage and power to undo it**. Each chapter builds on the previous one as you learn more about yourself and racial oppression. **20 activities get you thinking and help you grow with the knowledge. All you need is a pen and paper.**

Author Tiffany Jewell, an anti-bias, anti-racist educator and activist, builds solidarity beginning with the language she chooses—using gender neutral words to honor everyone who reads the book. Illustrator Aurélia Durand brings the stories and characters to life with kaleidoscopic vibrancy.

After examining the **concepts of social identity, race, ethnicity, and racism**, learn about some of **the ways people of different races have been oppressed**, from indigenous Americans and Australians being sent to boarding school to be "civilized" to a generation of Caribbean immigrants once welcomed to the UK being threatened with deportation by strict immigration laws. **Find hope in stories of strength, love, joy, and revolution** that are part of our history, too, with such figures as the former slave Toussaint Louverture, who led a rebellion against white planters that eventually led to Haiti's independence, and Yuri Kochiyama, who, after spending time in an internment camp for Japanese Americans during WWII, dedicated her life to supporting political prisoners and advocating reparations for those wrongfully interned.

Learn language and phrases to interrupt and disrupt racism. So, when you hear a microaggression or racial slur, you'll know how to act next time. This book is **written for EVERYONE who lives in this racialized society**—including the young person who doesn't know how to speak up to the racist adults in their life, the kid who has lost themselves at times trying to fit into the dominant culture, the children who have been harmed (physically and emotionally) because no one stood up for them or they

couldn't stand up for themselves, and also for their families, teachers, and administrators. With this book, **be empowered to actively defy racism and xenophobia** to create a community (large and small) that truly honors everyone.

Walking in the Wind

2015

John Lewis

The award-winning national bestseller, *Walking with the Wind*, is one of our most important records of the American civil rights movement. Told by John Lewis, who Cornel West calls a “national treasure,” this is a gripping first-hand account of the fight for civil rights and the courage it takes to change a nation.

In 1957, a teenaged boy named John Lewis left a cotton farm in Alabama for Nashville, the epicenter of the struggle for civil rights in America. Lewis's adherence to nonviolence guided that critical time and established him as one of the movement's most charismatic and courageous leaders. Lewis's leadership in the Nashville Movement—a student-led effort to desegregate the city of Nashville using sit-in techniques based on the teachings of Gandhi—set the tone for major civil rights campaigns of the 1960s. Lewis traces his role in the pivotal Selma marches, Bloody Sunday, and the Freedom Rides. Inspired by his mentor, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lewis's vision and perseverance altered history. In 1986, he ran and won a congressional seat in Georgia, and remains in office to this day, continuing to enact change.

Stamped: Racism, AntiRacism and You

2020

Jason Reynolds & Ibram X. Kendi

A timely, crucial, and empowering exploration of racism—and antiracism—in America

This is NOT a history book.

This is a book about the here and now.

A book to help us better understand why we are where we are.

A book about race.

The construct of race has always been used to gain and keep power, to create dynamics that separate and silence. This remarkable reimagining of Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award-winning *Stamped from the Beginning* reveals the history of racist ideas in America, and inspires hope for an antiracist future. It takes you on a race journey from then to now, shows you why we feel how we feel, and why the poison of racism lingers. It also proves that while racist ideas have always been easy to fabricate and distribute, they can also be discredited.

Through a gripping, fast-paced, and energizing narrative written by beloved award-winner Jason Reynolds, this book shines a light on the many insidious forms of racist ideas—and on ways readers can identify and stamp out racist thoughts in their daily lives

The Hate U Give: A Novel

2017

Angie Thomas

* This book was made into a movie which is listed in the Movie/Documentary Section of this list.

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when

Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

On the Come Up: A Novel

2019

Angie Thomas

Sixteen-year-old Bri wants to be one of the greatest rappers of all time. Or at least win her first battle. As the daughter of an underground hip hop legend who died right before he hit big, Bri's got massive shoes to fill.

But it's hard to get your come up when you're labeled a hoodlum at school, and your fridge at home is empty after your mom loses her job. So Bri pours her anger and frustration into her first song, which goes viral . . . for all the wrong reasons.

Bri soon finds herself at the center of a controversy, portrayed by the media as more menace than MC. But with an eviction notice staring her family down, Bri doesn't just want to make it—she *has* to. Even if it means becoming the very thing the public has made her out to be.

Insightful, unflinching, and full of heart, *On the Come Up* is an ode to hip hop from one of the most influential literary voices of a generation. It is the story of fighting for your dreams, even as the odds are stacked against you; and about how, especially for young black people, freedom of speech isn't always free.