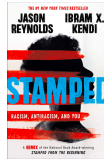


Chapter 1: Stamped



ELA 1.1 Choose and Apply Reading Strategies

As I read high school level texts (e.g., 1040L-1385L), I can use a variety of strategies to make meaning of the story/source.

questioning, inferring, connecting, predicting, visualizing

I can analyze (e.g., discussion, journal, conference) my use of strategies (e.g., how I use them, which ones help me and when) to better understand myself as a reader and to gain a deeper understanding of the story/source I am reading.

Directions:

As we read Chapter 1 of *Stamped*, we will use our reading strategies such as predicting, connecting, inferring, and making connections, but you will add a new strategy, which is called visualizing.

In addition, after completing the reading, you will answer guided questions that help you to gain understanding about the following questions:

- What is the role of storytelling in myth creation?
- What were the early stories and myths about Africans that became the basis of racism towards Africans?

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1. Read and annotate Chapter 1.
 2. Note the **text features** (title, subheadings, scan the first few lines) and **make a prediction** about what you think this chapter will be about.

My Prediction

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What is my purpose for reading?

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The Story of the World's First Racist

BEFORE WE BEGIN, LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT. This is not a history book. I repeat, this is *not* a history book. At least not like the ones you're used to reading in school. The ones that feel more like a list of dates (there will be some), with an occasional war here and there, a declaration (*definitely* gotta mention that), a constitution (that too), a court case or two, and, of course, the paragraph that's read during Black History Month (Harriet! Rosa! Martin!). This isn't that. This isn't a history book. Or, at least, it's not that kind of history book. Instead, what this is, is a book that contains history. A history directly connected to our lives as we live them right this minute. This is a present book. A book about the here and now. A book that hopefully will help us better understand why we are where we are as Americans, specifically as our identity pertains to race.

Uh-oh. The R-word. Which for many of us still feels rated R. Or can be matched only with another R word—*run*. But don't. Let's all just take a deep breath. Inhale. Hold it. Exhale and breathe out:

RACE.

See? Not so bad. Except for the fact that race has been a strange and persistent poison in American history, which I'm sure you already know. I'm also sure that, depending on where you are and where you've grown up, your experiences with it—or at least the moment in which you recognize it—may vary. Some may believe race isn't an issue anymore, that it's a thing of the past, old tales of bad times. Others may be certain that race is like an alligator, a dinosaur that never went extinct but instead evolved. And though hiding in murky swamp waters, that leftover monster is still deadly. And then there are those of you who know that race and, more critical, racism are *everywhere*. Those of you who see racism regularly robbing people of liberty, whether as a violent stickup or as a sly

pickpocket. The thief known as racism is all around. This book, this *not history* history book, this present book, is meant to take you on a race journey from then to now, to show why we feel how we feel, why we live how we live, and why this poison, whether recognizable or unrecognizable, whether it's a scream or a whisper, just won't go away.

This isn't the be-all end-all. This isn't the whole meal. It's more like an appetizer. Something in preparation for the feast to come. Something to get you excited about choosing your seat—the right seat—at the table.

Oh! And there are three words I want you to keep in mind. Three words to describe the people we'll be exploring:

Segregationists. Assimilationists. Antiracists.

There are serious definitions to these things, but... I'm going to give you mine.

Segregationists are haters. Like, *real* haters. People who hate you for not being like them. Assimilationists are people who like you, but only with quotation marks. Like...“like” you. Meaning, they “like” you because you're like them. And then there are antiracists. They *love* you because you're like you. But it's important to note, life can rarely be wrapped into single-word descriptions. It isn't neat and perfectly shaped. So sometimes, over the course of a lifetime (and even over the course of a day), people can take on and act out ideas represented by more than one of these three identities. Can be *both, and*. Just keep that in mind as we explore these folks.

And, actually, these aren't just the words we'll be using to describe the people in this book. They're also the words we'll be using to describe you. And me. All of us.

So where do we start? We might as well just jump in and begin with the world's first racist. I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, *How could anyone know who the world's first racist was?* Or you're thinking, *Yeah, tell us, so we can find out where he lives.* Well, he's dead. Been dead for six hundred years. Thankfully. And before I tell you about him, I have to give you a little context.

Europe. That's where we are. Where he was. As I'm sure you've learned by now, the Europeans (Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch,

French, British) were conquering everyone, because if there's one thing all history books *do* say, it's that Europeans conquered the majority of the world. The year is 1415, and Prince Henry (there's always a Prince Henry) convinced his father, King John of Portugal, to basically pull a caper and capture the main Muslim trading depot on the northeastern tip of Morocco. Why? Simple. Prince Henry was jealous. The Muslims had riches, and if Prince Henry could get the Muslims out of the way, then those riches and resources could be easily accessed. Stolen. A jack move. A robbery. Plain and simple. The take, a bountiful supply of gold. And Africans. That's right, the Portuguese were capturing Moorish people, who would become prisoners of war in a war the Moors hadn't planned on fighting but had to, to survive. And by prisoners, I mean property. Human property.

But neither Prince Henry nor King John of Portugal was given the title *World's First Racist*, because the truth is, capturing people wasn't an unusual thing back then. Just a fact of life. That illustrious moniker would go to a man named neither Henry nor John but something way more awesome, who did something *not* awesome at all—Gomes Eanes de Zurara. Zurara, which sounds like a cheerleader chant, did just that. Cheerleaded? Cheerled? Whatever. He was a cheerleader. Kind of. Not the kind who roots for a team and pumps up a crowd, but he *was* a man who made sure the team he played for was represented and heralded as great. He made sure Prince Henry was looked at as a brilliant quarterback making ingenious plays, and that every touchdown was the mark of a superior player. How did Zurara do this? Through literature. Storytelling.

He wrote the story, a biography of the life and slave trading of Prince Henry. Zurara was an obedient commander in Prince Henry's Military Order of Christ and would eventually complete his book, which would become the first defense of African slave trading. It was called *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*. In it, Zurara bragged about the Portuguese being early in bringing enslaved Africans from the Western Sahara Cape, and spoke about owning humans as if they were exclusive pairs of sneakers. Again, this was common. But he *upped* the brag by also explaining what made Portugal different from their European neighbors in terms of slave trading. The Portuguese now saw enslaving people as missionary work. A mission from God to help civilize and

Christianize the African “savages.” At least, that’s what Zurara claimed. And the reason this was a one-up on his competitors, the Spanish and Italians, was because they were still enslaving eastern Europeans, as in White people (not called White people back then). Zurara’s ace, his trick shot, was that the Portuguese had enslaved Africans (of all shades, by the way) supposedly for the purpose of saving their wretched souls.

Zurara made Prince Henry out to be some kind of youth minister canvassing the street, doing community work, when what Prince Henry really was, was more of a gangster. More of a shakedown man, a kidnapper getting a commission for bringing the king captives. Prince Henry’s cut, like a finder’s fee: 185 slaves, equaling money, money, money, though it was always framed as a noble cause, thanks to Zurara, who was also paid for his pen. Seems like Zurara was just a liar, right? A fiction writer? So, what makes him the world’s first racist? Well, Zurara was the first person to *write* about and *defend* Black human ownership, and this single document began the recorded history of anti-Black racist ideas. You know how the kings are always attached to where they rule? Like, King John of Portugal? Well, if Gomes Eanes de Zurara was the king of anything (which he wasn’t), he would’ve been King Gomes of Racism.

Zurara’s book, *The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*, was a hit. And you know what hits do—they spread. Like a pop song that everyone claims to hate, but everyone knows the words to, and then suddenly no one hates the song anymore, and instead it becomes an anthem. Zurara’s book became an anthem. A song sung all across Europe as the primary source of knowledge on unknown Africa and African peoples for the original slave traders and enslavers in Spain, Holland, France, and England.

Zurara depicted Africans as savage animals that needed taming. This depiction over time would even begin to convince some African people that they were inferior, like al-Hasan Ibn Muhammad al-Wazzan al-Fasi, a well-educated Moroccan who was on a diplomatic journey along the Mediterranean Sea when he was captured and enslaved. He was eventually freed by Pope Leo X, who converted him to Christianity, renamed him Johannes Leo (he later become known as Leo Africanus, or Leo the African), and possibly commissioned him to write a survey of Africa. And in that survey, Africanus echoed Zurara’s sentiments of Africans, his own

people. He said they were hypersexual savages, making him the first known African racist. When I was growing up, we called this “drinking the Kool-Aid” or “selling out.” Either way, Zurara’s documentation of the racist idea that Africans needed slavery in order to be fed and taught Jesus, and that it was all ordained by God, began to seep in and stick to the European cultural psyche. And a few hundred years later, this idea would eventually reach America.

Directions: Demonstrate your use of your reading strategies after reading and annotating the chapter.

1. Questioning

After reading the chapter, write down **three questions** that you have. Try to be as specific as you can with your questions. Next, turn to a partner and ask them the question, discussing your questions together. Write down their thoughts and a possible answer to your question. Take turns with your questions.

Question I have	What my classmates think	Possible Answer
1.		
2.		
3.		

2. Connecting

Next, add a text to self, text to text, and text to world connection with Chapter 1.

Text to Self	Text to Text	Text to World
<p>How can you connect the chapter to your life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I relate to this part because...This reminds me of...This part makes me think about...	<p>Text to text connects one story to another story</p> <p>Connect the podcasts or any other reading we have completed so far, or anything you have read outside of this class.</p>	<p>How does this statistic relate to the world around you?</p> <p>In the world....</p> <p>In life...</p> <p>Offer evidence from the text to defend your answer.</p>

3. Inferring

What can you infer about the story of the world's first racist?

What the author tells you	What you already know	What you can infer

4. Visualizing

Draw a picture of what you visualize Zurara to look like here (or anything else that was described in the chapter)

Guided Questions:

1. How would you describe the role of storytelling in the creation of the myths that were spread about Africans? What myths about Africans are included in this chapter?
2. What is an example of segregationist behavior from this chapter?

Level 10!**Thinking about your Reading Strategies:**

1. How did **using your reading strategies** during and after reading help you to understand the chapter better? How might this help you as a reader? Be specific about which strategies helped you the most.

