

Introduction:

1. [Systemic Racism Explained -- YouTube](#)

This video is a gentle introduction to systemic racism in America. It explains why Black Americans are far poorer than White Americans as a whole and touches on systemic reasons why Black Americans receive worse education and have fewer job prospects than White Americans. It does not point fingers or assign blame.

2. [Letter to Our Asian Parents -- NPR](#)

This link goes to a page that includes several cool resources, including CodeSwitch, an NPR politics that dissects many racial issues. Notably, it also includes a five-minute video simulating a conversation that young Asian Americans can have with their parents about activism for Black Americans. I think this can also be helpful for White families in areas like San Marino, CA that regularly interact with Chinese American neighbors. This video thanks our parents for their difficult journey to an America that did not always accept them, and it recognizes that they struggled to bring us closer to the American dream. It explains however that the American dream is not available for all our friends, and it distinguishes between the discrimination we Asians face and the discrimination our Black friends face. It challenges the argument that if we can build up community and wealth with hard work, Black people can too, and it makes clear that no minority group is truly safe unless we all are. You can also find it here in plain text: [Dear Mom, Dad, Uncle, Auntie](#).

3. [Ted Talk with Bryan Stevenson -- YouTube](#)

This is a funny and engaging 2012 Ted Talk by a Black lawyer. He gives moving and thoughtful contexts about why Black Americans are more likely to end up in prisons and about many other topics that just make you sit back and reconsider some of your ideas about America. He touches on his childhood and about how his grandmother was the daughter of emancipated slaves. It goes to show that slavery is still so close to our experiences now. He traces the history of emancipation to KKK terror to segregation and discusses how that history continues to impact the Black lived experience today. He is empathetic in his speaking, and his credentials and public speaking experience as an attorney give weight to his opinions. Alternatively, if your audience is not flagrantly anti-Obama and wishes to watch a shorter video, you can show them [Obama: 'Trayvon Martin could've been me' -- YouTube](#).

Privilege--What is it, and how do we understand it?

1. [What is White Privilege Really?](#)

This article breaks down the difference between white privilege and racism, what white privilege means, and how white privilege has changed in American history.

2. [White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#)

This is an essay written by a White woman named Peggy McIntosh in 1988. She received her PhD from Harvard and is currently a senior research scientist at Wellesley College in Massachusetts. This essay lists a number of activities and assumptions she can enjoy as a White woman that Black women cannot. This is a quick read. If you are sitting down to read this with a poor white person, it may be a good idea to follow this up with the following article.

3. [Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person -- Huffington Post](#)

This article is written by a self-proclaimed broke White person. She criticises some of McIntosh's examples of white privilege, because she believes that they reflect, more than anything, McIntosh's experience as a middle-class woman. She analyzes the text in an effort to

connect with the idea of White privilege and gives a new context to the term. She then moves on to discuss privilege more broadly and introduces the idea of intersectionality. This article is not academic or polite, and it uses some swear words, but it is direct, thoughtful, and empathetic.

*suggested by Alex Tangalos (she/her)

4. [Reverse Racism' Is A Giant Lie – Here's Why -- YouTube](#)

This video gives a two-minute analysis about the difference between a White person discriminating against a Black person and vice versa.

5. [The Myth of Reverse Racism -- The Atlantic](#)

This 2017 article discusses the idea of reverse racism in the context of college admissions. At the time, there was a debate in the public sphere about whether Asian-American students were disadvantaged when applying for colleges. Despite our perceptions, the idea that White and Asian students are less likely to get into choice colleges flies in the face of statistical data. It also refers to an earlier (and denser) 1993 article, [Reverse Racism, or How the Pot Got to Call the Kettle Black -- The Atlantic](#), for more in-depth reading.

Deconstructing our American History:

This is quickly growing to be the biggest section of our curriculum, but I believe the biggest barrier to understanding racism and oppression in this country is a fundamental disconnect with our American history. That said, I remain committed to making this a digestible source for you and your White audience, and some of the articles are repetitive. Therefore, I will be organizing this section in two parts: a first abbreviated section of videos and articles to give a general overview and facilitate your conversations and a second part of equally valuable resources for the history nerds who wish to continue learning and unpacking.

Part 1:

1. [Slavery to Mass Incarceration -- YouTube](#)

A quick video intro narrated by Bryan Stevenson, our Ted Talk lawyer from above. The video sets the mindset for this section about understanding our American history and all its uncomfortable turns. This video does not shy away from the deep brutalities of American slavery, oppression, and segregation, but it illustrates these concepts with painted images to make them both easier to understand and more real. This video also links this history to our present state of mass incarceration and unfair sentencing in America today.

2. [Explained | Racial Wealth Gap | FULL EPISODE | Netflix](#)

This engaging 16-minute video goes into depth about the reasons why Black families in America have accumulated much less wealth than their White counterparts, even though slavery ended in the nineteenth century. It describes efforts made by President Lincoln to ensure Black home-ownership, how those efforts were defeated after his death, and the impact of that defeat on stagnating the growth of Black wealth in the following years up to the present day. Those impacts include redlining up until the Civil Rights Movement, continued discrimination after, predatory loan financing during the 1990's and 2000's, and a great loss of Black wealth during the 2008 financial crisis. *suggested by Alex Tangalos (she/her) I highly suggest that you follow this up by looking up your neighborhood though [Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America](#). It is a database of maps drawn in the 1940's which break up neighborhoods based on desirability. You can see undesirably, majority-Black sections shaded in red. The database was put together by the University of Richmond.

3. [Genealogist Who Tracks Down Modern-Day Slavery Practices -- YouTube](#)

This video is both a nerd's dream and a sobering wake-up call. It follows Antoinette Harrell, a Louisiana genealogist, as she works on one of her many cases to uncover Black Americans' lost family histories. This 21-minute video discusses abusive share-cropping, a violent and dehumanizing practice that continued well into the 1950's and beyond, to demonstrate that slavery did not end in 1865.

4. [Unraveling the Truth About 'Black-on-White Crime' -- The Southern Poverty Law Center](#)

This painstakingly edited and interactive website tells the story about the people who created the assumption that Black men are violent and dangerous, and it explores the consequences of that assumption. It begins with academic studies after the Civil War which falsely claimed that African Americans were intellectually inferior to Whites. It then continues to describe the burgeoning and racially biased field of crime statistics that followed and the untold horrible crimes that White supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan perpetrated onto Black Americans. This article makes the point that racist academics at elite American universities were funded by extremist groups to publish research based on anecdotal findings which have greatly impacted American policy and opinion about Black folks. It asks us to reconsider our ideas about whether an underbelly of unintelligent, violent Blacks exists in America, and it helps explain where the idea came from.

Part 2:

5. [Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#)

I should start by saying many Black folks then and now do not align themselves with Dr. King, his branding, or his message because they find it incomplete and because they see him as an imperfect leader. That said, this letter is a good start to understanding that both Dr. King and our American History are so much more complex than we have been taught. In this letter, Dr. King discusses why Black Americans protest and why it is harmful when American are more outraged by the means of protest than the conditions that brought the protests to life. This letter also goes to show that Martin Luther King, Jr. was jailed, repeatedly, throughout his life for participating in protests that made the people around him very uncomfortable.

6. [A Timeline of Events that Got Us Here -- The Root](#)

This article clearly lists in chronological order, from August 1619 onward, events which oppressed African Americans and Black Americans and which inform their experiences today. It clearly shows that American racism did not simply end with the Civil Rights Movement, as described in our textbooks, but rather that it is a continuing thread in the fabric of our history and society.

7. [A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America -- NPR](#)

This article and the accompanying 35-minute podcast episode discuss redlining, a policy of residential real estate development which began in 1933 and which focused on improving property values in White communities by denying home loans to Black Americans who wished to buy residential property. The end result was that Black families were largely unable to build generational wealth throughout the 1900's and into the present day, because for most American families, their home is their nest egg for future generations. Redlining is discussed briefly in our very first introductory video, [Systemic Racism Explained -- YouTube](#). *suggested by Alex Tangalos (she/her)

8. [What I Learned From Leading Tours About Slavery at a Plantation](#)

As the title would suggest, this article is written by a former tour guide at a slave plantation. She answers five commonly asked questions and assumptions she heard about slavery during her employment. They include assumptions about “nice” slave-owners and “benign” enslavement. *suggested by Alex Tangelos (she/her)

Looting, Property Damage, and Anxiety Today:

1. [George Floyd, Minneapolis Protests, Ahmaud Arbery & Amy Cooper -- YouTube](#)

Trevor Noah discusses the broken social contract that brings us to this present moment of unrest and violence. He also asks us to consider why the sight of a burning building is so repellent when so many other acts of violence and destruction that are a part of daily life in America for Black people haven't registered in the same way.

2. [Why People Loot -- The Atlantic](#)

“For many Americans watching the country erupt in protests, the looting is the rub. Over the past week, thousands of people have taken to the streets in cities across the United States to denounce institutional racism and police violence after a Minneapolis man named George Floyd died when a police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes. But the breaking of windows, burning of property, and stealing of goods that have accompanied peaceful demonstrations make some people hesitant to throw their full support behind the protesters.”

This article discusses the motivations of looters historically and today and explains how we can fear for our safety and our property and still support the Black Lives Matter movement. It's short and insightful, and it is gentler than the article below.

3. [In Defense of Looting](#)

I want to be very clear that your target audience has to already be familiar with the concepts of white privilege and institutional racism before they read this. This is not an introductory piece on racism or direct action. This piece is unapologetic about the means with which Black Americans and other oppressed minorities use the tools at hand to bring attention to the injustices they face everyday. However, it breaks its argument down clearly and in an organized structure. It may take some work to get your audience to the place where they can read this, but it is wholly possible.

How Can You Help?

1. [How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them. -- Ted Talk](#)

This 2012 Ted Talk was given by Verna Myers, a Black lawyer and activist who graduated from Harvard. She argued that the best way to overcome our implicit biases was not to double down on color-blindness, but rather to walk closer to the people in our lives that we have biases about. Her hope is that if we can have more human experiences with different people, we will see demographics of people more fully. (She mentioned in her introduction *Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabella Wilkerson, which documents the flight of many Black families out of the South and into Northern states from 1915 to the 1970's, just in case you want even more reading.)

*originally found via [Justice in June](#)

2. [Be Less Racist: 12 Tips for White Dudes, by A White Dude](#)

I imagine this is pretty self-explanatory.

3. [Where do I donate? Why is the uprising violent? Should I go protest?](#)

This article touches on the present moment in American history with clear directions and explanations for White people.

4. [How White People Can Hold Each Other Accountable to Stop Institutional Racism](#)

Once your audience understands white privilege and are interested in making simple changes in their lives, you can show them this article by Teen Vogue with actionable instructions, including suggestions such as shopping at companies owned by Black Americans or which actively reject racism in their business practices. This is a quick read.

5. [African American or Black: Which Term Should I Use?](#)

A quick primer on good and bad ways to refer to Black Americans.

6. [What To Do Instead of Calling the Police?](#)

Your audience has learned that police can enforce systems of inequality and violence, but now what? Read this article for alternative ways of working through stressful and concerning situations in your life.

More Reading:

1. [Black History Month Library](#)

If you are so inclined, you can find at the link over a hundred full-length books in PDF form. They include the works of Angela Davis, bell hooks, and Frederick Douglass, just to name a few that were already familiar to me. These writings reflect a diversity of opinions among Black activists throughout time and space. The movement for Black lives is not a single monolith; it is helmed by so many smart people with different backgrounds and ideas about how to move forward. I encourage those with openness of mind and heart to peruse this richly organized library as you continue on your journey to better understand racism and activism in America.

2. [The Intersectionality Wars -- Vox](#)

This article discusses intersectionality, something I have thus far mostly left off the curriculum. I don't know how to explain it better than the article does itself, but suffice it to say that intersectionality helps tie racial issues that White folks may be less familiar with with ideas such as feminism and poverty that they might know about in their personal lives and history.