

Conversation Starters for Talking to Teens About Racism and Implicit Bias

Watch: [Film Shorts on Bias \(NYTimes\)](#) view 3 short video that discuss Implicit bias and aspects about the difference between racism and implicit bias, how it is formed, and what associations are made and how to understand and address it.

Take an Implicit Associations Test/s: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html> Anonymous online association tests measuring associations towards categories of people, for example: Age, Disability, Race, Gender, etc. Learn how your brain has learned implicit bias even if you don't agree or even know the associations exist.

Watch [Why Color Blindness Will NOT End Racism MTV News](#) (6 minutes) then talk about these questions:

1. Why do you think most people think race is biological?
2. Race is a "social construct" (meaning it is an idea that has been created by our society.) So if racial categories (being White, Black, etc) are an invention, why do they matter so much?
3. Structural racism refers to a *system* that disadvantages People of Color -- as opposed to an individual act. She describes three examples of structural racism. Summarize each of them in your own words.
4. According to the video, why is it important to NOT claim you are *colorblind* ("I don't see race!")

Watch [Racism is Real](#) (3 minutes) then talk about these questions:

1. How is this similar to or different from what you previously learned about racism?
2. Can White people get advantages from structural racism even if they don't seek it or want it?
3. Describe three advantages that White people might get as described in this video.

Watch [7-minute video of interviews with 12-year olds](#) reflecting on their identities. Choose two kids whose stories struck you as surprising or interesting. Then talk about who you picked and why.

Watch [Ta-Nehisi Coates on words that don't belong to you](#). (5 minutes) Ta-Nehisi Coates is a journalist and writer. In this video, he is talking at a high school about whether White people can use the "N"-word, then talk about these questions.

1. Summarize his argument for why a White person shouldn't use the "N"-word.
2. In what ways do you agree and/or disagree with his argument?
3. What questions do you still have?

Watch: [How to Overcome Our Biases: Walk Boldly Toward Them, Verna Myers](#) TED talk

Reflect on the following: "When someone is told that they made a biased comment, they often respond in three ways: (1) They focus on **intent rather than impact** ('I didn't mean to offend you; isn't that what counts?'); (2) They accuse the targeted person of **overreacting** ('Why are you being so sensitive?!' 'I was just joking!'); and/or (3) They claim themselves **as the real victim** ('Haven't you heard of freedom of speech?' 'I feel so attacked right now!') With each of these responses, they fail to take responsibility or acknowledge the harm done to the targeted person. They also don't take into account that the targeted person may have had to deal with bias many, many, many times in the past and that takes a toll." Discuss how reading this makes you feel? What other questions does it raise for you?

Watch [this video about microaggressions](#) (2 minutes). It describes the impact of "microaggressions," which are subtle indignities that people face based on their identities. Based on this video, how might overhearing a slur be particularly harmful to someone who has been targeted based on their identity or presentation?

Build your Library: [What Does It Mean to Be White?: Developing White Racial Literacy](#), by [Robin DiAngelo](#)

Curriculum Link: <https://www.tolerance.org>