

★ American Girl®

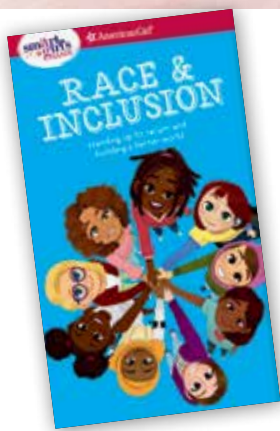


A Teacher's Guide to

# RACE & INCLUSION

standing up to racism and  
building a better world





## About the Book

*A Smart Girl's Guide: Race & Inclusion* is a practical and informative resource for teaching your students about standing up to racism and building inclusion. First, readers learn about race, racism, and anti-racism—and their impact on our world. Then readers are invited to take action to challenge racism in themselves and in their communities using the helpful ideas in the book. Building inclusion and standing up to racism is an important journey, and educating your students how to become anti-racist in their daily lives is the first step.

## About the Author

Deanna Singh is an accomplished author, educator, business leader, and champion for marginalized communities. As the founder and Chief Change Agent of Flying Elephant, a holding company for multiple social enterprises, Deanna consults with individuals and companies that are looking to make a positive difference in the world. She is known for giving clients the tools and courage to imagine, activate, and impact the world as agents of change. She is also the author of other children's and business books. Singh earned a BA in urban studies from Fordham University, a JD from Georgetown University, an MBA from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and a certificate in diversity, equity, and inclusion from Cornell.



## About the Illustrator

Shellene Rodney is a Toronto-based illustrator with a passion for illustrating experiences and emotions through the various stages of life. Her characters are often closely tied to personal experience. From the time she was a small child, she was influenced by the art around her, which helped build her understanding about art and creativity. Illustration and storytelling are among the many avenues that she uses to express her own unique ideas. Youth, children, and adventurous adults are her favorite subjects!

## About This Guide

*A Smart Girl's Guide: Race & Inclusion* encourages students to become informed about racism, inclusion, and anti-racist issues by giving them age-appropriate information about race, racism, bigotry, discrimination, and anti-racism. In its exploration of these concepts, the book also offers advice for standing up to racism and tools for building inclusion. The activities in this guide will extend students' engagement with and understanding of these concepts. Some activities will take longer than others, and teachers may adapt them to meet the needs of their students.

For many people, race and anti-racism are charged issues that can elicit various emotions. These topics can be difficult both to talk about and to understand. As you begin to discuss and learn about race and anti-racism in your classroom, ask students to share as they are comfortable and

to treat others' experiences with respect and kindness. Model empathy and compassion as you lead students through this material. Consider establishing ground rules about what is and isn't appropriate in your classroom as you explore these important and timely issues.

Before you begin to work with students in your classroom, you are encouraged to meet with colleagues to learn about and explore issues related to anti-racism. As a group, you can read, watch, and discuss articles, books, videos, or webinars about race and inclusion in your school and community. Research and discover ways to make your classroom and school anti-racist by expanding and diversifying students' instructional materials and assignments. As *A Smart Girl's Guide: Race & Inclusion* notes, anti-racism is a lifelong journey, and this exploration is just the beginning.

## Defining Race and Racism

In the first section of the book, students will encounter a lot of vocabulary around race, identity, and anti-racism. To understand and engage with the concepts in the book, it's crucial to understand these words and their definitions.

### Pre-Reading Activity: Word Wall

Create six "word stations" by writing each of these words on a large sheet of paper or on a whiteboard:

**RACE**

**STEREOTYPE**

**BIGOTRY**

**RACISM**

**PRIVILEGE**

**ANTI-RACISM**

**ALLY**

Place students into small groups of three or four, and give each group a stack of sticky notes. Each group should spend three to five minutes at each station, writing what they think the word means on their sticky notes and posting the notes to the board. As groups rotate through the word stations, they can add to previous groups' work, and they can disagree with previous definitions or reactions, but they cannot remove notes.

As a class, review all the sticky notes and work together to arrive at the correct definition for each word. Students just becoming familiar with these terms might misinterpret or misunderstand them, so it's important to establish accurate definitions before working with this material.

### Definitions as provided in *A Smart Girl's Guide: Race & Inclusion* are as follows:

**Race:** a system used to sort people into groups based on their ancestry or physical appearance. Examples include Black, White, Latinx, and Asian.

**Stereotype:** a false belief or assumption about an entire group of people.

**Bigotry:** treating another person differently because of her or his race.

**Ally:** someone who works together with people of color to make society fairer and more just.

**Racism:** how society treats racial groups differently. Racism is bigger than bigotry, because it's about entire groups of people and large societal systems.

**Privilege:** a right or advantage given or available to only a particular group or person.

**Anti-Racism:** intentional work to make society fairer and help people of color get the same quality of education, housing, jobs, food, and safety that most White people have.



## The Truth About Racism

### Activity: Quiz

After reading the first section of the book, use the quiz on pages 28-29 to gauge students' understanding of the material. Review key concepts such as biases, White privilege, White supremacy, bigotry, and systemic racism.

Direct student pairs to discuss each statement below and decide whether it's true or false. Discuss the answers as a larger group so that you can directly address inaccuracies about the concepts. Everyone will further their understanding of these concepts regardless of whether they have the right or wrong answer.

#### Questions

1. If I try hard enough, I can escape having any biases. It's possible for me to see everything—and everyone—without judgment.

True

False

2. Having White privilege means my life has been easy.

True

False

3. Talking about racial issues divides people and is anti-American.

True

False

4. I don't see someone's race. I only see the person.

True

False

#### Answers

1. **False.** Everyone has biases, and sometimes we don't even know where they came from—they are just a part of who we are. You can work to get rid of them, and until that happens, do your best to manage them.

2. **False.** Having White privilege means racism hasn't made your life more difficult. Accepting that you've had racial privilege doesn't mean ignoring other hardships. It just means that your race hasn't created barriers to success.

3. **False.** Racism has divided the United States and undermines the nation's values of equality and liberty. The goal of talking about problems is to fix them, which is a unifying and pro-American ideal.

4. **False.** Everyone makes racial assumptions. Don't try to ignore racial differences—you'll never be able to! When you ignore someone's race, you're ignoring an important part of who they are. Celebrate differences and treat people justly regardless of race.

5. Racism no longer exists and hasn't been around for a long time.

True

False

5. **False.** Public acceptance of blatant discrimination might have declined, but some aspects of racial inequality (such as income and wealth) are worse today than they were in 1940. We still have a lot of work to do to make our world anti-racist.

6. People of color actually have it easier than White people.

True

False

6. **False.** Some claim racism harms White people because of policies intended to help minority groups attend college and enter the workforce. Those programs were designed to fix racism, and over time, most of them have disappeared. Still, some people point to these efforts to claim people of color have it better than Whites, even though the problem of racial inequalities has not been fixed.

7. Anyone can be racist, even people of color.

True

False

7. **False.** Anyone can be bigoted and believe that a racial group is superior to others. They can say or do mean things to others based on race. But systemic racism is social inequality in food, housing, employment, income, education, law enforcement, imprisonment, legal protection, political representation, and cultural representation. It is these systems, not individual bigots, that create racial inequality.

8. People are too sensitive. If I don't mean what I say or do to be racist, it won't be.

True

False

8. **False.** Racism is not based on intent. It's based on how another person feels it. This makes racism and bigotry complicated, but no one has the right to tell other people how to feel about their experiences.

### Post-Activity Teacher Reflection: Consider these questions before moving on to the next section of the book:

- What are other racial stereotypes I believe?
- Which concepts of this section have students grasped most easily?
- Which ideas need more explanation?

## Mapping Your Bubbles

The second section of *A Smart Girl's Guide: Race & Inclusion* asks readers to look inward and think about how they can make small changes in their lives to support anti-racism. It's important for students to realize that they have influence and power in many areas of their lives.

### Activity: My Bubbles

Ask students to use the bubble diagram below to map their bubbles by identifying the mini societies they are part of. Bubbles should include family, friend groups, neighbors, school/classroom, extracurricular activities, community groups, etc. In each bubble, students should write the names of people who are in that bubble with them.

Next, read pages 32-37 together. Lead a discussion or break students into groups to reflect on their bubble maps. Answer these questions:

- What is outside my bubble? What do I not see or experience on a daily basis?
- What is life like for others or for people who are different from me?
- How do I feel about those people?
- What am I missing out on by only living inside my bubble?
- How can I influence the people inside my own bubble?

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**SCHOOL**  
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**FAMILY**  
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**FRIENDS**  
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**COMMUNITY GROUPS**  
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**NEIGHBORS**  
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**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**  
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## Becoming an Ally

### Activity: Beyond the Bubble Brainstorm

Using the mini-challenges on page 39 as a starting point, create a list of mini-challenges and goals as a class. Include books to read, movies to watch, and activities to try. Get specific with real book and movie titles that would be appropriate for your classroom. Post your challenges in your room, review them often, and check them off as you complete them.

Remind students that if they are White, just reading a book or watching a movie about a person of color doesn't mean they will fully understand that person's life and story or the experiences of other people of color. These challenges provide a glimpse into another person's world, and we can all practice anti-racism by trying to better understand the experiences of other people.

### Activity: Practice Speaking Up Against Bigoted Bullies

Name-calling, making fun of someone's ethnic background, mocking someone's accent, and bringing up stereotypes are all forms of bigoted bullying. Students need practice spotting these situations, and they need to prepare how they will respond when they see this type of discrimination.

As a group, review the Dos and Don'ts on pages 73-75 for standing up to racism:

**DO** focus on the target, not the bully

**DO** change the topic

**DO** disrupt the moment

**DO** ask questions

**DON'T** attack others

Review the tips on pages 74-75 for speaking up to bullies:

- Focus on actions and consequences. Avoid starting a sentence with "You."
- Focus on the big picture. Move the focus away from one person to how a whole group might feel.
- Focus on solutions. Instead of fixating on the bad behavior, think about ways the bully can make it right in the future.
- Focus on growth. Not everyone will change their bigoted thinking or behaviors right away. It's important to be patient, kind, and compassionate and allow others to gain awareness at their own pace.

Create some simple bullying scenarios that are appropriate and relevant for your class. (Note: be careful that your scenarios do not call out specific students or link closely to a student's actual experience—it's important to avoid triggering students of color with this exercise.) Direct student pairs to write scripts for how they could respond to the scenarios using the tips and examples on pages 74-75. Ask students to switch partners and practice their scripts with each other to become more comfortable using assertive language with their peers.

## Post-Activity Teacher Reflection: Consider these questions before moving on to the next section of the book:

- Have I seen racial bullying or discrimination in my classroom or school? How did I respond? How would I respond now with this new information?
- How can I improve the way I speak up for students of color?
- How can I support students to be better allies?
- How can I make my classroom and my school more inclusive?

## Reflecting on Race and Inclusion

An important part of being anti-racist is to remain curious and continue working toward greater understanding of these issues. Finding ways to incorporate anti-racism activities into daily life and conversations can keep students focused on this work as well as allow them to deepen their thinking and knowledge.

### Activity: Q&A for Adults

Ask students to interview a parent, guardian, or other trusted adult to learn what that person thinks about some of the concepts in *A Smart Girl's Guide: Race & Inclusion*. Students can journal about the answers they receive and reflect on how their experiences are the same as or different from the adults in their lives. Discuss as a group how students might imagine what their own answers to these questions would be if someone were to ask them again in twenty years.

#### Questions to ask an adult:

- What did you learn about racism in school?
- Did your parents ever talk about race and racism?
- Have you ever witnessed blatant discrimination? What did you do?
- Did you have any friends of a different race when you were in middle school?
- How has racism changed since you were my age?
- Do you know about White privilege? Do you think it applies to you?

### Activity: Commit to Change

As you finish the book, ask students to think about how they can commit to being anti-racist in their lives. Give each student a copy of the pact on the next page and direct them to fill it out. Display students' pacts in the classroom and check in from time to time to see if students have fulfilled their commitments, want to add to or update them, or need support to meet their goals.



# ≡ Make it happen ≡

I commit to sharing my anti-racism knowledge with \_\_\_\_\_.

Three anti-racism ideas I can share with a friend:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

I promise to use my skills of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ to create positive, anti-racist change.

In my circle of \_\_\_\_\_, I'll use my influence to change \_\_\_\_\_

I commit to these anti-racism actions:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Here are some other American Girl books you might like:

