

This Book Is Anti-Racist Teacher's Notes

Written by Tiffany Jewell



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Illustrations by Aurélia Durand

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'This is one for you, your neighbour, and the children in your lives.'
—The Guardian

About the author:

Tiffany Jewell is a Black biracial writer and Anti-Racist Montessori educator and consultant. She spends her time baking bread and macarons, building LEGOS, watching British detective shows, and dreaming up how she can dismantle white supremacy. Tiffany currently lives in Western Massachusetts (on the occupied land of the Wabanaki and the Nipmuck) with her two young activists, her partner, and a turtle she's had since she was nine. This is her first book for children and young adults. Find her on social media: @tiffanymjewell and at <https://anti-biasmontessori.com/>



Photo by James Azar Salem

About the illustrator:

Aurélia Durand is a French illustrator based in Paris. Her work is dedicated to representing people of color in society, and she uses bold art as a vivid demonstration. "I use vibrant colors and joyful music to spread good vibes to talk about diversity and open a conversation about why it matters to include more color in our society." She wants to create more nuanced illustrative stories by portraying women of color standing proudly and fiercely. Her work has been featured in advertising campaigns, galleries, and editorial magazines. Her clients include Apple, Refinery29, and Facebook. She shares her work online on different platforms, mainly Instagram, where she posts daily illustrations, live paintings, and animations. Find her on Instagram: @4ur3lia.



Photo by Aurélia Durand

- ★ *'A practical and educational toolkit for teens.'* —Evening Standard
- ★ *'A bright, creative book that explores race, ethnicity and racism.'* —The Sun
- ★ *'A useful tool for discussing racism with children ages 5 to 15.'* —The Telegraph

***This Book is Anti Racist* and the UK curriculum (Quarto statement):**

The Key Objectives below encompass the overarching themes of PHSE curriculum guidance; Health and Wellbeing, Relationships and Living in the Wider World for (KS3 and KS4) The book supports study relating to and opportunities to learn about:

- The impact of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination on individuals and relationships.
- The unacceptability of prejudiced based language and behaviour offline and online.
- The need to promote inclusion and challenge discrimination and how to do so safely.
- How their actions affect themselves and others
- Strategies to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination.

The book, teacher notes and activities can be adapted to support school policies and will complement other areas of the curriculum such as English, Drama, History, RE, Sociology and Citizenship.

It is for you as educators to decide on the best way of delivering these lessons and the book's content to suit the ability, behaviour and characteristics of your students.



How to use this guide with your students

Like the book, these teacher's notes are the beginning of a journey in lifelong anti-racism work. I offer up suggestions and activities I've used with students over the years and look forward to hearing from you about how you're using the book in your community. Use the hashtags #ThisBookIsAntiRacist and #AntiRacistYouth to share how you're supporting your students and community members, including yourself, in anti-racism.

Pre-reading activity: building community

Before we dive into the big work of anti-racism with our students (learners) we need to spend time building community and supporting students' exploration and understanding of their individual and collective social identities. This is not something you can do in one day, it takes all school year, as dismantling racism is lifelong work.

There are many ways to build community. Some of my favourite ways are through group guided reading sessions, creating classroom community guidelines together, playing at break times, [mixing up lunch seating](#) and writing stories together. To build community is to intentionally foster strong, trusting, honest relationships between you and your students, your students with each other, and with the families you work with. It takes time and is one of the most necessary and valuable things to do in growing an anti-racist classroom school environment.

We build our community guidelines using Glen Singleton's four agreements for [courageous conversations](#) (Stay engaged, Experience discomfort, Speak your truth, Expect and accept non closure). After students have a chance to share ways the community can support their learning and growth, be sure to revisit the guidelines to see if there's anything that needs to be added etc.



Turn your classroom into an anti-racist environment

It's a good time for you to prepare/turn your classroom into an anti-racist environment.

- Ensure there are [Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors](#) for your students.
- Bring life into the classroom by way of plants. (Open the windows too, if you have them.)
- Make a plan for how students' needs can be met:
 - How can you have snacks on hand for those who haven't had breakfast? Are growing? Have low blood sugar? Are hungry?
 - Is it possible to turn the overhead lights off? Is there natural light? Are table lamps available?
 - Do students have easy access to water and staying hydrated?
 - What is your bathroom policy? Are students able to go when they need to without asking in front of the whole classroom? Are they allowed a certain number of passes each month? If so, what happens when they run out and need to use the toilets?
 - Who is this space centred around? You, the adult? Or, the learners?
 - How are students' learning spaces encouraging collaboration? Are they?
 - Do students have easy access to extra supplies if they are not able to be prepared?
- Keep students and their families at the center of the work.
- Look at your classroom texts and decor critically.
 - Who is represented? Who is missing?
- Spend a moment focussing your students. Breathe together. Check in with them. Be honest with them. (If you had a stressful morning, tell them. You don't have to go into details, but letting them know allows for your student to see your humanity.)

A few books I use and refer to often regarding building classroom community:

- *Being the Change* by Sara K. Ahmed
- *New Games* by New Games Foundation
- *More New Games* by New Games Foundation
- *The First Six Weeks* by Responsive Classroom
- *Black Ants and Buddhists* by Mary Cowhey
- *Because We Can Change the World: A Practical Guide to Cooperative, Inclusive Classroom Communities* by Mara Sapon-Shevin



Classroom activity: gallery walk

Download and print the three poster images:

Click on the image to download the poster



"We All Deserve":
<https://quartokno.ws/TBIAR1>



"My History":
<https://quartokno.ws/TBIAR2>



"You Have the":
<https://quartokno.ws/TBIAR3>

Hang them up, give students sticky notes, and ask them to respond to each poster by writing their reactions on the notes and sticking them below the posters on the wall.

Some discussion prompts:

- What do the words mean to them?
- What do they want to know more about?
- What do they notice about the illustrations?

You may ask guiding questions, prompt responses or ask students to just respond. I like using sticky notes because they offer students a chance to share freely and (sometimes) anonymously. Once everyone has had time to look and respond, you may organise a circle time and ask students if anyone would like to share their thoughts and responses and if there are any questions.

The posters provide a nice introduction to the book. You may also want to share some of Aurélie's other artwork that can be found on her website. <https://aurelia-studio.com/>

Let students know they will come back to these images and statements as they read through the book.

Section one: waking up: understanding and growing into my identities

During this first section of the book, students will be introduced to a lot of [new] words and language around identity and oppression. They will also spend a lot of time, at the end of each chapter, working on understanding their own identities. Providing students with time and space to do this work is invaluable.

Activity: co-creating definitions

Co-create collective definitions with your students. Some of the words that will appear in this section of *This Book Is Anti-Racist* are as follows:

Identity	Race	Racism	Oppression
Dominant culture	Ethnicity	Biases	Anti-Racism
Institutions	Privilege	Stereotypes	Anti-Bias
Society	History	Discrimination	

You may offer another gallery walk to students, but this time it's with the words. Write each word on a large piece of paper and tape them around the room. Again, give students sticky notes and ask them, "What do you know about these words?" or, "What does this mean to you?" Encourage peer to peer discussion.

Please remember that before you dive into this work, focus on building a safe community with your students. Be ready and prepared to work with students on creating truthful accurate definitions.



Section two: opening the window: making sense of the world

In this section of the book, students will be introduced to some of the history of racism and anti-racism and will begin to make sense of the world they live in.

Activity: co-creating definitions continued

Co-create collective definitions with your students. Some of the words that will appear in this section of *This Book Is Anti-Racist* are as follows:

Prejudice

Colonization

Microaggression

Assimilate

Internalized racism

Activity: we are our history

This is a good time to pause with *This Book Is Anti-Racist* and provide time and space for students to build a greater understanding of the depth of racism. I like to offer research time to students (usually in pairs), which then turns into a collective building of the timeline of the History of Racism and Anti-Racism.

Add resources to the classroom so students may explore and expand this history.

Some of my favorite books to start with are:

- *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become A Good Ancestor* by Layla Saad
- *Brit-ish: on race, identity and belonging* by Afua Hirsch
- *Taking Up Space: The Black Girl's Manifesto for Change* by Chelsea Kwakye, Ore Ogunbiyi
- *The Good Immigrant* by Nikesh Shukla (UK ed)
- *Black and British: A Forgotten History* by David Olusoga
- *Mother Country: Real Stories of the Windrush Children* by Charlie Brinkhurst-Cuff
- *Voices of the Windrush Generation: The real story told by the people themselves* by David Matthews
- *I Will Not Be Erased: Our stories about growing up as people of colour* by gal-dem
- *Black Britain: A Photographic History* by Paul Gilroy
- *Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire* by Akala
- *It's Not About the Burqa: Muslim Women on Faith, Feminism, Sexuality and Race Hardcover* by Mariam Khan
- *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race* by Reni Eddo-Lodge
- *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe* by Johny Pitts
- *Rife: Twenty-One Stories from Britain's Youth* by Nikesh Shukla
- *The Clapback: Your Guide to Calling Out Racist Stereotypes* by Elijah Lawal

Activity: acknowledging anti-racist heroes

Share the image below of some BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) activists who are a part of our history and of folx who have worked to move us forward into anti-racism. Share photos of these people, listen to audio of them, watch videos of them speaking, and read their words. Keep them present in your classroom as you continue through this journey.



Work with students to create a list of young activists and change-makers. Highlight these folx as you build; share with your classroom community that they don't have to wait until their adult years to take action. Hot Seating is a great way to further this knowledge. Hot Seating is a strategy in which a character played by a student is questioned by the rest of the group. This activity can invite multiple perspectives on a theme.

Section three: choosing my path: taking action and responding to racism



Activity: interrupt with comics

Building from Chapter 12 titled *Interrupt!* ask students to create a comic of themselves standing up against oppression using their superpowers, write a skit, song, story, news report, etc. Give students time to create and share!

Activity: build a collective toolbox

Ask students to bring/draw/write about an item they would bring to help them and their classmates to disrupt and stand up. Imagine you have an anti-racist toolbox that you carry around with you. What's in it and why? Here are some of the things I have in mine:

- A notebook and a pen so I can write down observations, thoughts, etc.
- Photographs of my family and friends to help ground me and keep me connected with those who I trust and love.
- Chocolate and almonds for quick energy.
- A reusable water bottle because I need to stay hydrated.
- Tiger Balm is in there. When I get stressed the tension builds in my shoulders and neck. It hurts. The Tiger Balm helps to ease that pain.
- I always have a book or two to read and make sure they're by BIPOC authors and folx living outside the imaginary box.
- Information about my rights.
- My phone (charged) so I can easily connect with others and take photos and videos.

Writing assignment: check in with yourself

Encourage your students to take a moment to pause and check in with themselves. Ask them: What action are you comfortable taking? What have you done? What do you feel like you can do? What action are you willing to take that goes beyond your comfort level? What do you need in order to into your lean discomfort with these actions? What kind of support? (And from whom?)

Discussion and role play: calling in/out

After reading Chapter 14, practice calling-in and calling-out. Ask your students:

- What are some situations when you may need to call someone/something out? What are some situations where you may need to call someone in? What is the difference? How is this tackled in our school? Could it be better?
 - Who has the power in this situation, the person I'm calling in/out, or me? (If you have the power in this situation, consider calling them in.)
 - Am I calling out a person or systemic behavior? (If you're calling out systemic behavior or an institution, call them out.)
 - How much energy and emotional labour am I able to share right now? (If you don't have the energy or aren't willing to put in the emotional labour it takes to educate someone and work with them to change, consider calling them in with someone who can take on the work you are not able to do. I have a friend who helps me out when I don't have the capacity to educate white people on racial oppression.)



Section four: holding the door open: working in solidarity against racism

Discussion: asking the big questions

Discuss the following questions with your students:

- What does solidarity look like, feel like, taste like, smell like, and sound like? What is exciting? What is difficult?
- What is white supremacy culture?
 - *For older students: Read about the [characteristics of white supremacy culture](#) from Tema Okun and Kenneth Jones. Work with students to identify where this exists in the classroom, at school, and in all education institutions.
 - *For younger students: Identify how educational institutions (including their school) could misuse and abuse power.
- How will you hold the door open without falling into saviourism? Who will you leave the door open for?
- Read *Anti-Racist Youth* by Amelia Allen Sherwood aloud and discuss with students: What affirms you? What challenges you?
- Is there a poem or song that keeps you motivated and grounded? Give some examples of your own.
- When will you listen, and when will you interrupt?
- What privileges do you hold? How can you use your privilege to disrupt racism?
- How will you listen so you are really and truly hearing what is being said?

To help group or peer to peer discussion, students can develop prompt questions such as:

- What do we (think, feel, believe) about...?
- How can we/will we/should we...?
- What if...? What can...? What will...?
- Who can help us with...? When do we need to...?



To keep this work going with your classroom/school community consider hosting an Anti-Racist Book Club. Follow the hashtags #AntiRacistBookClub, #DisruptTexts, and #TheBookChat for more suggestions and conversations about books that support students' growing consciousness.

For a more in-depth guide for your classroom, download my free anti-racism curriculum on my website: <https://anti-biasmontessori.com/>

Some suggested reads for students aged 10-15:

- *The Boy at The Back of the Class* by Onjali Rauf
- *Indian No More* by Charlene Willing McManis and Traci Sorell
- *Watch Us Rise* by Renée Watson and Ellen Hagan
- *Say Her Name* by Zetta Elliott
- *Pet* by Akwaeke Emezi
- *With the Fire on High* by Elizabeth Acevedo
- *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei
- *American Street* by Ibi Zoboi
- *Pride* by Ibi Zoboi
- *Colour Outside the Lines* Edited by Sangu Mandanna
- *Speak Up!* by Adora Svitak

