

RACE CARS

A children's book about white privilege



Educator's Guide




Common Core State Standards Aligned for Grades 2 - 6

Please Note: The creators of this book included a complete discussion notes guide in the text. This educator's guide serves as an **additional** resource. For the complete list of discussion questions, please refer back to the book. It is recommended that you read the "Tips for Reading Race Cars with Kids" (p. 3) and "Note to adults" sections in the back of the book (pp. 38 - 39) before beginning this unit to better guide you and give you some background information needed to have rich and meaningful discussions with your class.


ABOUT THE BOOK

RACE CARS tells the story of two best friends, a white car and a black car, who cannot wait to race together. However, through a series of events, the cars experience different rules based on their color while entering the same race. This book follows the journey of both of these cars as they try to compete in the same race.

ABOUT THE CREATORS



Jenny Devenny is a psychotherapist, author, illustrator and native New Yorker currently living in Los Angeles with her husband and son. *Race Cars* is her first children's book and is a product of her passion for helping adults have meaningful conversations about race with children. Jenny has facilitated workshops on racism as well as white privilege and believes that the key to dismantling white supremacy starts with our youngest.



Charnaie Gordon is the author of the book *A Kids Book About Diversity* and serves as a member of the National Advisory Board for Reading is Fundamental for their Race, Equity and Inclusion (REI) initiative. She is a Diversity and Inclusion Expert, blogger, podcast host and digital creator. Charnaie is passionate about instilling a love of reading, lifelong learning and curiosity in kids.

OBJECTIVE

The teacher will lead rich and meaningful discussions through pre, during, and post reading questions that will prompt students to think about white privilege and unfair rules and systems. Through discussions, students will develop a better understanding of systems of privilege, how to better reach equity, and engage in activities that foster empathy.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED:

Race Cars is a great springboard for conversations about racism and privilege, but even before getting into those conversations you want to make sure the foundation is there. A great place to start would be the book *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves* by Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards, which does a wonderful job of clearly outlining the goals of Anti-Bias Anti-Racist (ABAR) education and ideas for how to achieve these goals in a classroom setting.

Race Cars should be used as part of a much wider anti-racist curriculum and as part of a library of diverse books that foster self-love and embrace and celebrate differences. We want our children to first feel really good about their identities and who they are, to have accurate language for differences and for race, to have an understanding of where people get their skin color from and to be open and willing to experience differences before reading *Race Cars*.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

1. What does "fair" mean?
2. What does "unfair" mean?
3. Why is it important to have fair rules for everyone?
4. How can you make sure all rules are fair for everyone?
5. If you think a rule is unfair for someone, what can you do to change it?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARD ALIGNMENT

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PRE-READING DISCUSSION

Before reading the book, have a class discussion about the three essential questions with students. Explain that they will be reading a book about two cars who are best friends who decide to race together. Remind the students to be thinking about the essential questions discussed as you read the book together.

Book Discussion Questions:

PP 10 - 11

- Why do you think the committee changed the rules of the race? Was that a fair change? Why/Why not?
- Is having different rules always a bad idea? Why/Why not?
- Think of examples when having different rules may be a good idea.

If students struggle with thinking of examples on their own, brainstorm to come up with examples as a class like: playing games with older brother/sister or adult, how would the rules be different for them?

- When can different rules can be harmful or hurtful to people?

This may be a good time to relate back to real world examples like segregation, Black Lives Matter movement, Voting rights and how they have changed for African Americans, Women, Native Americans, and other people groups throughout history.

PP 18 - 19

On these pages we see different reactions to the change of the racing rules.

- How do you think Chase felt about the new bridge rule? Explain.
- Did Ace notice the new bridge rule? Why/Why not?
- How did the committee feel about the results of the race?

PP 24 - 25

- How does Chase feel about the newest rule changes for the race? Explain.
- How does Ace feel? Explain.
- Do they both feel the same about the rule change? Explain your thinking.

PP 26 - 27

- Grace is the only girl car on the committee, and the youngest. Why do you think she is afraid to speak up about the unfair rule changes?
- Have you ever felt afraid to speak out when you saw something happening that was unfair? What did you do?

PP 30 - 31

Ace decides he wants to know about the path his friend Chase had to take in the race.

- Why was it important for Ace to turn down the path Chase had to take?
- What did Ace learn by following the path Chase had to take because of the rules made by the committee?

PP 32 - 33

Grace speaks up about the unfair rules to the committee so that Chase can find his friend Ace.

- If Ace did not get lost, do you think the committee would have changed their rules? Why/Why not?
- Do you think Grace would have spoken up about the unfair rules if Ace had not gotten lost? Why/Why not?

PP 36 - 37

Ace apologizes to Chase for not realizing how much harder the race was for his friend.

- What do you think Ace and Chase should do next to make sure that the rules are fair for everyone?
- What can you do to change unfair rules?

POST READING DISCUSSION

After reading discuss with your class the following questions:

- From what we know about the committee, do you think they will change the rules in the future to make them more fair for all cars? Do you think Grace, and the other cars that supported her, will stay on the committee?
- In the real world, each of us are unique and different. These differences are wonderful and should be celebrated. Unfortunately, differences can sometimes lead to the way we are treated. How do you think a car that looks like you might be treated in the race? What can we do when we see people being treated unfairly?
- In real life, racism is still happening and white people are still getting privileges that they did not earn, simply because they are white. What can we do to change this? How can we make the world a better place for everyone?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Click [HERE](#) for optional slide presentation
2. Have each student create a car they feel best represents themselves, put all cars on a poster or display around the classroom.

Click [HERE](#) for car template.
3. Have students write an ending to the story with what they feel should happen in the next committee meeting.
4. Have students work with a partner to come up with a list of rules they think would be more fair than the ones the committee came up with for the race.
5. For older students (4 - 6) have them draw a poster relating this book to a current political issue. Compare/contrast the events in this book to a real world event (past or present).