



## SEPTEMBER CHALLENGE: ANTI-RACISM

Normally, when writing up a challenge for The Kin Project, I spend a few days researching the issue and then pass along what I think are the most effective ways we can tackle our collective problem on an individual basis. I don't think that approach works here. A bullet-point list of how to be an anti-racist feels very inadequate.

For this challenge, I think the best course of action is for us each to educate ourselves via books and films, and/or enrol in an anti-racism course. Here are some titles/names to get you started.

Please note that these are almost exclusively focused on racism in the USA and UK. Sadly yet obviously, racism is not limited to those two countries, but to try to include resources for addressing racism in every part of the world would be a bit loco. I think, however, that these are useful in thinking about how to be an anti-racist anywhere in the world.

### **Books:**

*How To Be An Antiracist*

Ibram Kendi

"I'm not the least bit racist" is a common rebuttal to being identified as a racist. But even if that statement is 100 percent true, it's still insufficient, argues author Ibram Kendi. Not being racist is a neutral stance, and in the fight for a more fair world, neutrality isn't good enough. We must choose a side and lean into the work of anti-racism. Racism is a



powerful system that creates a paradigm for the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors. It intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves. In *How to Be an Antiracist*, Kendi leads us to a better understanding of all forms of racism and its pernicious consequences.

### *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People To Talk about Racism*

Robin DiAngelo

Sociologist and anti-racist academic Robin DiAngelo explores how whites react when their assumptions about race are challenged and why those reactions make progress so difficult. DiAngelo helps us understand that racism as a practice is not restricted to “bad people.” She defines “white fragility” as a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering defensive moves like anger, guilt, silence, and a desire to flee the stress-inducing situation. Whether intended or not, these behaviors curtail honest discussions and ensure that nothing ever changes. She explores what we can do to engage more constructively.

### *So You Want To Talk About Race*

Ijeoma Oluo

While acknowledging that talking about race is difficult, Ijeoma Oluo has written a tutorial for anyone who wants to go there, nonetheless. In frank, blunt language, *So You Want to Talk About Race* guides readers of all races through everything from intersectionality to affirmative action to white privilege. It is the only way we can have honest, productive conversations about race and racism, she asserts. Her book gets to the core of how racism has infected almost every aspect of American life and dismantles the grievances and blind spots that impede clear, constructive dialogue.



*Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race*

Reni Eddo-Lodge

Eddo-Lodge highlights the fact that issues of structural racism are not confined to the United States, and it lays out an alternative history of Britain to the one taught in schools. Taking apart the insidious nature of white privilege, this book shows the consequences of racial bias following World War I.

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

Michelle Alexander

This book is key to understanding the oppressive judicial system that has used the War on Drugs to target and oppress black men and communities of colour with almost surgical precision. Legal scholar Michelle Alexander lays out in intricate detail how the criminal justice system functions as a contemporary system of racial control and relegates millions to permanent second-class status. She argues that our racial caste system hasn't ended; it's merely been redesigned.

*Just Mercy: A Story Of Mercy And Redemption*

Bryan Stevenson

*Just Mercy* is both a searing indictment of our criminal justice system and perhaps the most imminently readable book ever written about the death penalty. Fresh out of Harvard Law School, author Bryan Stevenson founded the Equal Justice Initiative to defend those that many feel are undeserving of mercy: death-row inmates. Stevens' powerful true story compels us to believe in the potential for mercy to redeem us. He makes a persuasive case that each of us is capable of making a difference if we pursue justice with the vigor, relentlessness, and compassion it deserves.



*Born A Crime: Stories From A South African Childhood*

Trevor Noah

On its face, *Born a Crime* is the story of a dirt-poor, mischievous young boy who makes good. Much deeper, it paints a poignant and sometimes painful picture of a biracial man struggling to find his place in a society where his very existence is a crime. Trevor Noah offers hilariously brilliant insights into the world of apartheid as a construct at odds with itself and bound to collapse under its own nonsensical weight. In that respect, it is a reflection of racism in America.

*Natives: Race & Class in the Ruins of Empire*

Akala

The first non-fiction book from poet, entrepreneur, public speaker and recording artist Akala, *Natives* is a powerful polemic that asks hard questions about two issues at the heart of modern Britain: race and class, and how they shape the life chances of young black people. Akala highlights two modern myths: “The delusion that we live in a meritocracy, and the fantasy that the exceptional achievements of some black people are proof that the obstacles of poverty and race can be overcome by all.”

*Between the World and Me*

Ta-Nehisi Coates

This book has been called the bible for the Black Lives Matter movement. It creates a new framework for understanding how the bodies of black women and men have been exploited through slavery and segregation and how a modern-day system serves to widen the gulf between people and exacerbate tensions and unrest. In this blend of history and memoir, Coates chronicles these struggles with clarity, dignity, and respect. He uses his own coming-of-age journey to illuminate our history, confront our present,



and offer a road map for living within a system that, by design, is so unfair. Coates wrote *Between the World and Me* as a loving letter and a warning to his adolescent son.

*Blood Done Sign My Name*

Timothy Tyson

This memoir recounts author Timothy Tyson's childhood growing up as the son of a white liberal Methodist minister in a small North Carolina town riven by conflict and racism. As a historian, Tyson delivers an unassailable dissertation that deconstructs the revisionist history of the Civil War that seeks to recast treason as patriotism and whitewash the brutality of slavery. Beautifully written and, at times, laugh-out-loud funny, *Blood Done Sign My Name* is one of the most powerful meditations on race in America.

*Girl, Woman, Other*

Bernadine Evaristo

Winner of the Man Booker prize last year, this book is an exploration of black womanhood through the stories of 12 black British women. Though a piece of fiction, the 12 interwoven storylines allows the reader to understand a plethora of black women's experiences across time throughout Britain.

*The Underground Railroad*

Colson Whitehead

Another work of fiction, this novel depicts situations that were actually happening for black people in America. The novel is about a slave called Cora and her journey to escape slavery. The book has been described as essential reading for all Americans. Eileen Battersby for the Irish Times [said](#): "History and human experience as well as an



artist's obligation to tell the truth have shaped a virtuoso novel that should be read by every American as well as readers across the world. And it will be, it should be.”

### *Me and White Supremacy*

Layla F Saad

This book is all about teaching white people how to understand their privilege, dismantle it and to stop using it to inflict damage on people of colour, even unintentionally. Layla's book is in a 28 day challenge format and shares cultural and historical context to better understand the situations we now find ourselves in.

### *The Good Immigrant*

edited by Nikesh Shukla

This collection of essays features 21 authors looking at immigration in Britain. The conversations look at why immigrants come to the UK, how immigrants are only accepted when they're winning Olympic medals and what it means to be "other". The book features black, Asian and minority ethnic voices from across Britain, showing a wide variety of experiences of what it means to be an immigrant in Britain.

### *Don't Touch My Hair*

Emma Dabiri

The conversation around black hair in the UK still needs a lot of work as the [reactions to Priscilla's wig](#) in Love Island showed. Emma's book looks at many cultural and historical aspects of black hair. It dives into the history of black hair and covers topics such as how it was used to send secret messages which lead slaves to freedom and Kim Kardashian's use of braids today.



### *Minor Feelings*

Cathy Park Hong

This prizewinning book by poet and essayist Cathy Park Hong lays bare the ways in which Asian Americans have been made into second-class citizens, excluded, stereotyped, and silenced. A “minor feeling” describes a particular phenomenon experienced by marginalized communities, wherein “your [perception of reality is always denied by the dominant culture](#),” the author told Vox in 2021. Interweaving autobiography, art criticism, and more, *Minor Feelings* exposes that dissonance, and the unique discomfort it creates.

### *Yellow Peril: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*

Edited by John Kuo Wei Tchen & Dylan Yeats

This is one of the most comprehensive records [ever made of anti-Asian texts and images](#), examining cultural artifacts dating from European colonialism through to the present day. The pop culture archive evidences the ways in which the concept of “yellow peril” has shaped white people’s treatment of Asian communities for centuries.

### *The Myth of the Model Minority: Asian Americans Facing Racism*

Rosalind S. Chou & Joe R. Feagin

The [idea of the “model minority”](#) has been a mainstay of white Americans’ perception of Asian Americans since the 1950s, but this scholarly book deconstructs that idea from the ground up. It records experiences of racism from dozens of Asian Americans, and confronts the realities of surviving in America as an Asian person. The second edition of the book adds in new context about how sex and gender play into anti-Asian racism.



## *We Gon' Be Alright*

Jeff Chang

This wide-ranging collection of essays features Chang's incisive perspective on the protest movements and racial turbulence of the past decade. He shows how segregation, far from being a thing of the past, [continues to rear its head](#) and affects the fight for racial equality in myriad ways — including entrenching the “in-betweenness” of Asian American communities.

### **Films & Documentaries:**

#### *Let the Fire Burn* (2013)

In May of 1985, the Philadelphia Police Department attempted to evict the members of the black liberation group MOVE from their row house in a residential area. The group resisted, and police unleashed gunfire, tear gas, and explosives on the home, which officials — with the permission of the mayor and district attorney — opted to let burn. Five children and six adults perished in the blaze, which also destroyed over 60 homes in the neighborhood. Jason Osder's incendiary documentary account relies less on present-day interviews and narration, and focuses instead on the events as they happened, presenting a meticulous ticktock of an infuriating abuse of power.

#### *Copwatch* (2017)

The advocacy organization We Copwatch, which trains regular citizens in the laws and rights that allow them to videotape police activity, predated those protests, but it gained particular relevance after the high-profile deaths of Brown, Eric Garner, and Freddie Gray. Camilla Hall's documentary follows We Copwatch founder Jacob Crawford from his home in Oakland to the sites of those murders, and the cameramen he recruits along



the way. Hall follows those cases through the system (such as it is), and dives deep into the day-to-day work of the organization. *Copwatch* is an observational documentary, and an intimate one, acquainting viewers with these citizen journalists and listening to the stories they tell. (*Streaming on Amazon Prime.*)

### *16 Shots* (2019)

Just a few months after the death of Michael Brown, another midwestern city was rocked by the police shooting of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald, who was shot and killed by Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke. The circumstances of that shooting — and how the officers on the scene and people in power throughout the city attempted to control (and cover up) the narrative in its aftermath — are the subject of this documentary account from director Rick Rowley. (*Streaming on Showtime.*)

### *Do Not Resist* (2016)

The rapid response of a chillingly militarized police force — riot gear, tear gas, rubber bullets, military vehicles — has rendered the idea of “peaceful protest” all the more oblique. For some insight into that shift in policing, seek out Craig Atkinson’s informative documentary, which begins with the Ferguson protests but gradually widens its scope to detail how mind-boggling post-9/11 expenditures for local police forces have resulted in departments more equipped to go to war with the communities they serve than to protect them. (*Available for rental or purchase via Amazon, iTunes, YouTube, etc.*)

### *13th* (2016)

The tricky thing about reading up on the issues of the moment is that the struggle does not begin nor end with police brutality, or street protests, or even with what we immediately think of as systemic racism. To that end, police brutality and mass



incarceration go hand in hand — the “before” and “after” of biases in the criminal-justice system. The definitive exploration of that issue remains Ava DuVernay’s *13th* (*streaming on Netflix*), a wide-ranging documentary in which scholars and historians detail how the relatively recent emphasis on imprisonment has reverberated through American culture. (DuVerany’s docuseries *When They See Us*, also on Netflix, is a helpful companion.)

### *I Am Not Your Negro*

Writer and activist James Baldwin was a crucial voice in the Civil Rights Movement, and the film *I Am Not Your Negro* uses his own words to powerfully depict the ongoing struggle for equality in our country. Along with archival footage and recordings, Samuel L. Jackson narrates from one of Baldwin’s unfinished works, and the final result is a fascinating look at both James Baldwin’s life and his views on race. His words may be from decades ago, but they’re just as timely today.

### *When They See Us*

In 1989, five young New Yorkers of color were branded the Central Park Five, and thrown in jail for raping a jogger—a crime they did not commit. *When They See Us*, a powerful four-part series directed by Ava DuVernay, undoes that label and restores their names: Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, and Korey Wise. The opposite of the media sensation the case had become in the '90s, *When They See Us* is an intimate retelling of how forced confessions and an unjust justice system altered the course of these five boys' lives. Oprah Winfrey produced the series, and interviewed the show's subjects today.



### *Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland*

On July 13, 2015, Sandra Bland was pulled by a Texas state trooper for failing to signal for changing lanes. After a conversation with the officer, Bland was arrested; three days later, she was found dead in her jail cell. Medical examiners ruled her death suicide by hanging, but her family—who were a part of the documentary's making—are doubtful. *Say Her Name* is yet another depiction of what an interaction with police can lead to for a Black individual.

### *The House I Live In*

This acclaimed documentary looks at the impact of the War on Drugs on individual people, from prisoners to prison guards, and on the U.S. in general. Thousands of people have been handed long-term prison sentences for minor drug offenses. One of the documentary's participants, Michelle Alexander, is the author of *The New Jim Crow*, a tome about mass incarceration in the U.S. It's the perfect companion read to this documentary.

### *Knock Down The House*

The events happening now don't exist in a vacuum—they're the product of hundreds of years of racist policies and attitudes. If we are going to make meaningful changes moving forward, we have to have a government that will work for us, and *Knock Down The House* follows the efforts to make that a reality. The film follows Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and three other female grassroots candidates on their 2018 Congressional campaigns, and the institutional challenges designed to keep people like them out of power.



## Courses:

Rachel Cargle: [#dothework](#) free 30-day Course and [The Great Unlearn](#)

Rachel Cargle is an academic, writer, and activist who works in “unpacking the racist histories of various American systems and affirming the Black experience with tools of language, concepts, and cultural systems.” Currently, Cargle is offering both a free 30-day anti-racism course called [#dothework](#) (which has a self-paced syllabus sent to your inbox every 10 days for 30 days total) and [The Great Unlearn](#), which offers a monthly self-paced syllabus of readings, video lectures, and even templates for reaching out to your employer, local school districts, and other organizations about racial justice and accountability.

Nova Reid: [Anti-Racism Course](#) and [free anti-racism guide](#)

This course is for those who are interested in learning about antiracism from a British perspective. Here is some of what you will learn:

- Understanding white privilege and its role in racism
- Understanding both covert and overt racism
- Microaggressions
- Patriarchy, feminism and their firm role with racism
- Conscious anti-racist parenting
- Language and knowledge to feel empowered and confident to tackle uncomfortable conversations with people you love
- Self awareness, managing shame, and looking after yourself in your activism
- Feel equipped to campaign, advocate and safely and effectively challenge racism



*Coursera: Antiracism 1*

<https://www.coursera.org/learn/antiracism-1#about>

*From the course's about page:*

Anti-Racism I is an introduction to the topic of race and racism in the United States. The primary audience for this course is anyone who is interested in learning about race/racism in the US who has never taken a course in critical race or ethnic studies or affiliated fields (indeed, who may not know what the fields of critical race studies or ethnic studies are), who has never read a book about race/racism, or attended any race equity or diversity trainings on the topic of race/racism.

### [Boukman Academy](#)

The Boukman Academy (named after Haitian revolutionary Dutty Boukman) is a Black-owned school offering free lessons and educational resources for Black [history](#), [politics](#), [psychology](#), and [sociology](#). “Like Boukman, we aim to empower through action, providing education from a Black perspective to people of all ages,” the website reads. The Boukman Academy also offers a podcast called “[Red Black Green](#)” that dives into Black history with subjects like Leopold II of Belgium’s genocidal rule and what COVID-19 shows us about racism.

### [Monique Melton: Unity Over Comfort](#)

Monique Melton, a podcast host and anti-racism educator, offers classes on her website that teach you how to identify and eliminate racism. On Melton’s website you’ll find an [Anti-Racism 101 Crash Course](#), a [Unity Over Comfort](#) 10-week anti-racism learning program, and the [Unity Over Comfort curriculum](#)—which dives in deeper on anti-racism education on steps to eliminating racism. This curriculum features weekly 90-minute sessions for 12 weeks, weekly assignments, and live Q&A sessions with Melton.



## [Layla F. Saad: Good Ancestor Academy](#)

Layla F. Saad is the author of the best-selling book [Me and White Supremacy](#) and is also the host of the Good Ancestor Podcast—making her one of the foremost experts on anti-racism and content for white people looking to educate themselves on the history of white privilege and racism.

### **Articles:**

*White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible backpack by Peggy McIntosh*

*Guide to Allyship*

*Welcome To The Anti-Racism Movement — Here's What You've Missed*

*White Fragility and the Rules of Engagement by Robin DiAngelo*

*What to do with guilt and fragility by Erin Brown*