



The  
Economist

EDUCATIONAL  
FOUNDATION

# RACISM

## PART 1: WHAT IS RACISM?

Child-led learning resource



# INTRODUCTION

In response to the protests for racial equality that are happening all over the world, we are publishing two educational resources for 9-year-olds and upwards. They are suitable for parents to use at home with their children or teachers to use with their students. We recommend that adults work with pupils on these activities, so that they can manage sensitive conversations and questions as they arise.

To accompany these resources, we invited Liberty Martin, a Columbia University class-of-2021 undergraduate student and writer, to write an opinion piece. She has written articles for the *Financial Times*, the *Columbia Daily Spectator* and local newspapers from her home in London. She also enjoys writing fiction and poetry in her free time and is increasingly interested in work in archives, museums and the wider cultural sector. Her piece is intended for older students, parents and teachers, and she has included some questions that students aged 14 and upwards might want to work through.

It was very important to us to give space to a young Black voice on this issue, particularly because, while lots of the young people that we work with have lived experience of racism, we on the Foundation team do not. Liberty also advised us on the educational resources.

In her piece, Liberty encourages people to educate themselves about racial equality. We are particularly passionate about the importance of supporting young people to learn about this. Our mission is to give young people the skills to think and speak for themselves about current affairs. It's vital for them to be able to engage with the issues affecting their lives, however complex or sensitive they might be. We hope that our resources support young people in their efforts to understand racism and how it can be tackled.



***Read Liberty's piece in the  
appendix of this resource  
PAGE 18***

# SENSITIVE-ISSUE GUIDANCE

This bulletin comes in response to the protests for racial equality that are happening all over the world, specifically under the “Black Lives Matter” movement.

It provides opportunities for discussing racism and racial discrimination by exploring questions like:

- What is prejudice?
- What does discrimination look like?
- Whose responsibility is it to end racism?

This is an important topic to cover because it affects the lives of young people and is increasingly visible in the media.


We’ve put together the following recommendations to support the teaching of this topic:

- Ensure you look through all content before the session. The content is age-appropriate, but we recognise that some young people may have personal experience of the issues covered.
- Give students the option to opt out of certain activities or discussions. Students might not feel comfortable sharing experiences and this is fine.
- It is OK to feel uncomfortable when talking to young people about complex or sensitive issues. Reassure students that feeling uncomfortable when talking about racism does not mean they should avoid talking about it.

For further advice, please see our *Tips for Managing Sensitive Conversations* [\*\*bit.ly/sensitive-convo\*\*](https://bit.ly/sensitive-convo)

# WARM UP

Sometimes, discussions can feel uncomfortable.

A photograph of Demi Stokes, an England Women footballer, in a white kit with the number 12, dribbling a soccer ball. She is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially overlapping a large yellow and orange geometric shape.

**“That’s the only way this can be solved - by having uncomfortable conversations.”**


– Demi Stokes,  
England Women footballer

*Shutterstock.com / Jose Breton- Pics Action*

- How does talking about racism make you feel?
- Why might the conversations make some people feel uncomfortable?
- Talking about some things is uncomfortable. Does that mean we shouldn't talk about them? Can you give examples to support your answer?
- Does feeling uncomfortable about racism mean we should stop talking about it?

# A “NEW NORMAL”

This quote is from a speech by Barack Obama aimed at young people.

A profile photograph of Barack Obama, looking upwards and to the right, wearing a white shirt and a blue striped tie.

**“You can create a new normal, one that is fairer, and gives everyone opportunity, and treats everyone equally, and builds bridges between people instead of dividing them.”**

- What do you think Barack Obama, a former American president, means by “a new normal”?
- How old do you think you have to be to change something?
- What are the things that stop people from making a change?



REASONING

Do you agree or disagree with what he is saying? Try to give a reason for your opinion.

# KEYWORDS



What does each word mean? Try to explain in your own words, using examples to support your ideas.  
When have you seen these in the news?



# KEYWORDS

## RACISM

Racism is when people are treated unfairly because of their colour or ethnicity.

## DISCRIMINATION

is when a group of people are treated differently and unfairly because of who they are. The reasons for discrimination could be things like skin colour, beliefs or gender.

## Prejudice

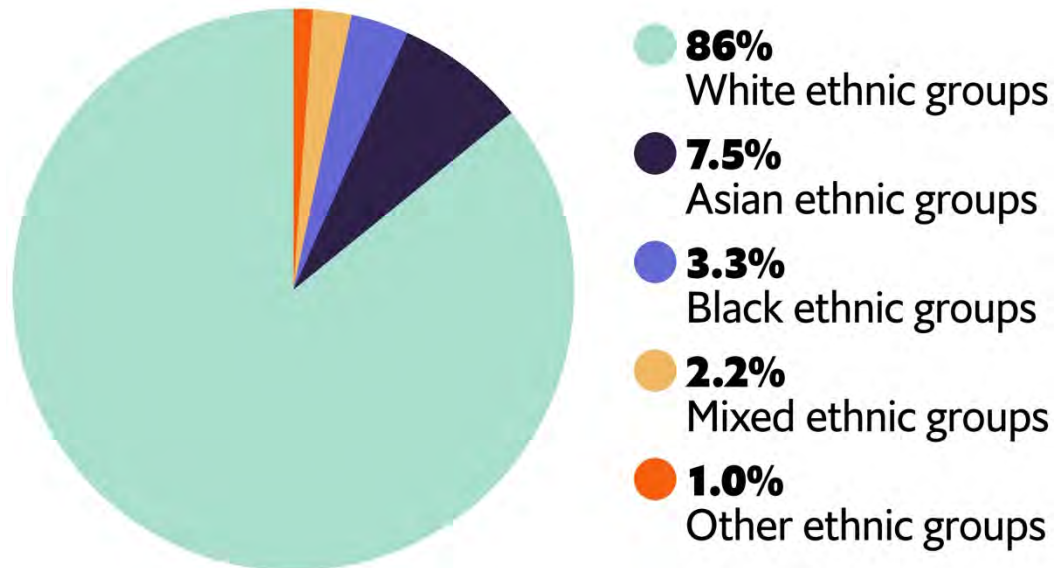
is when opinions are formed about people before we know them. Prejudice is usually negative. For example, deciding that a teenager you see across the street will be rude.

- What could someone be prejudiced about? Can you think of some examples?
- How might discrimination make someone feel?
- Why might someone have a racist belief?

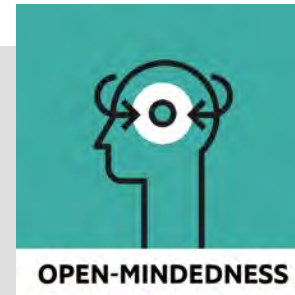
# ETHNICITY

An ethnic group is a group of people that share the same culture, religion, language or traditions.

Look at the pie chart showing the different ethnicities of people living in England and Wales. It represents 56 million people.



- Are you surprised by these numbers? Why / why not?
- Do you think the percentages are the same where you live?
- What might you notice or not notice if your ethnicity is in the majority?
- What might you notice or not notice if your ethnicity is in the minority?



What are the good things about experiencing different cultures? Are there any cultures that you would like to learn more about?



# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

LOOK AT THESE PICTURES...



- Who would be more helpful?
- Who would be the most mean?
- Who would you trust to look after your pocket money?
- How did you make these decisions?

# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Unconscious bias is when you make a snap decision about what something or someone might be like without having evidence for it, or without really thinking about it.

**Did you make snap decisions about the wolf and the fairy?**

**Did you have any evidence for your answers?**



Unconscious bias can also create stereotypes. A stereotype is where you assume that all people within a group are the same, eg “all girls like the colour pink”. They are often not true!

Can you think of any other stereotypes?



How can stereotypes cause prejudice?  
How can stereotypes cause racism?

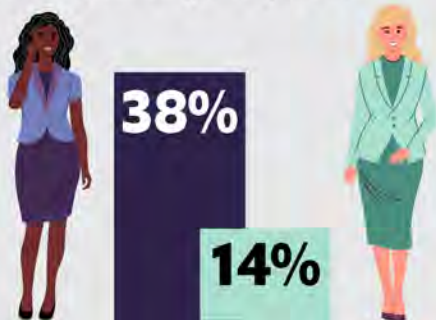
# WHAT DOES RACISM LOOK LIKE?

Racism is not always as obvious as abusive language or violence.

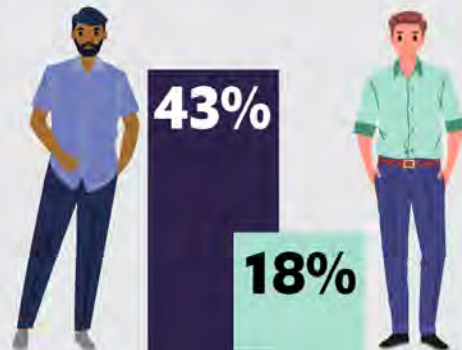
Often, it is shown through one race being treated differently than another, which creates inequality. Look at the following examples of how people have experienced racism in Britain.

A survey of 1,000 people from ethnic minority backgrounds showed:

**38%** had been treated like a shoplifter in a shop when they hadn't done anything wrong, compared with **14%** of white people.



**43%** had been refused a job for a reason that felt unfair, compared with **18%** of white people.



**41%** said that someone in the last year had assumed they were not British.



People from minority backgrounds were **2x** as likely as white people to be confused for staff in restaurants or shops.







# WHAT DOES RACISM LOOK LIKE?

- How do the survey numbers make you feel?
- How do they show **prejudice**? How do they show **discrimination**? How do they show **unconscious bias**?
- What can be done to reduce this type of racism?

# NON-RACIST V ANTI-RACIST

If you add the prefix "**non**"  
to a word, what does it do?

*For example "non-fiction".*

If you add the prefix "**anti**"  
to a word, what does it do?

*For example "antifreeze".*

not something  
= **non**

against something  
= **anti**

Using these definitions, what do you think  
non-racist and anti-racist mean?

How might a non-racist person behave?

How might an anti-racist person behave?

How are they different?

# NON-RACIST VS ANTI-RACIST

Look at the following examples and decide whether they are non-racist or anti-racist:



Telling a friend they are wrong for making a racist joke.



Joining a protest in support of Black Lives Matter.



Feeling embarrassed by a racist comment but not saying anything.



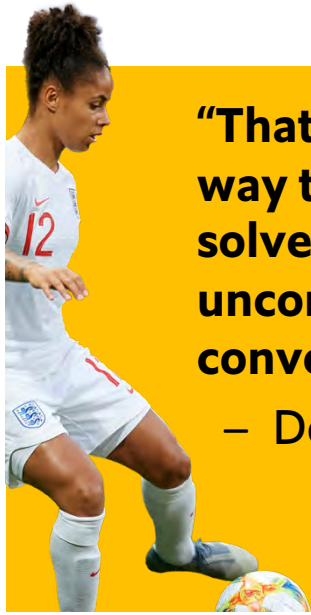
Reading about how racism affects people to understand how to help.

- When have you seen any examples of non-racist or anti-racist behaviour in the news?
- What impact do you think **non-racist** people will have on racism?
- What impact do you think **anti-racist** people will have on racism?





# REFLECTION



**“That’s the only way this can be solved - by having uncomfortable conversations.”**

– Demi Stokes

**“You can create a new normal, one that is fairer, and gives everyone opportunity, and treats everyone equally, and builds bridges between people instead of dividing them.”**

– Barack Obama



How could the following people help to create a “new normal”?

- A person who owns a business
- A child in the playground
- A celebrity
- A restaurant worker





# SUPER-REFLECTION

- How can learning about racism help to reduce it?
- What effect has the coronavirus pandemic had on racism?
- Whose responsibility is it to stand up to racism?

## NOW...



### Have a discussion

Talk to someone else about the issues covered in these activities



### Become the teacher!

See if you can go through these activities again, as the teacher, with somebody else in your household

- For further reading, try the “Mark’s dilemma” activity here:  
[bit.ly/EEF-dilemma](https://bit.ly/EEF-dilemma)
- Or find out about anti-racism protests here:  
[bbc.co.uk/newsround/52978346](https://bbc.co.uk/newsround/52978346)

Watch out for the second part of this activity which will develop these questions further. You can complete it from next week onwards.



# APPENDIX

## – THE BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTESTS FEEL DIFFERENT THIS TIME - HERE'S WHY

*A piece by Liberty Martin*

## – ANTI-RACISM RESOURCES





# The Black Lives Matter protests feel different this time - here's why



*By Liberty Martin*

We were all itching to go back outside, but nothing could have prepared us for the onslaught of Black lives lost to racial violence when the US lifted some of its COVID-19 lockdown measures. The murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and Tony McDade reverberated across social media until the death of George Floyd became the straw that broke the camel's back. Protests and riots erupted in Floyd's home of Minneapolis, spread across the United States and then the world. We've seen these events before, both here and abroad, proceed like clockwork: the murder of a Black civilian by the police, the video of this Black person's final moments circulated across social media and then civil unrest.

But we have reached a turning point. In a recent interview with Channel 4, activist Angela Davis said, "This is a very exciting moment. I don't know if we have ever experienced this kind of global challenge to racism and to the consequences of slavery and colonialism." Imagine, a former member of the Black Panthers, a vocal activist in the US Civil Rights Movement, has said that she has never seen protests like this before. And she's excited. The mass uproar that we are witnessing now is not another tragic repetition of events passed, but rather the next development in a long struggle against anti-Black racism.

The rise of social media marked a new era in the fight for social justice that has been both invigorating and traumatising. The internet has spread information and language such as "white privilege" and "intersectionality" to help us navigate conversations about race, and has also broadcast racial injustice in an unprecedented manner. Today's protests are the outcry of a generation who have watched Black people die, on their laptops and mobile phone apps for years. Black Lives Matter, the hashtag born from these tragedies, is now a movement that pervades all facets of life, not just police brutality. The discrimination that Black people face in education, academia, health care, the media and workplaces belies the institutional racism at the very fabric of our society. Yes, our society. We cannot ignore the deep-rooted racism in the UK any longer.

Far too often Britain uses the US to distance itself from racism, as if racism is a uniquely American phenomenon. Where do you think the US got it from? The horrific racism of North American history is simply the legacy and evolution of British colonialism. We see this legacy thrive blatantly on British shores with the Windrush crisis, Grenfell, the disproportionate COVID-19 fatality rate in the Black community, police profiling and brutality and the deaths

of Belly Mujinga, Mark Duggan, Stephen Lawrence and Cherry Groce (whose fatal shooting by the police launched the 1981 Brixton uprising). Britain is going to have to reckon with its violent history of the Empire, especially because the descendants of colonised British subjects are now integrated into British society. This is why we are going to see more and more demands to take down the statues of figures who played an active role in slavery and imperialism, including British “heroes” such as Winston Churchill. Brits must confront why some of their national heroes are also responsible for genocide, violent exploitation and/or oppression, because it’s not a coincidence.

So what do we do next? As you will see in the two-part bulletins for your pupils, being non-racist is not enough. We must be anti-racist in order to make a change. Educate yourself about race, institutional racism and the unsung history of colonised peoples such as the African diaspora. Educate yourself about Britain’s investment and transformation through the various crimes of the Empire, like the extremely lucrative transatlantic slave trade. Use this knowledge to engage in those difficult conversations about race with your friends, families and children. Call out racism in your everyday life and support activists who fight for change through donations and standing up to naysayers. And when you do so, remember that anti-racism is not an act of good-will or charity. It is a complete reassessment and overhaul of our self-perception as individuals and, more importantly, as a society. It is, and will be, an uncomfortable, difficult and lengthy process. It is active and necessary work. And it is literally a matter of life and death for Black people across the globe.

We are living in a moment of history. The protests will inevitably peter out, but racism and the struggle against it will continue in classrooms, workplaces and the streets. Have you ever wondered what role you would have played as a normal person in the abolition of slavery, in Nazi Germany or South African apartheid? What side of history would you have been on? Well, it’s your time to find out.

Follow Liberty on Twitter [@libertyamartin](https://twitter.com/libertyamartin)  
View Liberty's portfolio [clippings.me/users/libertymartin](https://clippings.me/users/libertymartin)

## THINKING QUESTIONS:

- Did any parts of this article surprise or challenge you? Why?
- Are there any parts of the article that you agree and/or disagree with?  
Why do you think the author wrote these parts?
- What steps do you think you can take to be anti-racist?
- How do you think anti-racism will affect British culture?
- How much do you know about Black British history? What could you do to learn more?
- Do you think we should change how we teach history? Why / why not?  
If you think it should be changed, how would you like to change it?

# ANTI-RACISM RESOURCES

## RESOURCES FOR PUPILS:

These resources will help to provide pupils with a deeper understanding of racism and Black Lives Matter. We recommend that children visit the following websites with an adult who can manage the sensitive conversations.

News articles written for children about the Black Lives Matter protests in America.

[\*teachingkidsnews.com/2020/06/09/black-lives-matter\*](https://teachingkidsnews.com/2020/06/09/black-lives-matter)

CNN pairs with Sesame Street to explain what racism is.

[\*edition.cnn.com/2020/06/06/us/cnn-sesame-street-town-hall-racism-trnd\*](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/06/us/cnn-sesame-street-town-hall-racism-trnd)

A comic strip by Elise Gravel explaining what racism is.

[\*elisegravel.com/en/blog/racism\*](https://elisegravel.com/en/blog/racism)

A BBC article on George Floyd protests, including information on some key vocabulary.

[\*bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-52892949\*](https://bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-52892949)

A Newsround special episode based around the anti-racism protests.

[\*bbc.co.uk/newsround/52978346\*](https://bbc.co.uk/newsround/52978346)

An activity called "Mark's Dilemma" aimed at making children think about how people from ethnic minorities are underrepresented in children's books.

[\*thephilosophyman.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Marks-dilemma.pdf\*](https://thephilosophyman.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Marks-dilemma.pdf)

A TED Talk by 14-year-old Ellis Fearon about Black Lives Matter and why it is relevant in the UK.

[\*youtube.com/watch?v=A7EZWBIPUUQ\*](https://youtube.com/watch?v=A7EZWBIPUUQ)



## RESOURCES FOR ADULTS:

These resources provide information about how to facilitate conversations about racism and take steps towards equality. They include ideas of books and activities that can be used to take discussions with pupils further.

An article about how to teach tolerance and have conversations about discrimination and prejudice.

[tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/beyond\\_golden\\_rule.pdf](https://tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/beyond_golden_rule.pdf)

An explanation of what white privilege means in the UK.

[refinery29.com/en-gb/2020/05/9830372/white-privilege-definition](https://refinery29.com/en-gb/2020/05/9830372/white-privilege-definition)

The Black Curriculum is a social enterprise which want to reform the curriculum to include a fairer representation of Black history and to give every child a sense of belonging.

[theblackcurriculum.com](https://theblackcurriculum.com)

The Conscious Kid is an education, research and policy organisation dedicated to reducing bias and promoting positive identity development in youth.

[theconsciouskid.org](https://theconsciouskid.org)

Show Racism The Red Card is an anti-racism educational charity. They aim to combat racism through enabling role models and provide lots of anti-discrimination work packs.

[theredcard.org/resources-and-activities](https://theredcard.org/resources-and-activities)

“Talking about Race” Web Portal by the National Museum of African American History and Culture. The portal is intended to help explore issues of race, racism and racial identity, featuring eight foundational subjects. The subjects have specific content for educators.

[nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race](https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race)

EmbraceRace was founded in early 2016 by two parents who set out to create resources to meet the challenges they face raising children in a world where race matters.

[embracerace.org](https://embracerace.org)

A TED Talk about the dangers of creating misinformation by only sharing a “single story”.

[ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_ngozi\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)

A TED Talk by Nova Reid about microaggressions and how to make a change.

[youtube.com/watch?v=G8iNGeVvUs](https://youtube.com/watch?v=G8iNGeVvUs)

White Privilege explained in a variety of ways.

[distractify.com/p/white-privilege-explained-instagram](https://distractify.com/p/white-privilege-explained-instagram)