



# A Talkin'-To

Jason Reynolds Illustration by Andrea Pippins

I could tell you all the bad things,  
all the bad things that cut and scare  
and howl and growl and gnash and  
bear teeth, bright and sharp that  
glint in the moonlight.

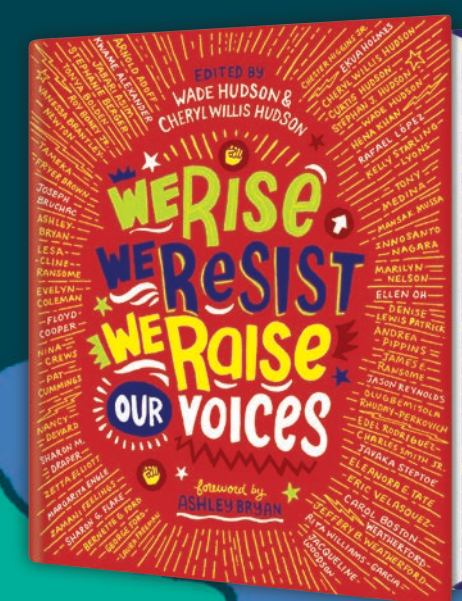
I could tell you all that's frightening,  
all that's frightening and lurking  
and looming and hiding in the brush,  
razor-hair pricked up on the back  
of something too sly to see.

I could tell you about all the loud things,  
all the loud things that scream  
and shriek and shred our ability to hear  
each other, the beasts behind screens,  
scrolling banners of bully-banter.

I could tell you all the things,  
all the things that are trying to tell you  
about you, about how you should run,  
and how you should run,  
and how you should run,  
but I'm about you above all things,  
above all things, so I'd rather tell you  
one thing and one thing only:

everything bad and frightening and loud  
will always hide when you hold your head up,  
will always hide when you hold your heart out,  
will always sing a shrinking song  
when you fly.

An excerpt from *We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices*  
compiled by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson



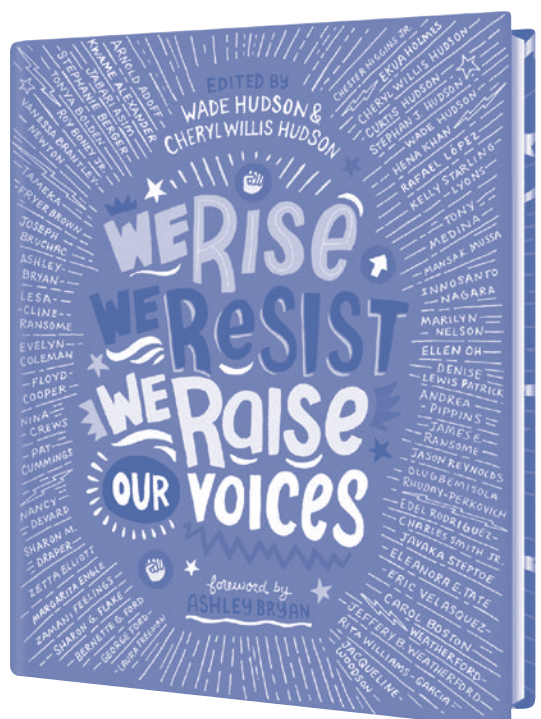


## EDUCATORS' GUIDE

### ABOUT THE BOOK

What do we tell our children when the world seems bleak, and prejudice and racism run rampant? In ninety-six lavishly designed pages of original art, prose, and poetry, fifty-two diverse creators lend their voices to inspiring young activists.

Featuring poems, letters, personal essays, art, and other works from such industry leaders as Jacqueline Woodson (*Brown Girl Dreaming*), Jason Reynolds (*All American Boys*), Kwame Alexander (*The Crossover*), Andrea Pippins (*I Love My Hair*), Sharon Draper (*Out of My Mind*), Rita Williams-Garcia (*One Crazy Summer*), Ellen Oh (cofounder of We Need Diverse Books), and artists Pat Cummings, Ekua Holmes, Rafael Lopez, James Ransome, Javaka Stepstoe, and more, this anthology empowers the nation's youth to listen, learn, and build a better tomorrow.



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### ABOUT THE EDITORS

Wade Hudson is president and CEO of Just Us Books, an independent publisher of Black-interest books for children and young adults. For his work, Wade has received a New Jersey Stephen Crane Literary Award; the Ida B. Wells Institutional Leadership Award, presented by the Center for Black Literature; and the Madame C. J. Walker Legacy Award, given by the Hurston/Wright Foundation. He has also been inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent. Discover more about Wade at [wadehudson-authorpublisher.com](http://wadehudson-authorpublisher.com).

Cheryl Willis Hudson is an author, editor, and cofounder and editorial director of Just Us Books. Cheryl has written over two dozen books for young children, is a member of the children's book committee of PEN America, and has served as a diversity consultant to a number of educational publishers. Learn more about Cheryl at [cherylwhudson.weebly.com](http://cherylwhudson.weebly.com).

### IN THE CLASSROOM

*We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices* is an excellent resource for teachers to use as a springboard to discuss timely topics such as activism, social justice, civil and political rights, bias, and diversity. The anthology provides opportunities for students to reflect on the challenges they experience and see in the world, and build empathy and understanding for the richly diverse individuals in our society. There are also opportunities to learn from and engage in active communities devoted to positive change. Contributing authors and illustrators offer youth encouragement, advice, and support to face the very real and present issues of their generation. Young people will be inspired and empowered to dream of a better world, stand up and speak out for what they believe in, and take part in making change.



CROWN BOOKS  
FOR YOUNG READERS



Library

RHTeachersLibrarians.com

### EXPLORING SOCIAL ISSUES:

#### Discussion Questions

1. Draw parallels between the experience of the narrator in Medina's "One Day Papi Drove Me to School" and the fears described by the speaker in Alexander's "A Thousand Winters." What do Rodriguez's illustrations accompanying "One Day Papi Drove Me to School" add to the narrative? How would you illustrate this essay with photographs?
2. Discuss the effects of race-based violence and punishment on parents and their children.
3. Read Oh's "Words Have Power." Describe the ways in which teasing and bullying can have a damaging impact on both the victim and the abuser. Give examples of how you can use positive words and speech to counteract bullying and hate. What actions can you take to confront bullying and support individuals and groups who are harmed?
4. In "Dark-Brown Skin Is Beautiful," Tate describes the colorism she experienced in her home. Using examples from the text, how would you define *colorism*? What are examples of colorism you have observed? How does colorism contribute to our perception and treatment of people with dark skin? What does Tate encourage readers to do to cope with colorism?
5. What is the shared lesson in Boney's "Tell It in Your Own Way" and Khan's "How to Pass the Test"? Discuss the dangers of making assumptions about various groups of people. How do Hudson's photographs and Boney's illustrations in each entry challenge prevalent stereotypes? How can you take action to stand up against stereotyping and prejudice?

#### Extension Activities

1. Explore how leaders use words to empower people. Research a famous civil rights speech and analyze the use of powerful rhetoric, symbols, and imagery to promote equality and acceptance. Research controversial hate speeches, symbols, and imagery. Compare and contrast the strategies used to persuade different audiences.
2. Examine and analyze negative and positive depictions of diverse groups in media (films, books, advertisements, etc.). Discuss how these depictions contribute to perpetuating or breaking down stereotypes and why it is important to have positive and authentic representation in media. Choose an example of a negative portrayal and create a poster or illustration that counters and challenges the negative representation.
3. Using the text as inspiration, write a poem describing a situation or event from differing perspectives.
4. Research the various ways groups use positive sustained dialogue to begin having conversations about difficult issues. In small groups, list the strategies and suggestions you have found helpful for having positive discussions with people. In pairs, create a scenario in which you both practice using positive dialogue.

Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS.SL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, 6.3, 7.3, 8.3; RL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 6.9; W.6.4, 7.4, 8.4 6.7, 7.7, 8.7, 6.9B, 7.9B, 8.9B; RH.6-8.2, RH.6-8.6

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### GETTING STARTED

#### Art and Text Unit

Art can be a powerful tool for activism, and this anthology should be read with equal attention paid to the text and images. Powerful images speak volumes. Study the art paired with each piece of writing. Discuss how the art conveys or enhances its message. Does the art provide its own message about social justice and activism? How has art impacted communities and social justice issues? Choose your favorite artwork in the anthology and create your own interpretation.

### MAKING HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

#### Discussion Questions

1. Many of the authors reference past civil rights and social justice movements in their works. How do these events compare or contrast with current events? What characteristics, qualities, and skills does your generation share with the past generation of activists? How do you believe you are different? Choose a post or image from a social media platform to illustrate your point.
2. Identify and analyze the shared allusion in "A Thousand Winters" and "You Too Can Fly." Compare the tone Alexander and Elliott use to convey their messages. What kinds of historical references are embedded in the poems and art? How do the illustrators use color and style to convey meaning? What textual evidence helps you understand the tones of the poems?
3. In "We, the People," what does Williams-Garcia mean by "the founders didn't know this would include all of us"? Investigate and discuss the history around the creation of the United States Constitution.
4. In "What Songs Will Our Children Sing?," W. Hudson ponders the types of songs your generation will sing. What purposes do songs have in the poem? What songs do you know from past generations? Share a current song that inspires you. What current songs do you think future generations will remember, and why? Historically, songs have been used as anthems for movements. Research songs that were used to inspire followers and promote causes such as the civil rights movement and the women's movement.

#### Extension Activities

1. Create a historical timeline depicting influential civil rights and social justice movements. Illustrate the timeline using symbols and key images to represent each movement.
2. Discuss the current rights of students in comparison to the rights your grandparents had as students. As a class, create a list of what you believe should be the core values and rights of students. Do these rights differ outside of school? Discuss whether you believe students should have different rights at school and at home.
3. Explore the concept of a living document. Create an addendum to the Bill of Rights incorporating what you believe should be added to represent the rights of young people. How do your additional rights compare to the current ones for adults? Research other declarations of human rights, and discuss how these documents support the concept of a living document and represent diverse perspectives.

Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS.SL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2; RL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4; W.6.2, 7.2, 8.2, 6.7, 7.7, 8.7, 6.9B, 7.9B, 8.9B; RH.6-8.2, 6-8.7

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### SHARING ADVICE

#### Discussion Questions

1. Identify the figurative language used in "What Shall We Tell You?" (W. Hudson) How does the language change throughout the poem?
2. How does Bolden's "a day of small things" expand on the advice given in Woodson's "Kindness Is a Choice"? Give additional examples of small things you can do to be kind. How can small acts have big impacts? How does the imagery in Reynolds's "A Talkin'-To" compare to the language in and ending of W. Hudson's "What Shall We Tell You?" How are Pippins's and Cooper's illustrations different? Would you respond differently to the poems if the illustrations were exchanged?
3. As a class, read Weatherford's "The Golden Rule" and brainstorm additional rules you believe everyone should follow. Are there situations in which the rules we follow can or should be broken? What does Weatherford's illustration convey?
4. Draper's "Prayers of the Grandmothers" provides examples of cautionary advice given to young people to stay safe. Discuss the types of advice you have received about staying safe. How does the advice given to your peers compare to the advice you have received? How does Velasquez's painting make you feel?
5. What is Bruchac's advice in "To Find a Friend"? What suggestions do you have for being a good friend and making friends? Do you think the two boys in Smith's photograph have found a friend?
6. In "The Art of Mindfulness," Coleman discusses ways to be more mindful. Reflect on a situation when examining your feelings before reacting would have helped produce a more positive outcome.
7. Compare Nelson's "It Helps to Look at Old Front Page Headlines" with Cummings's "We've Got You." What imagery is used in both poems? How does the imagery connect to comparable themes? Discuss how Adoff's "here is a poem of love and hope:" uses similar imagery to achieve a different effect. How do Mussa's and Cummings's illustrations reinforce the messages of the poems?
8. What is the significance and meaning of the repetition in Rhuday-Perkovich's "Advice . . . (I'm Old-School Like That)"? Make a checklist of advice you could give to your classmates. Illustrate your work and display it in your classroom.

#### Extension Activities

1. Throughout the anthology, authors impart wisdom, advice, and positive mantras to empower and uplift young people. Create a classroom book filled with advice and words of wisdom for peers your age and the next generation.
2. Consider how different religions and societies have interpreted the Golden Rule. Select a Golden Rule that speaks to you. Journal about how this rule echoes your beliefs about how people should be treated. How might the world look if everyone followed the Golden Rule?

Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS.SL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2; RL.6.4, 7.4, 8.4, 6.2, 7.2, 6.9; W.6.4, 7.4, 8.4, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5

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### ENGAGING IN ACTIVISM

#### Discussion Questions

1. In the "Introduction," the authors state there are tools you can use to navigate the present and future. What tools do young people have to help them confront unfairness and inequality? What tools do they have now that past generations did not?
2. In "We, the People," Williams-Garcia gives examples of ways to be of service. Discuss active citizenship and additional examples of ways students can be involved in local and global communities.
3. In "You Can Change the World" (B. Ford) and "When I Think of You" (S. Flake), the authors provide examples of young people taking action to promote change. Discuss influential contemporary young people who have met Ford's challenge and influenced the world. How does G. Ford's illustration capture the message in "You Can Change the World"? How do Feelings's photographs in "When I Think of You" impact the message?
4. Analyze the repetition used in "Drumbeat for Change." (Lyons). What is the meaning and effect of the repeated words and phrases? How does the repetition help to convey the theme? Black-and-white photography is often used in photojournalism. What is the meaning and effect of the photograph in this entry?
5. Engle writes about patience, time, and growth in her poems "All Nations Are Neighbors" and "I Wonder." How are these concepts important to the topics of progress and activism? Compare Engle's poems to Cline-Ransome's poem "Next." How are the concepts of time and waiting different in "Next"? Are there any similarities in López's and Ransome's illustrations? How do the illustrations complement the messages of the two poems?
6. In "Where Are the Good People?," Brown describes the types of activists and allies you can find in your community and the importance of standing together to fight for fairness. Discuss the meaning of *activism*, *allyship*, and *community*. How does community-building relate to activism and promoting change? Describe what is happening in Nagara's illustration.
7. Asim's "You Can Do It" provides encouragement to make any dream happen. What are your dreams for the future? What positive changes do you want to see in your school, community, state, country, and world? Imagine a conversation between the students in the photographs about their futures. What would they say?

#### Extension Activities

1. Research a youth-led movement from the past or present, including the social issue the young people challenged, the difficulties they faced, and the outcomes of their activism. Design a poster, make a short video, or create a vision board that could be used and shared to summarize your research.
2. As a class, brainstorm social issues that matter to you. In groups, research and present on one of the topics. Include in your presentation an overview of the issue, relevant laws, and steps activists have taken to address the issue. Make a group collage from newspaper and magazine clippings to illustrate your findings.
3. Research online activism and the digital technologies used to promote positive social change. Discuss how technology and social media can be used as tools for activism.
4. Analyze a past hashtag campaign that focused on diversity or social justice. Was this campaign effective in bringing awareness to the issue? If so, how? If not, why? What happened as a result of the campaign?

Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS.SL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4; RL.6.2, 7.2, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4; W.6.7, 7.7, 8.7

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### RISE, RESIST, RAISE YOUR VOICE

#### Looking at the Anthology as a Whole

1. Heroes are everywhere. Observe the kind and brave people in your community who stand up for what they believe in and work to create change. Heroes can be quiet and loud, and they make change through actions big and small. Identify a hero in your own life and interview them. Consider asking what motivates them to make a difference and what characteristics they believe are necessary to be a role model and hero. After the interview, create a presentation that represents who they are and the work they do. It can be in the form of any creative product you can imagine (poem, essay, story, song, art, etc.).
2. Understanding your past and your present requires listening to and knowing the stories of those who came before you and the experiences of people living in the diverse communities that make up your world.
  - In "You Are Here," Patrick states, "Our lives have created a map that you can always follow." Patrick and other authors and illustrators throughout the anthology give voice to past and current experiences that have created life maps. Create your own life map using symbols, images, and words to describe where you come from and the elements that make up your home, family, and community. Think about who has come before you, how they helped to make you who you are, and what you envision for your map's future.
  - People have used quilts throughout history to tell their stories. In "Get on Board," C. Hudson creates a story-quilt to illustrate the popular historical African American spiritual "The Gospel Train." Research the history of quilting and the techniques quilters employ to convey a concept or experience. Create your own paper quilt square that represents the experience of a group you have learned about through reading this anthology. Combine the quilt squares with your classmates to create a classroom story-quilt.
3. Many of the authors and illustrators in the anthology convey through writing and art the difficulties past generations have faced and the ability of young people to address current challenges and injustice. Do you think it is important for young people to participate in activism? Discuss how taking action can create change and how small acts can have a big impact and spur movements. What can you do to create change in your own life? What are ways young people can gain agency to impact issues affecting our society?

The following list contains ideas for actions you can take to help make a difference.

- Read, research, and educate yourself on the issue. Talk to people who have a different stand on the issue so that you have a full understanding.
- Find people who share the same beliefs as you. They can become your support network.
- Run for student government or volunteer as a student representative in local government committees.
- Engage in community service and volunteer your time.
- Follow legislation affecting the issue.
- Identify and engage with lawmakers and your local and state representatives.
- Write letters or call government officials about your opinion on the issue.
- Identify and contact leaders and activists in your community.
- Create a public awareness campaign to help educate others.
- Contact the press or write an editorial.
- Conduct a fundraising drive to donate money or supplies.
- Organize a protest or demonstration.
- Encourage adults to vote and voice their opinions. When you are eligible, register to vote.

As a whole class or in small groups, research a specific issue of interest. Using the list above as guidance, develop and write a plan of action for taking part in addressing the issue. Consider the various ways one can be an activist and the importance of both small, local acts and large, global movements.

Correlates to Common Core Standards CCSS.SL.6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 6.2, 7.2, 8.2, 6.4, 7.4, 8.4; W.6.4, 7.4, 8.4, 6.7, 7.7, 8.7; RH.6-8.2

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