

# The 1619 Project

## A New Origin Story

Created by Nikole Hannah-Jones &  
*The New York Times Magazine*

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### One World

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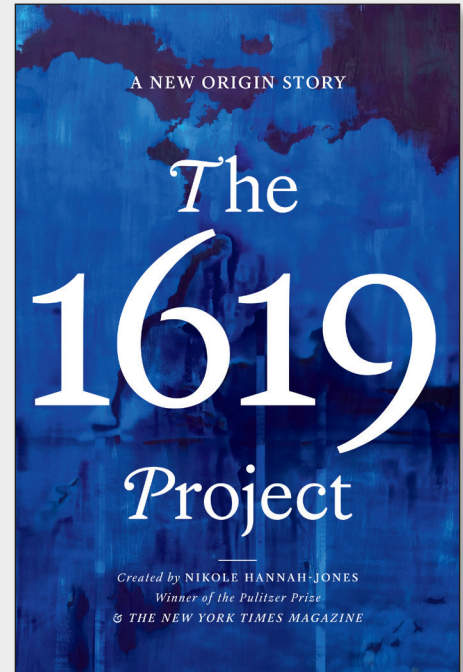
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### NOTE TO THE TEACHER

The 1619 Project was first published in the *New York Times Magazine* in August 2019 to coincide with the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans to the colony of Virginia. The project, led by acclaimed journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, sought to reframe United States history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the U.S. historical narrative. Moreover, it forced this country to grapple with the long and enduring legacy of American slavery while also correcting the historical narrative and its portrayal of Black American citizens. Instead of positioning Black Americans as insignificant to the U.S. civic narrative, the 1619 Project instead contends that Black Americans have, in fact, been vital to the foundational ideas of American democracy and freedom.

*The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story* is a riveting expansion of the original project that includes a number of essays that explore the legacy of slavery and its connection to present-day institutions, as well as poetry, photographs, and works of short fiction that highlight the resistance and resilience of Black Americans in both the past and present. This book is especially relevant in this current political moment and can help provide students with a deeper understanding of how racist ideas, structures, and policies in the past evolved into our present-day systems of government, transportation, religion, criminal justice, healthcare, medicine, etc.

The content of this guide provides teachers with ideas and resources on how to use the text in the classroom with high school students (grades 9–12). The book lends itself to U.S. history, government/civics, ethnic studies, and ELA curricula. It also can be used in all-school or common reading programs, both at the school and district level as well as at colleges and universities. It is important to note that this book does not have to be used linearly and assigned to students from beginning to end. Rather, it is modular in nature and can be used to supplement a variety of themes and topics in the curriculum.



## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

These questions support the focus of the guide and can be used before, during, or after reading the text for discussion or reflection.

- What is the significance of 1619?
- What does it mean to be an American?
- What is the purpose of history? Who gets to decide what and who is remembered from the past? What are the consequences of those decisions? How does that impact how one sees themselves as a citizen?
- How can the United States come to a place of truth and reconciliation about the history and legacy of slavery?
- What would truth, healing, and reconciliation look like in terms of atoning for the “original sin” of slavery?

Additionally, consider these questions posed by Hannah-Jones in the book’s preface: “What would it mean to reframe our understanding of U.S. history by considering 1619 as our country’s origin point . . . How might that reframing change how we understand the unique problems of the nation *today* . . . How would looking at contemporary American life through this lens help us better appreciate the contributions of Black Americans—not only to our culture but also to our democracy itself?” (pp. xxii–xxiii).

## DISCUSSION NORMS/ COMMUNITY BUILDING

While reading this book, students will be pushed to examine difficult issues and truths. Therefore, it is important that students and teachers approach this text and the work with an open mind and heart. It is important to remember that it is okay to feel discomfort. When reading and interacting with this text please keep in mind that agreement is not required, but mutual respect and consideration are. Teachers may consider adopting their own discussion and community norms as the basis for classroom discussions on the text, or they can use the five “Norms for Facilitating Courageous Conversations” ([tinyurl.com/NormsForConversations](https://www.tinyurl.com/NormsForConversations)): 1) stay engaged, 2) speak your truth, 3) experience discomfort, 4) expect and accept non-closure, and 5) listen for understanding.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before students begin reading the book, you can use these questions to gauge students’ prior knowledge about the subject matter. Moreover, these questions will also preview major themes from the text.

- **What does freedom mean to you?** What does it look like, sound like, feel like?
- **What is democracy?** What does it look like, sound like, feel like?
- **What is citizenship?** What does it mean to be a citizen? Who decides who is a citizen, and how has the idea of citizenship changed over time? What does it mean to belong? What have you learned in previous history classes about who is a citizen and what it means to be a citizen?
- **What do you know about the history of slavery in the United States?** What do you know about the year 1619 and its implications in the context of U.S. history? What have you learned about slavery from books that you’ve read or what you’ve heard before in school? What do you know about the origins of the institution of slavery in the United States? How did the institution of slavery impact the country socially, politically, and economically?

**PRE-READING ACTIVITIES**  
(CONTINUED)

- **What does it mean to be resilient?** Why is it important to be resilient?
- Some of the history and stories told in this book are difficult to read because they describe painful events. **What can we do to take care of ourselves and others when a topic is both important to engage with but difficult to hear/read?**

**Note:** Please be cognizant of the language that you use to describe those who were enslaved. It is important to use “enslaved person” instead of referring to people as “slaves.” Remember that slavery is not who a person is, and referring to people as “slaves” effectively dehumanizes them.

**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

The following questions can be used to prompt classroom discussion or student writing about any of the individual poems or short fiction pieces in the book or the role of the creative works and images in the book as a whole.

1. What words and phrases stand out, and why?
2. What emotional reactions do you have, and why?
3. How do the authors use creative writing to address historical events?
4. How do the authors use form and language to communicate a point of view?
5. What new information do you learn about the lasting impact of slavery through the stories and poems featured in *The 1619 Project*?
6. Why do you think Hannah-Jones included creative writing in *The 1619 Project*?
7. Why do you think Hannah-Jones included photography in *The 1619 Project*? What was the purpose of the photographs? What message was she trying to send by including the photographs throughout the text?
8. How do the fictional stories and poems connect to other essays, photography, and artwork highlighted in the book?

*These discussion questions were created by The Pulitzer Center to help students analyze and discuss the creative work featured in the original “1619 Project” issue of The New York Times Magazine, published in August 2019. Find the original questions at [tinyurl.com/PulitzerReadingGuide](https://www.pulitzercenter.org/readingguide).*

**Preface: “Origins” by Nikole Hannah-Jones**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** White Lion, 1619, *History, Power*

1. Hannah-Jones addresses the scrutiny and criticism the 1619 Project has come under. In part, she argues that the criticism stems from the fact that the mainstream public is oftentimes unaware of the work of historians and the conversations and debates that occur within academia about the history of slavery. She cites historian Mary Ellen Hicks who wrote, “We [historians] produce constantly evolving interpretations, not facts.” What have you previously learned about the work of historians? How is “history” written and what is the process used by historians to write “history”?
2. Hannah-Jones writes, “In truth, most of the fights over the 1619 Project were never really about the facts” (p. xxvi). She then discusses the failed 1776 Commission and bills in state legislatures attempting to ban and/or discredit the 1619 Project. According to Hannah-Jones, what is the fight over the Project really about? What issues are really at the heart of the criticism of and objections to the Project?

**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS  
(CONTINUED)**

**Chapter 1: “Democracy” by Nikole Hannah-Jones**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Abolitionist, American Revolution, Bacon’s Rebellion, Somerset Ruling, Crispus Attucks, Declaration of Independence, Dunmore Proclamation, Slave Codes, Dred Scott v. Sandford, Reconstruction, W.E.B. Du Bois, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Jim Crow, Civil Rights Act, Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965*

1. What was Bacon’s Rebellion and what impact did it have on the institution of slavery?
2. Hannah-Jones writes, “In fact, some might argue that this nation was founded not as a democracy but as a slavocracy” (p. 19). What evidence does she use to substantiate that claim? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?
3. What societal changes did newly emancipated Black Americans push for after the Civil War? What impact do they have on our lives in the present day?
4. “What if America understood, finally, now, at the dawn of our fifth century, that we have never been the problem, but the solution?” (p. 35). What does this quote mean to you? Please use evidence to substantiate your claim.

**Chapter 2: “Race” by Dorothy Roberts**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Loving v. Virginia, Miscegenation, Moynihan’s 1965 Report The Negro Family: The Case for National Action, Loretta J. Ross, Reproductive Justice*

1. Think of a time when you had to specify your race or ethnicity. Do you think twice about it? What are your thoughts about the ways in which people are asked/forced to reveal their race or ethnicity?
2. Before reading this chapter, what did you know about the history of race in the United States? How has this text changed/added to your understanding of race as a social construct?
3. In what ways are we still living with the legacy of centuries of miscegenation laws in the United States?
4. Who is Loretta J. Ross and what is her contribution to the reproductive justice movement?
5. What are some of the many ways in which Black women resist domination of their bodies (both in the past and present day)?

**Chapter 3: “Sugar” by Khalil Gibran Muhammad**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *New York Slave Codes, Middle Passage, Haitian Revolution, Triangular Trade, Nat Turner’s Rebellion*

1. Muhammad states that the growing and production of sugar changed the world. What evidence does he use to justify that claim?
2. How would you characterize or describe Black Americans’ history with the land in Louisiana after emancipation?
3. What impact does sugar continue to have on the Black community in the present day?

**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS  
(CONTINUED)**

**Chapter 4: “Fear” by Leslie Alexander and Michelle Alexander**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, 2021 U.S. Capitol Insurrection, 1739 Stono Rebellion, Haitian Revolution, Toussaint Louverture, Nat Turner’s Rebellion, Jim Crow Laws, Freedmen’s Bureau, 15th Amendment, COINTELPRO*

1. According to the authors, how is white fear weaponized against Black people?
2. What do you remember about the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020? What about the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021? Compare and contrast the federal government’s response to and media coverage of each event.
3. The authors write, “Nothing has proved more threatening to our democracy, or more devastating to Black communities, than white fear of Black freedom dreams” (p. 102). What are your thoughts, reactions, connections, or questions in response to that quote?
4. What was the significance of the Stono Rebellion?
5. Trace the beginning of law enforcement in the United States. Were you aware of this history? Taking into account this history, coupled with the knowledge of current events and the over-policing of Black communities, what do activists mean when they make calls to “defund the police”? Do you agree or disagree? Please use evidence to justify your response.

**Chapter 5: “Dispossession” by Tiya Miles**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Indian Removal Act of 1830, Mexican-American War, Westward Expansion, Broken Treaties, Tribal Sovereignty*

1. Discuss your reaction to this chapter and learning this history.
2. What actions did the U.S. government take to infringe on treaties with Native nations?
3. Miles writes that, during the visits to Hopewell, Native participants learned important lessons about race and citizenship in the United States: “white people were citizens, Black people were possessions, and Indigenous people were now subject to national interference. In order to maintain the ‘protection’ of the United States from its own citizens, Native leaders were being indirectly encouraged to participate in a form of racial hierarchy that was considered part and parcel of civilized American society—one that has distorted Native and Black relations ever since” (p. 139). What were Native Americans being “indirectly encouraged” to do by the U.S. government? Why? What impact did this have on Native and Black relations?
4. What can we learn from this history of dispossession and what are the implications for the present day?

**Chapter 6: “Capitalism” by Matthew Desmond**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *2008 Economic Crisis, Assets, Capitalism, Collateralized Debt Obligations (CDOs), Cotton Gin, Industrial Revolution, Labor Union, Louisiana Purchase, Mortgage, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Panic of 1837, Stock Market Crash of 1929, Wall Street, Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*

1. At the beginning of the chapter, Desmond recounts the story of a pharmaceutical company chief executive who committed securities fraud and justified his actions by saying, “But this is a capitalist society, a capitalist system, and capitalist rules” (p. 166). What do you think this statement means? Is this statement an accurate reflection of U.S. capitalism? Why or why not?

**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**  
(CONTINUED)

2. In what ways has slavery shaped the Constitution and how does it impact us today?
3. How did the Constitution make it impossible for the federal government to regulate slavery without the South's consent?
4. "America has evolved into one of the world's most inequitable societies. Today the richest 10 percent of Americans own over 75 percent of the country's wealth, with the top 1 percent owning well over a third. Many of the political systems, legal arrangements, cultural beliefs, and economic structures that uphold and promote this level of inequality trace their roots back to slavery and its aftermath" (p. 185). Discuss this statement and whether you agree or disagree with it. Please use evidence to justify your response.

**Chapter 7: "Politics" by Jamelle Bouie**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *2021 U.S. Capitol Insurrection, Three-Fifths Clause, Nullification, Tariff of 1828, John C. Calhoun, Filibuster, Affordable Care Act (ACA)*

1. In what ways do we still see John C. Calhoun's ideological legacy reflected in the system of government today?
2. Bouie concludes the following about not only the Trump movement but also the current political moment: "It was always about the contours of our national community: who belongs and who doesn't; who counts and who shouldn't; who can wield power and who must be subject to it" (p. 197). What are your thoughts, reactions, and connections in response to this statement? Do you agree or disagree? Please use evidence to justify your claim.
3. Bouie issues a warning at the end of the chapter about the efforts Republicans have used to disenfranchise communities of Color: "While neutral on their face, these methods—the assaults on the legitimacy of nonwhite political actors, the casting of rival political majorities as unrepresentative, the drive to nullify democratically elected governing coalitions—are clearly downstream of ideas and ideologies that came to fruition in the defense of human bondage and racial segregation. And as long as there are enough Americans who do not trust democracy to protect their privileges—as long as there are those who see in political equality a threat to their power and standing—these ideas and ideologies will have a path to power" (p. 208). What are some ways to disrupt these racist tactics against people of Color? Who is doing this work in your community or state? What can you do to work with community groups and organizations to combat centuries of voter suppression and tactics that reduce racial and ethnic minorities to second-class citizens?

**Chapter 8: "Citizenship" by Martha S. Jones**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Citizenship, Naturalization Act of 1790, American Colonization Society, Frederick Douglass, Dred Scott v. Sandford, 1869 National Convention of the Colored Men of America, 14th Amendment, Reconstruction Act of 1867*

1. How does Jones define citizenship? Does her definition match your own? After reading the essay, has your definition changed? If so, how?
2. According to Jones, what role have Black people played in defining citizenship?
3. Considering what you've read in both this chapter and Chapter 1, in what ways have Black people redefined the notion of citizenship and American democracy?
4. Jones writes, "for Black Americans, full citizenship would not come at the ballot box. Nor would it come by way of white lawmakers' benevolence. Instead,

**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS  
(CONTINUED)**

the route to national belonging would come by way of big ideas along with organizing and advocacy” (p. 227). In what ways have Black people fought and advocated for full citizenship in the past and how does this fight continue in the present day?

**Chapter 9: “Self-Defense” by Carol Anderson**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Castle Doctrine*, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, *Stand Your Ground Laws*, *James Madison*, *Second Amendment*

1. Anderson critically examines the history of the Second Amendment and its connection to the institution of slavery. Prior to reading this chapter, what was your understanding of the Second Amendment? How did this chapter add to your understanding of the amendment? How/why do you think this history of the amendment, and its connection to anti-Blackness and slavery, is not widely taught in schools or known by the public?
2. The notion of “white fear” is a theme that recurs across different chapters in this book. How have white lawmakers codified and institutionalized protections for white fear into state and federal law?
3. Anderson writes, “But when they won their freedom, Black people did not also win the right to defend themselves. That has remained elusive to this day” (p. 265). What are some ways Black Americans fought for their right to self-defense in the past? How do they continue to fight for that right today?

**Chapter 10: “Punishment” by Bryan Stevenson**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *13th Amendment*, *Black Codes*, *Capital Punishment*, *Reconstruction*, *Sharecropping*, *Sullivan v. Florida*, *McCleskey v. Kemp*

1. How has the U.S. Supreme Court reinforced the racial disparities in the criminal justice system?
2. What connections were you able to make between the treatment of Black citizens in the criminal justice system and the institution of slavery? What helped recreate these similar conditions?
3. Stevenson writes, “The smog created by our history of racial injustice is suffocating and toxic. We are too practiced in ignoring the victimization of any Black person tagged as ‘criminal’ . . . too many Americans remain willing spectators to horrifying acts of extreme punishment, as long as they are assured that it is in the interest of maintaining order” (p. 282). Stevenson is clear that this systemic thinking has plagued the U.S. criminal justice system for centuries and continues to this day. What can be done to disrupt these types of systemic and racist ideas and structures?
4. Stevenson writes, “We are at one of those critical moments in American history when we will either double down on romanticizing a false narrative about our violent past or accept that there is something better waiting for us” (p. 282). Assess where you think we are as a country—are we doubling down on a false narrative of our past or are we at a place where we accept there is a better path? Please use evidence to justify your position.

**Chapter 11: “Inheritance” by Trymaine Lee**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Freedmen’s Bureau*, *GI Bill*, *Home Owners’ Loan Corporation*, *Reconstruction*, *Redlining*, *Racial Wealth Gap*

1. How does the story of Elmore Bolling, his murder, and the fate of his family help us understand the racial wealth gap?

**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS  
(CONTINUED)**

2. What did you learn in school about the Freedmen's Bureau? Did you learn about the Freedmen's Bureau savings bank? What impact did the dismantling of the bank by the all-white trustees have on Black depositors and future generations?
3. Throughout the chapter, Lee helps us understand the complexity of inheritance for Black citizens. Lee writes, "Instead of wealth, millions of Black families have passed down something else from one generation to the next: the mental and emotional stress that results from the constant threat of white violence and financial insecurity" (p. 301). How can you see this phenomenon playing out in the present day?
4. Josephine Bolling McCall states, "Every time we take a step up, there's someone trying to crush it" (p. 305). What connections can you make between this quote and other chapters in this book?

**Chapter 12: "Medicine" by Linda Villarosa**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Weathering, Covid-19, A Treatise on Tropical Diseases, Notes on the State of Virginia, Life Expectancy, J. Marion Sims, Slave Life in Georgia*

1. How does Villarosa define "weathering"? Have you heard this term before in the context of medicine? What impact does weathering have on the health of Black Americans?
2. How do racist ideas from slavery continue to impact the health care of Black people in the present day?
3. In what ways have medicine and science been used to justify slavery and the racial hierarchy?
4. In this chapter, Villarosa repeats the phrase, "*This is how Black people get killed*" (pp. 318, 322). What is the purpose of the repetition of that particular phrase? What impact or effect does it have on the reader?

**Chapter 13: "Church" by Anthea Butler**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Reverend Jeremiah Wright, James H. Cone, Black Theology, Richard Allen, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Senator Raphael Warnock*

1. What are some of the ways that Black preachers have used the pulpit to critique and challenge the hypocrisy of white American racism and injustices in society?
2. Why has the Black church been viewed as a threat by white supremacists and attacked throughout history?
3. Butler references and quotes Black theologian James J. Cone and his Black theology, which recognizes the struggle of Black people while also acknowledging the role of the white church in upholding white supremacy. Cone wrote, "It seems that the white church is not God's redemptive agent but, rather, an agent of the old society. Most church fellowships are more concerned about drinking or new buildings or Sunday closing than about children who die of rat bites or men who are killed because they want to be treated like men" (p. 351). What is your reaction to this quote? What historical events might have helped shape Cone's Black theology and led him to this conclusion? Cone's book *Black Theology and Black Power* was published in 1969; do you believe his statement holds true today? Why or why not?

**Note to teacher:** This might be a good time to revisit discussion norms about the importance of listening with an open mind and heart and to encourage students to sit with discomfort.



**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS  
(CONTINUED)**

**Chapter 14: “Music” by Wesley Morris**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Cultural Appropriation, Minstrelsy, Motown, Spirituals*

1. How does the music from blackface minstrel shows continue to shape music in the present day?
2. Is music gentrified in the present day? Why or why not? Please use evidence to justify your response.
3. How has music been liberatory for Black Americans?

**Chapter 15: “Healthcare” by Jeneen Interlandi**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *Affordable Care Act (ACA), Aid to Dependent Children, Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, Freedmen’s Bureau, GI Bill, Jim Crow, New Deal, Pullman Porters, Reconstruction, Social Security, Wagner Act of 1935, Medicare, Medicaid*

1. What similarities do you see between the fight to provide health care to newly emancipated Black Americans after the Civil War and conversations about access to health care in the present day? What do you think accounts for these similarities?
2. What forces have prevented the U.S. from adopting universal health care in the present day? How does this impact both those who are insured and uninsured?

**Chapter 16: “Traffic” by Kevin M. Kruse**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *James Baldwin, New Deal, Public Transit, Redlining, Segregation Laws of the 1890s, Urban Renewal, White Flight*

1. According to Kruse, what is the connection between mass transportation and segregation?
2. What is the history of mass transit in your community, city, or state? What can be done in the future to expand access to mass transit in your community?

**Chapter 17: “Progress” by Ibram X. Kendi**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *2008 Election, President Barack Obama, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Black Codes, Shelby County v. Holder, Notes on the State of Virginia, American Colonization Society, Uplift Suasion, The Liberator, Civil Rights Act of 1875, 15th Amendment, Compromise of 1877, Reconstruction, Brown v. Board of Education, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Civil Rights Act of 1968*

1. Kendi begins his chapter by quoting a line from former President Obama’s farewell address in January 2017: “That’s what we mean when we say America is exceptional. Not that our nation has been flawless from the start, but that we have shown the capacity to change and make life better for those who follow” (p. 422). After reading this text, do you agree or disagree with that statement? Please use evidence from the book to support your claim.
2. Kendi writes, “Inequality lives, in part, because Americans of every generation have been misled into believing that racial progress is inevitable and ongoing. . . . Saying that the nation can progress racially is a necessary statement of hope. Saying that the nation *has* progressed racially is usually a statement of ideology, one that has been used all too often to obscure the opposite reality of *racist* progress” (pp. 425–426). What fuels the push to paint America as a nation of progress? Why do Americans need to believe in progress? How can this belief in racial progress be harmful?
3. Kendi ends the chapter by stating, “Until Americans replace mythology with history, until Americans unveil and halt the progression of racism, an arc of the

**GUIDED READING AND  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS  
(CONTINUED)**

American universe will keep bending toward injustice” (p. 440). What are your thoughts, comments, or reactions in response to this quote? Assess where you think we are as a country. Please use evidence to substantiate your position.

**Chapter 18: “Justice” by Nikole Hannah-Jones**

**Key Names, Dates, and Terms:** *1739 Stono Rebellion, David Walker, Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World, Ida B. Wells, Fannie Lou Hamer, LaTosha Brown, Callie House, National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, Tulsa Race Massacre, Homestead Act, Brown v. Board of Education, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Racial Wealth Gap, Reparations*

1. What is the purpose of origin stories? How does this book represent a different origin story of the United States and American democracy?
2. In this chapter, Hannah-Jones lays out the case for what is owed to Black Americans. What are some of her arguments for reparations for Black Americans?
3. Can the United States come to accept the truth about the past and move toward reconciliation? Why or why not? How can this country make amends for the legacy of slavery, theft, violence, terror, and mass incarceration? Is it possible to move toward a place of truth, reconciliation, and healing for Black Americans?

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

In the book’s preface, Nikole Hannah-Jones discusses the nature of history. She quotes historian and Black studies scholar Mary Ellen Hicks, who, in a Twitter thread, reveals the mystery of the work of historians: “The discussions about the 1619 Project . . . have made me realize that historians may have missed an opportunity to demystify the production of scholarly knowledge of the public. The unsexy answer is that we produce constantly evolving interpretations, not facts” (p. xxvi). Therefore, teachers should consider supplementing the text with primary documents for students to examine, analyze, and interpret.

The original 1619 Project included a special broadsheet newspaper section highlighting a number of primary sources about the history of slavery in the United States. These primary sources can be used alongside the book so that students can dig deeper into the history of slavery. You can find the original section at [tinyurl.com/1619Broadsheet](https://www.tinyurl.com/1619Broadsheet), and below you will find different primary sources featured in the original publication along with document-based questions (DBQs) that will help students read and interpret the primary sources.

**Primary Source Description: Hand-colored lithograph by Achille Devéria, 1830s**

Heading and Page Number: “Queen Njinga,” p. 5

1. Who was this woman? What was her role in the kingdom of Ndongo?
2. What was her role in the history of the slave trade?
3. Why should she be remembered?

**Primary Source Description: An iron ballast block; a child’s iron shackles, before 1860**

Heading and Page Number: “Means of Control,” pp. 6–7

1. What are these artifacts?

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**  
(CONTINUED)

2. What was the purpose of the artifacts?
3. What do we know about the human beings who were forced to wear these?
4. How do these artifacts make you feel?

**Primary Source Description: “Sea Captains Carousing in Surinam,” painted by John Greenwood, circa 1752–58**

Heading and Page Number: “Cultivating Wealth and Power,” p. 5

1. Describe this painting—what do you see? What is happening? Who are the people?
2. What is the message of this painting? Why was it painted?
3. Where did this painting take place? What do you know about slavery and the slave trade in the northern United States?
4. Did anything surprise you about the painting?

**Primary Source Description: Excerpt from Virginia law enacted in 1662**

Heading and Page Number: “Race Encoded Into Law,” p. 5

1. What was the Virginia law that was enacted in 1662? What impact did it have on the population of enslaved persons?
2. Why were enslaved women “highly valued”?
3. How does this document make you feel? Why?

**Primary Source Description: Sugar cane cutter, metal and wood, 19th century**

Heading and Page Number: “A Deadly Commodity,” p. 9

1. What is this?
2. What was it used for?
3. How do you think the people who used it on a regular basis felt about this object?
4. What does this object symbolize or represent?

**Primary Source Description: Low Country basket, 19th century**

Heading and Page Number: “Memory and Place-Making,” p. 8

1. What is this object?
2. Who created it?
3. Why was it created?
4. What does the object symbolize or represent? Why is it important?

**Primary Source Description: A miniature portrait of Mum Bett by Susan Anne Livingston Ridley Sedgwick, 1811**

Heading and Page Number: “She Sued for Her Freedom,” pp. 10–11

1. Who was Mum Bett/Elizabeth Freeman? Why is she important?
2. What did freedom mean to Mum Bett?
3. What actions did she take to free herself?

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**  
(CONTINUED)

**Primary Source Description: Wood-engraving illustration of a cotton gin, *Harper's Weekly*, 1869**

Heading and Page Number: "The Destructive Impact of the Cotton Gin," p. 11

1. What is this object?
2. What was the purpose of this object?
3. What impact did this object have on the institution of slavery?
4. How should history view this invention?

**Primary Source Description: Carte de visite silver gelatin portrait of Sgt. Jacob Johns**

Heading and Page Number: "Enlisting in a Moral Fight," p. 14

1. Describe the photograph. How does he look? What kind of clothes is he wearing? What impression do you get from the photograph?
2. Who was Jacob Johns? Why did Jacob Johns make the decision to enlist in the military?

**Primary Source Description: Daguerreotype of Rhoda Phillips, circa 1850**

Heading and Page Number: "A Woman Bequeathed", pp. 12–13

1. What kind of primary source is this? Why was it taken?
2. What do we know about this person?
3. What does "bequeathed" mean?
4. How did the people who enslaved Rhoda Phillips view her?
5. How do you think Rhoda viewed herself? Why do you think that?

**Primary Source Description: Quotation from Henry Highland Garnet, 1843**

Heading and Page Number: "Liberation Theology," pp. 12 and 14

1. Who was Nat Turner?
2. Did you have any prior knowledge about Nat Turner's Rebellion?
3. What did the rebellion represent to enslaved Black Americans? How did white Americans view Nat Turner's Rebellion?

**Primary Source Description: Joseph Trammell's freedom papers, 1852**

Heading and Page Number: "Always on Your Person" and "Growing National Tension," p. 14

1. What is this artifact? What was the purpose of this item?
2. Why was this item created? Why would Joseph Trammell need to keep his papers protected?
3. What was the Fugitive Slave Act?
4. Who was Dred Scott and why was his Supreme Court case important?

**Primary Source Description: The Emancipation Proclamation in pamphlet form, published by John Murray Forbes, 1862; quotation by Frederick Douglass**

Heading and Page Number: "Freedom Begins," p. 14 and Frederick Douglass quotation, p. 15

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

1. Who was Frederick Douglass? What do you know about him?
2. According to Douglass, what was the “word of deliverance” he was waiting for?
3. What was the Emancipation Proclamation?
4. According to the Emancipation Proclamation, who was free? Did President Lincoln have the authority to free all enslaved persons in that part of the United States? Why or why not?
5. What legally ended slavery in the United States?
6. What is Juneteenth? Why is it an important holiday?

### Further Resources for Classroom Activities

The Pulitzer Center has created classroom activities and lesson plans for use with the original “1619 Project” *New York Times Magazine* issue that can easily be adapted for use with the book. These include reevaluating U.S. history through the creation of a timeline based on the Project, constructing an oral or imagined family history, creating a quote museum that pairs the text with images, visualizing contemporary linkages to slavery through infographic design, and more. Access these curriculum resources at [tinyurl.com/PulitzerLessonPlan](https://tinyurl.com/PulitzerLessonPlan).

## PROMPTS FOR RESEARCH AND WRITING

### Prompts for Further Reflection:

- How are we still living with the legacy of slavery (socially, politically, and economically)? Who is fighting to make a positive change?
- How has reading this book changed/added to your understanding of democracy and the rights and freedoms that we have today? Please use evidence from the readings.
- Some would call the current moment a “third Reconstruction.” Do you agree or disagree with that characterization? Please use evidence to substantiate your claim.

### Extension Activities:

- Teachers can encourage students to conduct research and give a presentation to the class and community on the long history of Black Americans fighting for full citizenship and personhood. In particular, students should explore the connections between the past and the most recent attempts to suppress access to the ballot for Black Americans. Students should consider how, collectively, they can support equal access to the ballot and work to help expand voting rights in your community.
- In Chapter 13, “Church” by Anthea Butler, students are introduced to Senator Raphael Warnock, the first Black U.S. senator from Georgia, “the same state that had refused to seat Henry McNeal Turner after he was elected to the legislature in 1868” (p. 352). Most students do not learn about the history of Black legislators during Reconstruction. Teachers can encourage students to conduct research and consult primary sources (such as sources from the Library of Congress at [www.loc.gov](https://www.loc.gov)) to learn more about the experiences of Black elected officials throughout U.S. history.

**PROMPTS FOR RESEARCH  
AND WRITING  
(CONTINUED)**

- In Chapter 3, “Sugar” by Khalil Gibran Muhammad, students are briefly introduced to the history of Black farmers and landowners. After reading this chapter, teachers can ask students to listen to Episode 5 of the *New York Times*’s podcast *1619* on the past, present, and future of Black farmers ([tinyurl.com/1619ProjectPodcast](https://www.nytimes.com/1619ProjectPodcast)). By learning about the complicated history of Black Americans’ connection to the land and the history of Black farmers in the United States, students will begin to see the connections between agriculture and freedom. Students can research the current experiences of Black farmers, the efforts of the Biden Administration to provide relief to Black farmers, and the lawsuits by white farmers to stop such efforts ([tinyurl.com/NYTDebtRelief](https://www.nytimes.com/nytDebtRelief)).
- Teachers can explore how art has been used as a way to center marginalized perspectives and challenge dominant historical narratives. Students can examine the work of Black artists, both past and present, and their efforts to document and share their voice and perspective with the world. Students can select a chapter from the text and develop an original piece of artwork (poetry, music, dance, photography, sculpture, drawing, painting, mixed media, etc.) to accompany the chapter. Students must then explain how their art is reflective of the content of the chapter and their process to create their work. Teachers can then lead a discussion with the class on how art can help process difficult truths, traumas, and histories.
- After reading Chapter 18, “Justice” by Nikole Hannah-Jones, teachers can encourage students to conduct research to learn more about the movement to provide reparations to descendants of those who were enslaved in the United States. The United Nations has outlined that reparations should be provided when there is evidence of gross human rights violations ([tinyurl.com/UNReparations](https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/press/2021/05/20210511-reparations.html)). The organization notes that reparations must be “proportional to the gravity of the violations and the harm suffered.” Taking this standard into account, students can research and discuss the historical and present-day conversation around reparations for Black Americans and what form of reparations would be commensurate to the harm perpetuated from enslavement to today.

**RESOURCES FOR FURTHER  
READING AND RESEARCH**

**Further Reading:**

- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
- *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* by Carol Anderson
- *A Black Women’s History of the United States* by Daina Ramey Berry and Kali Nicole Gross
- *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* by David Blight
- *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860–1880* by W.E.B. Du Bois
- *Reconstruction Updated Edition: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* by Eric Foner
- *The Second Founding: How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution* by Eric Foner

**RESOURCES FOR FURTHER  
READING AND RESEARCH  
(CONTINUED)**

- *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619–2019* edited by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain
- *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi
- *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All* by Martha S. Jones
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

**Further Viewing:**

- *13th*, a documentary directed by Ava DuVernay and available on Netflix: [tinyurl.com/DuVernay13th](https://www.netflix.com/DuVernay13th)
- *Reconstruction: America After the Civil War*, a four-part documentary series from PBS and presented by Henry Louis Gates Jr.: [www.pbs.org/weta/reconstruction](http://www.pbs.org/weta/reconstruction)

**Resources for Educators:**

- **Black Lives Matter at School**, a national coalition organizing for racial justice in education: [www.blacklivesmatteratschool.com](http://www.blacklivesmatteratschool.com)
- **D.C. Area Educators for Social Justice**, a network of educators who seek to strengthen and deepen social justice teaching: [www.dcareeducators4socialjustice.org](http://www.dcareeducators4socialjustice.org)
- **Learning for Justice**, an organization that centers justice and the action that students and educators can take to realize change: [www.learningforjustice.org](http://www.learningforjustice.org)
- **The Pulitzer Center**, which provides reading guides, activities, and other resources to bring the 1619 Project into your classroom: [tinyurl.com/PulitzerLessonPlan](https://tinyurl.com/PulitzerLessonPlan)
- **Teaching for Change**, an organization that provides teachers and parents with the tools to create schools where students learn to read, write, and change the world: [www.teachingforchange.org](http://www.teachingforchange.org)
- **Zinn Education Project**, which promotes and supports the teaching of people's history in classrooms across the country: [www.zinnedproject.org](http://www.zinnedproject.org)

**ABOUT THIS  
GUIDE'S WRITER**

AMANDA E. VICKERY is an Associate Professor of Social Studies and Anti-Racist Education at the University of North Texas. Her research focuses on how Black women teachers utilize experiential and community knowledge to reconceptualize the construct of citizenship. Additionally, she explores Black women as critical citizens within the U.S. civic narrative. In 2019 she was awarded the CUFA Early Career Award in recognition of her scholarship, teaching, and service to the field of social studies. She is an Affiliate Faculty Board Member for the K-12 Black History Research Consortium for the Carter Center for K-12 Black History Education. Dr. Vickery is a former middle school social studies teacher.

NOTES



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