

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

**WORDS
OF CHANGE**

**ANTI-
RACISM**

**POWERFUL VOICES,
INSPIRING IDEAS**

KENRYA RANKIN

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This collection of quotes celebrates resistance by centering and honoring anti-racist voices, past and present. These are words to enlighten, to prompt change, to provide encouragement, and to move readers to action. A brief biographical note for each person quoted gives context to their words. The bold and colorful design underlines the energy and movement toward real change.

Voices include: Ta-Nehisi Coates, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ibram X. Kendi, Elaine Welteroth, Serena Williams, W. Kamau Bell, Lizzo, Opal Tometi, Alicia Garza, Jason Reynolds, Audre Lorde, Bayard Rustin, Malcolm X, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Frederick Douglass, and many more.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kenrya Rankin is an award-winning author, journalist, editor, speaker, and on-air talent who creates dynamic, high-impact content that amplifies the lived experiences, advocacy and work of people of color and shifts the narrative around who deserves liberation, justice, joy, and dignity in America. Kenrya's insight has been tapped by leading media outlets such as the *New York Times*, the *Huffington Post*, and ThinkProgress. She is the author of five books, including *How We Fight White Supremacy: A Field Guide to Black Resistance*. Kenrya earned her undergraduate degree in journalism from Howard University and her master's degree in publishing from New York University. She is a proud native of Cleveland, Ohio, and currently lives in the Washington, DC, area with her brilliant artist daughter.

NOTE TO EDUCATOR

Anti-Racism: Powerful Voices, Inspiring Ideas is a collection of quotes that were gathered with a very clear agenda: to encourage readers to take their place in the fight against racism. In that vein, you could say it is a manual for how to become an activist or strengthening existing activism. It does this in three general ways. The first is by emphasizing, through the introduction and with various quotes, what White supremacy is and how far its toxicity has spread into all aspects of life. Secondly, it states that being anti-racist is an active, not passive, position that requires seeing race and racial difference. Finally, the book features quotes that directly speak to White people, stating why an end to White supremacy will only come through a movement including White people who are truly allies. Just as the book is meant to inspire action, students are not to read it passively as simply a collection of quotes from public figures. This guide is meant to help them to see themselves as active participants in the anti-racism movement.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- White supremacy
- What it means to be anti-racist
- The need for a multiracial movement against racism
- Becoming an activist
- The power of the spoken word

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Watch films, documentaries, and news segments on anti-racism movements:

- [*Selma*](#)
- [*Eyes on the Prize*](#) docuseries
- [*Whose Streets?*](#) (documentary on the protests sparked by the 2014 killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri)
- BBC's [*Apartheid in South Africa*](#) collection of interviews and news clips

Learn more about some of the people quoted in the book:

- [*The Autobiography of Malcolm X*](#)
- [*The Power of Vulnerability*](#) (Brené Brown)
- [*Over the Top: A Raw Journey to Self-Love*](#) (Jonathan Van Ness)
- [*Angela Davis: An Autobiography*](#)
- [*Well, That Escalated Quickly: Memoirs and Mistakes of an Accidental Activist*](#) (Franchesca Ramsey)

Expand what you know about White supremacy:

- [*How We Fight White Supremacy*](#) (also by Kenrya Rankin, and coauthor Akiba Solomon)
- [*Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*](#) (Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds)
- [*When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matters Memoir*](#) (Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The author describes White supremacy as a smoggy ladder, writing it is “a political, social, and economic system that thrives on the subjugation of people who have not been let into Whiteness.” What do you think it means to be let into Whiteness?
2. This book includes quotes from people of all races. Why do you think the author decided to make it a collection from a multiracial group of contributors?
3. Words are powerful. If they were not, a collection of quotes would not have the ability to inspire others to tackle racism. What do you think makes these words so effective at changing or encouraging behavior?
4. “History must restore what slavery took away, for it is the social damage of slavery that the present generation must repair and offset,” said Arturo Alfonso Schomburg. What do you think is the “social damage” of slavery and how can history repair it?
5. Actress Amandla Stenberg said, “What would America be like if we loved Black people as much as we love Black culture?” How do you think someone who supports laws that are unfair or discriminatory to Black people can easily enjoy Black culture without seeing a contradiction when the culture was made by Black people?
6. Do you agree or disagree with bell hooks that racism is a feminist issue?
7. César Chávez says, “You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore.” How does this idea apply to the Black Lives Matter protests that have happened around the world in 2020?
8. This book repeatedly emphasizes that White people must join the movement to topple White supremacy, including quotes like Erin Heaney and Heather Cronk’s that says, “Now is the time for White people of conscience to act—it is time to dig in, it is time to be bold, and it is time to start making up for centuries of lost time.” Do you think there could be an effective anti-racist movement without White people’s involvement?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

9. Malcolm X said, “If you stick a knife in my back nine inches and pull it out six inches, there’s no progress. If you pull it all the way out, that’s not progress. Progress is healing the wound that the blow made.” Where do you think America is today in terms of pulling out the knife of racism and racial injustice? And what would need to happen—what changes would have to take place in society—to heal the wound?
10. Although the book makes clear that there is still a need for an anti-racism movement, there have been others in the past that have been successful in bringing about needed change. What are some of those changes? And what tactics did people use to bring change?
11. Partial proceeds from the profits of this book will go to The Movement for Black Lives Fund. What is this fund? And why is such a fund necessary in the current anti-racism movement?

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Pick a topic (for example, feminism) and gather quotes not used in this book from a range of people on the topic. How do you decide who to include? And where do you search to find their words?
- Choose the quote in this book that inspired and encouraged you the most. Write a letter to the speaker explaining their words’ impact on you.
- Begin following young activists on social media. Then go one step further: when they post something you find inspirational, write it down in a journal.

TAKE ACTION

Reading inspiring words is a critical step, but taking decisive steps to end racism is the goal. Here are some ideas:

- Find an organization that you believe does effective work towards dismantling White supremacy and sign up for its newsletter.
- Make a donation to an organization whose mission you believe in and want to support.
- Research speakers who do work around anti-racism and speak to a teacher about bringing one of those speakers in to talk to your class.
- Find events (like book readings) being held by the people quoted in the book and attend one in real life or virtually. Even better: Ask them a question during the Q&A session!

This guide was prepared by Ayana Byrd, an author and journalist who has been writing about race, racism, and anti-racist movements for her two-decade-plus career. Yet now as a new mother, she is thinking more passionately about how words and actions will shape the future for the next generation. Her work has appeared in publications including the *New York Times* and *Essence*, and she has an essay in Kenrya Rankin's *How We Fight White Supremacy*.