

BLACK LIVES MATTER READING LIST

Books to promote understanding in honor of the Black Lives Matter movement.



Black Boy (1945) by Richard Wright

A memoir detailing the author's upbringing in the Jim Crow South and his eventual move to Chicago, where he joined the Communist Party.

Invisible Man (1952) by Ralph Ellison

The novel is narrated by a nameless young black man living in a 20th-century United States where reality is surreal and survival is only through pretense. It addresses many of the social and intellectual issues faced by African Americans in the early twentieth century.

Notes of a Native Son (1955) by James Baldwin

A collection of ten essays, tackling issues of race in America and Europe.

The Fire Next Time (1963) by James Baldwin

Contains two essays - "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to my Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation" and "Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region of My Mind". A landmark work with an impassioned plea to 'end the racial nightmare' in America.

The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and- Politics in the Post - Civil War North 1865-1901 (2001) by Heather Cox Richardson

This new perspective on American race and labor demonstrates the importance of class in the post-Civil War struggle to integrate African Americans into a progressive and prosperous society.

The New Jim Crow: Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (2010)

by Michelle Alexander

This book discusses race-related issues specific to African-American males and mass incarceration in the United States, arguing that mass incarceration is, metaphorically, the New Jim Crow.

Americanah (2013) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Novel by this Nigerian author which won the 2013 U.S. National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction, tells the story of a young Nigerian woman who immigrates to the United States to attend university.

Reproducing Racism: How Everyday Choices Lock in White Advantage (2014) by Daria Rothmayr

This book is designed to change the way we think about racial inequality.

Between the World and Me (2015) by Ta-Nehisi Coates

A national correspondent for the Atlantic, Ta-Nehisi Coates writes this book as a letter to his teenage son about the feelings, symbolism, and realities associated with being Black in the United States.

White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of our Racial Divide (2016) by Carol Anderson

A history of white Americans' centuries-long resentments and efforts to undermine African American progress.

Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America (2016) by Ibram X Kendi

National Book Award winning masterwork revealing how racist ideas were created, spread and became deeply rooted in America.

From #Black Lives Matter to Black Liberation (2016) by Keeanga Jamahtta Taylor

This book explores the historical and contemporary impact of racism and structural inequality such as mass incarceration and Black unemployment and argues that this new struggle against police violence holds the potential to reignite a broader push for Black liberation.

The Underground Railroad (2016) by Colin Whitehead

This genre-bending tale of escape from slavery in the American south contains extraordinary prose and shattering descriptions of the horrors of bondage. The book won a Pulitzer Prize for the author.

The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement (2016) by William J. Barber

A modern-day civil rights champion tells the stirring story of how he helped start a movement to bridge America's racial divide.

The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America

(2017) by Richard Rothstein

Forceful and well researched documentation of housing policy and how federal, state, and local governments gave rise to and reinforced neighborhood segregation.

White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism (2018) by Robin DiAngelo

As a diversity consultant and trainer, Robin DiAngelo argues that whites in America must face the racist bias implanted in them by a racist society and explore their assumptions and reactions to these truths.

How to Be an Anti-Racist (2019) by Ibram X Kendi

The book discusses concepts of racism and proposals for anti-racist individual actions and systemic changes.

Caste (2020) by Isabel Wilkerson

This highly esteemed writer considers the social divisions in American society, many of them unacknowledged, using comparisons with India and Nazi Germany.