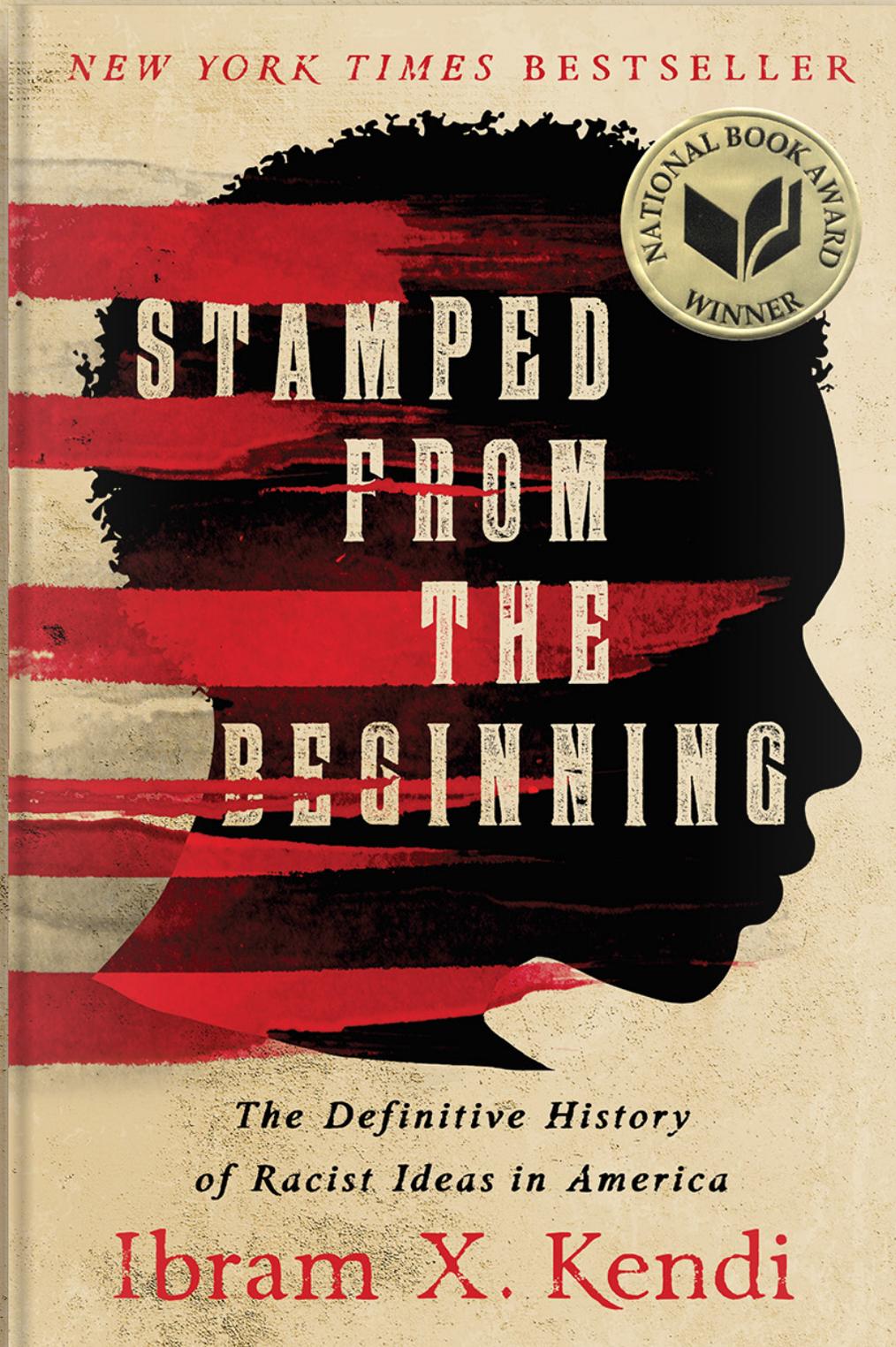
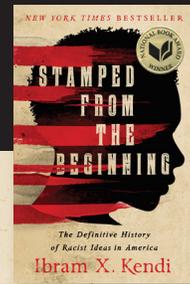


READING GROUP GUIDE



BOLD TYPE BOOKS

READING GROUP GUIDE



PART I

How does Kendi distinguish between segregationists, assimilationists, and antiracists?

How does Kendi define a racist idea? Has his definition impacted how you think about racist ideas?

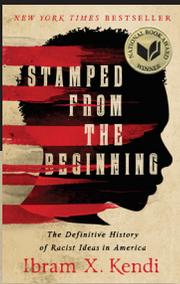
Kendi writes that he was taught “the popular folktale of racism: that ignorant and hateful people had produced racist ideas, and that these racist people had instituted racist policies.” Kendi argues, rather, that the relationship is as follows: racist policies led to racist ideas, which led to ignorance and hate. Why is this distinction important and what does it mean to you?

What are curse theory and climate theory? How were they used to justify the idea of Black inferiority? Do you see echoes of them today?

In noting a story “told many times in American history,” Kendi writes about “Black property legally or illegally seized; the resulting Black destitution blamed on Black inferiority; the past discrimination ignored when blame was assigned.” How does this cycle still affect the modern world?

How did Cotton Mather use puritanism to normalize and rationalize racist thinking? Why do you think Kendi chose Mather as a character to profile?





READING GROUP GUIDE

What passages or ideas from Part I were most memorable to you?

PART II

Explain the significance of the historical debate between monogenesis and polygenesis as theories of human origin. How was the latter used to justify racism?

What does Kendi mean by “uplift suasion” as a strategy for racial progress? How does he critique the idea? Do you see instances of it today in messages from political leaders?

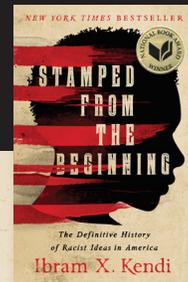
Phillis Wheatley, celebrated as a teenage poet, was just one example of someone put forward to, as Kendi writes, “showcase Black capacity for Whiteness, for human equality, for something other than slavery.” How was this idea of rare Black excellence used to perpetuate racist ideas?

How do assimilationists suggest making racial progress? Why does Kendi criticize this approach?

How did a racist portrayal of Africa, often presented as backward or as savage, while its historical civilizations and accomplishments were downplayed, shape the experience of Black Americans and White expectations? Why was the proposed solution of colonization, advocated by the likes of Jefferson and Lincoln, destined for failure?



READING GROUP GUIDE



Why do you think Kendi chose to frame Part II around Thomas Jefferson, who Kendi calls “the nation’s most famous anti-slavery anti-abolitionist”? Does Kendi’s portrayal of Jefferson change the way you think about our founding fathers?

What passages or ideas from Part II were most memorable to you?

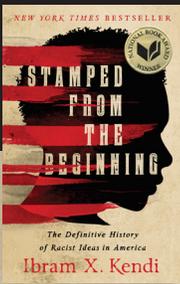
PART III

How were hyper-sexualization and other racist views around sex and the Black body used to marginalize Black Americans? Can you think of evidence that these views have persisted today?

For the book’s title, Kendi selected a quote from an 1860 speech by then-Senator Jefferson Davis claiming that “the inequality of the white and black races” was “stamped from the beginning.” How do you react to this quote? In what ways does it emphasize Kendi’s wider argument?

Why was the strategy of self-sacrifice pushed as a way to make racial progress? What is Kendi’s critique?

How were the ideas of Social Darwinism and the phrase “survival of the fittest” embraced and used by elites and by racists?



READING GROUP GUIDE

Kendi identifies what he calls the “persuasive, though racist, abolitionist theory that slavery made Black people inferior.” What is the key distinction between acknowledging that slavery was dehumanizing and arguing that slavery did dehumanize Black people?

Why do you think Kendi chose to frame Part III around William Lloyd Garrison, despite Garrison holding the view that slavery made Blacks inferior to Whites?

What passages or ideas from Part III were most memorable to you?

PART IV

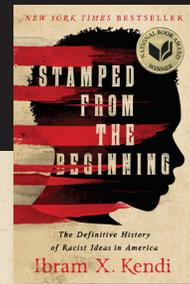
Consider the long history of housing discrimination against Black Americans, from availability of mortgages to blockbusting to redlining, set against the tendency by some to instead blame Black people for poor fiscal habits. How are these racist policies and attitudes reflected today?

W. E. B. Du Bois excelled at the world’s elite historically Black and historically White schools. Why is Kendi critical of the idea of educational persuasion as a tactic for uplifting Black Americans?

Kendi criticizes Chief Justice Warren’s opinion in *Brown v. Board of Education* for arguing that separate Black educational facilities were inherently unequal and inferior because Black students were not being exposed to White students. Kendi then notes how this



READING GROUP GUIDE



interpretation led to the assimilationist solution of forced one-way busing. What do you make of this critique?

In 1961, Kendi writes, “*To Kill a Mockingbird* . . . became the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* of the civil rights movement, rousing millions of readers for the racial struggle through the amazing power of racist ideas.” Kendi notes Atticus Finch as an example of the White savior narrative. Does this change the way you think of the now-classic novel? Do you notice that trope reflected in modern entertainment?

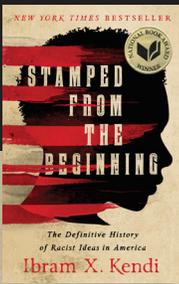
Why do you think Kendi chose to frame Part IV around W. E. B. Du Bois? How did Du Bois’s views transform over his life in the direction of being antiracist? What lessons can we take from the evolution of his thinking?

What passages or ideas from Part IV were most memorable to you?

PART V

How was the term “personal responsibility” used cynically to shift blame away from discrimination? Why does Kendi highlight the difference between encouraging a Black *individual* (or non-Black individual) to take more responsibility and generalizing to tell Black people as a group to take more personal responsibility?

Kendi offers significant pushback to the idea of measuring intelligence through the use



READING GROUP GUIDE

of IQ tests, standardized tests, and grade point averages. What are the potential flaws in using such metrics?

On election night in 2008, Kendi writes, many celebrating Barack Obama's victory were "most of all . . . enraptured by the antiracist potential of a Black president." After reading *Stamped from the Beginning*, how do you reflect on President Obama's time in office and his legacy?

In the book's conclusion, Kendi writes that "there will come a time when Americans will realize that the only thing wrong with Black people is that they think something is wrong with Black people," a theme Kendi hammers home throughout the book. Why do you think he place so much emphasis on this point?

Why do you think Kendi chose to frame Part V around Angela Davis and her antiracist life?

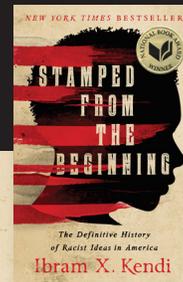
What passages or ideas from Part V were most memorable to you?

OVERVIEW QUESTIONS

Why does Kendi draw a sharp distinction between being "antiracist" and being "not racist"? What do you think about the difference?



READING GROUP GUIDE



What does it mean to have reckoned with Kendi's sweeping history of racist ideas? What are your overall impressions of his argument?

Since *Stamped from the Beginning* was published in April 2016, Donald Trump was elected president and Black Lives Matter protests have emerged worldwide. How does Kendi's book help you interpret the current moment?

How do you consider *Stamped from the Beginning* in the context of the coronavirus pandemic? How does race intersect with a public health crisis?

"Power cannot be persuaded away from its self interest," Kendi writes. "An antiracist America can only be guaranteed if principled antiracists are in power." How can you as an individual engage productively to improve race relations? How can you and your community do so?

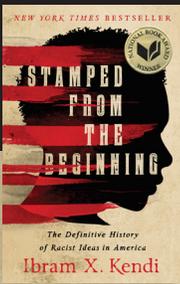
FURTHER READING

KENDI'S PICKS

For the *New York Times*, Kendi put together "An Antiracist Reading List," full of titles to "help America transcend its racist heritage." <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/books/review/antiracist-reading-list-ibram-x-kendi.html>

STAMPED FROM THE BEGINNING





READING GROUP GUIDE

Roberts, Dorothy. *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century.*

Model, Suzanne. *West Indian Immigrants: A Black Success Story?*

Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America.*

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*

Hughes, Langston. *The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain.*

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye.*

Thurman, Wallace. *The Blacker the Berry.*

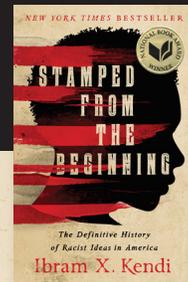
X, Malcolm, and Alex Haley. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.*

Metzl, Jonathan M. *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment Is Killing America's Heartland.*

Forman, James, Jr. *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America.*



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Robinson, Cedric J. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition.*

Joseph, Peniel E. *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America.*

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta (editor). *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective.*

Edim, Glory (editor). *Well-Read Black Girl: Finding Our Stories, Discovering Ourselves.*

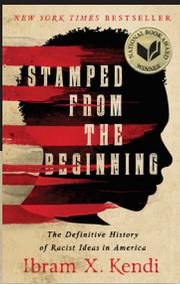
Mock, Janet. *Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love, and So Much More.*

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches.*

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

Abu-Jamal, Mumia. *Life from Death Row.*

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.*



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Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.*

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time.*

Baldwin, James. *Go Tell It on the Mountain.*

Blight, David. *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom.*

Bordewich, Fergus M. *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America.*

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me.*

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic.*

Davis, Angela Y. *Angela Davis: An Autobiography.*

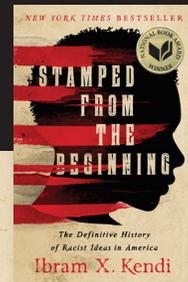
Davis, Angela Y. *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

Davis, Angela Y. *Women, Race, and Class.*

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.*



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Du Bois, W. E. B. *Black Reconstruction in America.*

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk.*

Ellis, Joseph J. *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson.*

Foner, Eric. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery.*

Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution.*

Gates, Henry Louis. *The Trials of Phyllis Wheatley: America's First Black Poet and Her Encounters with the Founding Fathers.*

Giddings, Paula. *Ida: A Sword Among Lions.*

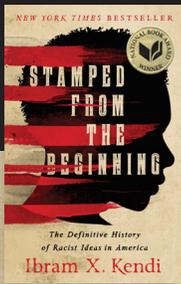
Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America.*

James, C. L. R. *The Black Jacobins.*

James, C. L. R. *A History of Pan-African Revolt.*

Katznelson, Ira. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America.*

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Marable, Manning. *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention.*

Marable, Manning. *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction and Beyond in Black America, 1945–2006.*

Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty.*

Silverman, Kenneth. *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather.*

Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption.*

Thomas, Hugh. *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440–1870.*

Wells, Ida B. *Southern Horrors.*



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