

Learning to be Anti-Racist

Understanding Anti-Oppression and
Anti-Black Racism

When having these discussions, we must agree to...

- Create a collective space where we can speak the truth
- Recognize that the truth is not always comfortable and that is ok as long as we commit to try to move through that feeling of discomfort and not to sit in it
- Stay with me, speak our truths, listen to other stories
- Understand that these stories may be new to us, but are lived by others in Canada and these experiences matter

Definitions are all in the [glossary](#)

Words to understand...more to come

Race

Racism

Anti-Racism

Anti-Black Racism

Part 1

In Relationship With One Another/ We all Share
Space/Understanding Ourselves to Better
Understand Others

“No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

– *Nelson Mandela*

About Identity...

No one is born racist. Racism is learned and being anti-racist is a conscious choice and effort.

These choices require:

→ ongoing self-awareness and self reflection as we make conscious choices to listen and learn

→ ongoing understanding of the role of action in making conscious choices about what it means to be anti-racist.

So we start with ourselves...

When we start here, we open ourselves to addressing our personal biases and recognize that we are a product of our learning.

We hold the capacity to learn to unlearn and relearn.

Let us start with a **Who Am I Activity** and reflect on our personal identities...

My Identity

The following prompts are a checklist. Write yes or no on a sheet of paper in response to the prompts.

- You often/can expect to see positive portrayals of your race in media
- Your race is not connected to your ability to be successful
- Your parents have had to have “the talk” with you about how to act should you encounter police
- You have not had to deal with a racial microaggression towards you
- You would never think twice about calling the police when trouble occurs
- Do you have privileges that others may not based on race?
- You have seen a number of images of yourself throughout your curriculum

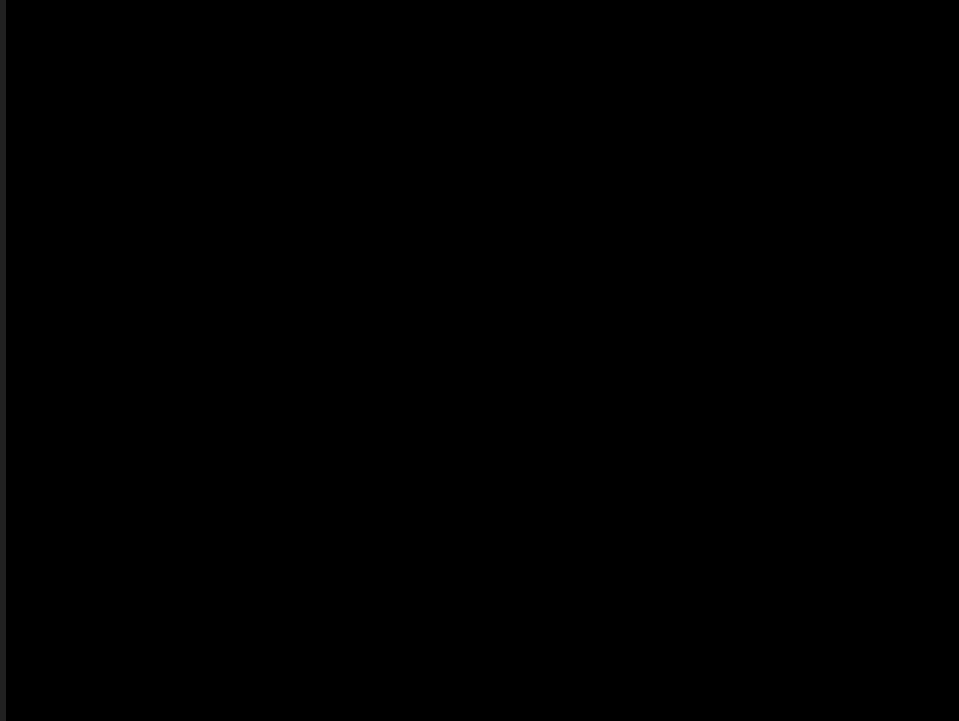
Debrief

1. How did the activity make you feel?
2. Did you wonder who was responding “no” to these prompts
3. Was there anything you wish existed in the prompts that was not an option?
4. How may our identities impact our interactions with people around us?
5. Why do you think we did that quick activity?



(un)LEARNING
My Name

Utopihood by Krissa Richmond



While listening to each of these these spoken word pieces:

1. Write down what the titles tell you about the spoken word pieces
2. Write down the lines or words that stand out to you
3. Write the feelings you are experiencing during the listening
4. Write down something about the poet's experiences that shocked you
5. Write down how their ethno cultural identities have impacted their words
6. Each artist speaks to a system, an institutional structure that has tried to define who they are. For Mohamed Hassan, what was that system? For Krissa Richmond, what was that system?
7. Write down how they feel they have been viewed by society
8. Was there a moment you can remember where someone perceived you differently from how you perceived yourself?
9. What does this statement mean? ***“Poetry as Resistance”*** Connect it to the spoken word pieces you have listened to.

One of the things this activity should have made clear is that...

- Biases exist
- We all may have learned some things about our social location that we may not have recognized. One's social location, advantages or denies you privilege
- We all recognize the importance of self reflection
- Race has an impact on how we are perceived
- We all have “a story”

Part 2

The Danger of a Single Story

We all Have a Story...

- Stories are an effective way of communicating knowledge
- Stories encourage the listening and learning of various perspectives
- Stories help build empathy and understanding
- Stories can expand our insight from micro to macro

But stories also have the potential to be dangerous...

- Especially when it is told only by who controls the dominant narrative
- Especially if/when it defines and describes the lives of others through a single narrative
- Especially when it erases the existence of people
- Especially when it is used to systematically oppress a group/people

The danger of a single story | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



What is the story of Canada what we have been told?

Take a moment and think of your journey of education in the Canadian school system.

- What did you learn about the history of Canada?
- Whose histories have been erased from Canadian history?
- Whose stories are being told? What is our evidence of this?

Understanding the history of Canada is integral to our understanding of the construction of race and the reality of racism here. Canada has offered many people a refuge and is seen as a progressive country.

Yet, it is also important understand that not everyone's experiences of Canada has been “progressive.”

All these conversations and #s around Black Lives Matter, Indigenous Lives Matter, anti-Asian racism, Islamophobia and more...

Are.

Happening.

For.

A.

Let us talk a walk through the missing pages of Canadian history... Black Canadian history

Part 3

Learning About Black Lives-The Beginnings in Canada

Learning about Black Lives



Black history and heritage did not begin in Canada but do you know where Black history in Canada begins?

To understand the complex history of anti-Black racism and Black experiences in Canada, you need to know Canada's true history.

- Who was the first Black person in Canada? What brought them here?
- In what capacity did Oliver Le Jeune, the second Black person to be brought to Canada?
- How did slavery in Canada shape the perceptions and treatment of Black people?
- What was the Underground Railroad and where did it lead to?
- What do you know about early Black settlements?

- Who was the first Black person in Canada? What brought them here?

Student slide contributions begin here

- In what capacity did Oliver Le Jeune, the second Black person to be brought to Canada?

Student slide contributions begin here

Quick Facts...

-The history of Black peoples did not start with slavery but with the cradle of civilization and rich kingdoms of Africa

-In 1444 Portuguese first kidnapped and enslaved Africans

-In 1600's the first enslaved Black person is brought to Canada

-Violence and denial of human rights practiced widely in Canada

-Slavery is abolished in 1834

“Slavery was the dominant condition of life for black people in this country for well over 200 years. So we have been enslaved for longer than we have been free.”

-Afua Cooper, historian

- How did slavery in Canada shape the perceptions and treatment of Black people?

Student slide contributions begin here

- What was the Underground Railroad and where did it lead to?

Student slide contributions begin here

Early Black Settlements

Watch the following short spoken word piece by TDSB teacher, playwright and spoken word artist Greg Birkett on early Black settlements

Listen and List

- the names of the settlements he mentions in his piece.
- The (mis)perceptions of Black Neighbourhoods
- anti-Black racism initiatives that destroyed early Black communities

The Story of Africville



Africville:
The Black
community
bulldozed by the
city of Halifax

- What do you know of early Black settlements?

Student slide contributions begin here

Quick Facts...

-Between 1783 and 1785, more than 3,000 free Blacks or former enslaved people settled in Nova Scotia. Here they faced hostility, racial segregation, low-paying jobs and inequality

-Racist immigration policies -1900s established such as Laurier's "Keep Canada White" - denying entry to "any race unsuited to the climate and requirements of Canada"-[The Last Best West](#)

- In 1911 that sought to ban Black people from immigrating to Canada.

- 1955-1967 West Indian Domestic Scheme

- Late 1960s and 1970s policies allowed Black people to come in any category

The past impacts the present

What we have reviewed, is a snapshot of the experiences of Black people in Canada. Where interested, we can always delve deeper and uncover more research.

As brief as it was, this history is reflective of attitude and behaviours towards Black people that have been embedded in the making of Canada.

- Black people have been in Canada for over 400 years-why are their stories missing from classroom textbooks about the history of Canada?
- There was slavery here for more than 200 years--how might current day racism be linked to the legacy of slavery?

- The stories of Early Black settlements in Canada are filled with the contributions of Black Canadians to the fabric of Canada-could knowing this history help people to understand how deeply rooted Black people are in Canada?
- Immigration policies of the 1900s sought to keep Black people from coming to Canada in efforts to keep Canada white-how might the attitudes that allowed this, be embedded in political structures?

This history has set the stage for understanding present day experiences of Black people in Canada and can inform us of the current context of race relations and anti-Black racism in Canada.

Part 4

Learning about Black Lives - Understanding Present Realities

Timeline of Events since the May 2020 Murder of George Floyd

[George Floyd a Timeline](#)

[George Floyd protests: Anti-racism demonstrations continue across Canada](#)

['A watershed mo](#)



[Derek Chauvin verdict](#)

Credit: Fibonacci Blue

The Pervasive Reality of Anti-Black Racism in Canada

In this article, we are only going to look at the headlines to get a quick cross section of the [Pervasive Reality of Anti-Black Racism in Canada](#)

What are some of the pervasive realities experienced by Black people in Canada?

Jot down key terms in the headlines you see.

The Reality of Now

We began part 4 looking at the timeline of events since the murder of George Floyd. What you can clearly see is the protesting that ensued internationally. On a global level, people felt the depth of what racism looked like and were exposed to the reality of racism that could no longer be silenced.

Let us take a moment to think about what people were protesting. What racism looks like.

Credit: Jason Hargrove



The Racism Iceberg

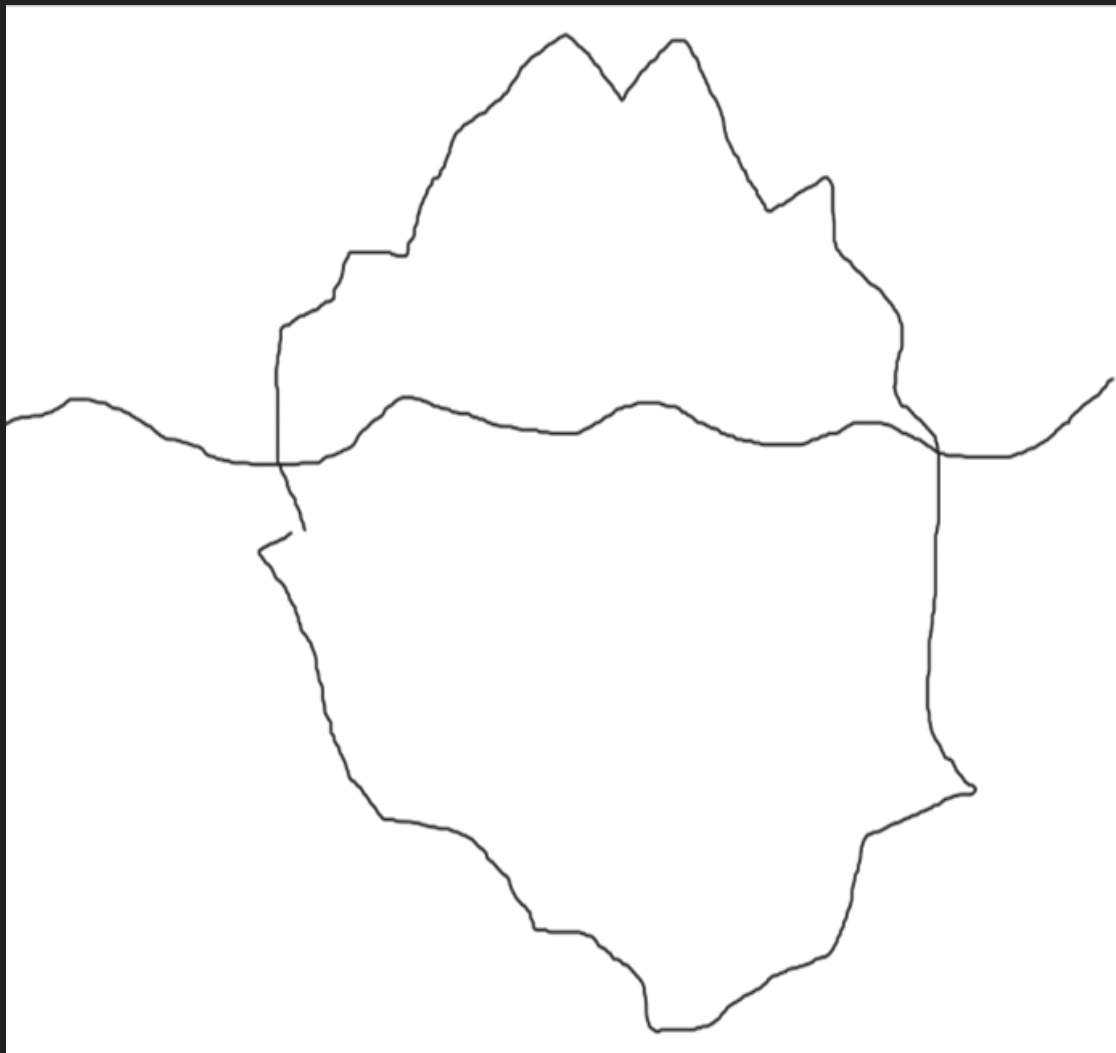
Who has heard the idiom 'the **tip of the iceberg**'?

What do you think this means?

(it means that something is only a small part of a much bigger situation. The idiom just 'the **tip of the iceberg**', it means that something is only a small part of a much bigger situation.)

We are going to use the iceberg to highlight some of the ways in which racism is manifested in our surroundings.

The Racism Iceberg



The Racism Iceberg

Look at the **tip** of the iceberg. **What do we know is blatantly unacceptable behaviours of racism that are most often frowned upon in society?** List them at the top of the iceberg.



Now let us look **beneath** the surface. With your groups, write the answers to the following questions. **What are ways in which anti-Black racism shows up in our society? What incidents or factors impact anti-Black racism?**

Look at the tip of the iceberg. What do we know is blatantly unacceptable behaviours of racism that are most often frowned upon in society? List them at the top of the iceberg.

At this point, participants will likely have the following on their lists:

- the N-word
- racial slurs
- racist jokes
- hate crimes
- refusing service based on race
- blackface

At this point, participants will likely have the following on their lists:

- microaggressions
- police brutality
- racial profiling
- carding
- hiring discrimination based on name
- school curriculum that is eurocentric
- being afraid of Black people
- calling police on Black people
- "all lives matter"
- cultural appropriation
- disproportionate numbers of racialized people with covid
- denial of racism
- healthcare discrimination
- "I don't see colour"

Now let us look **beneath** the surface. With your groups, write the answers to the following questions. **What are ways in which anti-Black racism shows up in our society? What incidents or factors impact anti-Black racism?**

Let us now use our knowledge gained in the iceberg activity to revisit what we know and make connections through the following questions:

- How has Canada's complicated past with slavery, colonization and discrimination informed the treatment of Black Canadians today?
- What do you think slavery entailed?
- How do you think the fact that France and Britain deemed slavery legal in their colonies helped to shape Canadian identity and heritage?
- How do you think this history has an impact on the relationship Canada has with Black peoples today?
- How has this history informed personal bias?

Use the language gained in this unit to respond to these questions.

Dismantling Racism-learning the language

Bias- We all have bias.

Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

Biases can be innate or learned.

We all have bias and engaging in dismantling racism involves recognizing how that bias impacts our perceptions and actions

Provide an example of how personal bias impacts one's perspective about an issue.

Dismantling Racism-learning the language con't...

White privilege is a term coined by American Feminist and activist, Peggy macintosh in 1989. This term refers to “a concept that highlights the unfair societal advantages that white people have over non-white people. It is something that is pervasive throughout society and exists in all of the major systems and institutions that operate in society, as well as on an interpersonal level.”

White privilege, does not imply that white people have not or cannot experience challenges in life, it means that any challenges that a white person has faced or may face is not related to the color of their skin.

What are some examples of white privilege in our society?



[Source: BLM Protest in Austria](#)

Having white privilege and recognizing it is not racist.

White privilege exists because of historic, enduring racism and biases.

→ What have we learned is the connection between white privilege and education?

→ White privilege and law enforcement?

→ White privilege and healthcare?

→ What does education, law enforcement and healthcare have in common?

These are all institutions within our society that we collectively rely on.

Why is this significant in this discussion?

Systemic Racism -learning the language con't...

Systemic Racism- The difference between prejudice (bias, preconceived opinion), discrimination (prejudice actions), and racism is that racism is *systemic*.

That means it is a **part of every one of our social systems and institutions**: education, justice, employment, healthcare, etc.

An example of prejudice: believing that Black and Indigenous people are dangerous

Discrimination: deciding not to sit next to a Black or Indigenous person on the bus, crossing the street when you see, etc.

Systemic racism: Black people being 20x more likely to be fatally shot by police in Toronto. Indigenous people making up 29% of prisoners in Canada, despite making up 4% of the population.

In 2020, Ontario Premier Doug Ford recently stated that Canada doesn't have the same "systemic, deep roots" of racism that the United States does – he has since retracted that statement –

“.. his initial, unfiltered words prove a telling point that our country's racist past, which continues to be felt by people of colour, in particular Black and Indigenous communities, is not something that white privileged people give much thought to (without a prompt) because it doesn't directly impact their lives.” (Meera Estrada June 2020)

What could this lack of recognition of systemic racism by a member of parliament at this level mean as it relates to Black folks?

According to Canadian sociologist Augie Fleras

“racism requires that we examine social norms, ideologies, practices, policies and laws to determine if they support or combat racism.

The onus has always been on those who have experienced racism to prove its existence and its harmful outcome. But it is incumbent on all institutions, from the federal government to a child’s soccer team, to review their policies and practices, and to assess their complicity in racism.”

Reflect and Interpret this in your own words.

Black Resistance & Resilience to anti-Black Racism

The history of Black folks is one of resilience and resistance. As long as there has been adversity there has been resistance to that adversity.

We are going to look at some Black persons and organizations who are resisting anti-Black racism in a variety of different ways. You will be assembled into groups to choose an organization from the following page and follow the steps given to create a modified Pecha Kucha to present your information gathered.

Each one of these groups are an example of resilience and resist anti-Black racism in ways that are specific to the scope of the organization. Let us discover more...

Black Resistance & Resilience to anti-Black Racism-Organizations

[Black North Initiative](#)

[Black Lives Matter Canada](#)

[Black Youth Helpline](#)

[Toronto Black Film Festival](#)

[Across Boundaries](#)

[Federation of Black Canadians](#)

[Nia Center for the Arts](#)

[Urban Alliance on Race Relations](#)

[Rania El Mugammar](#)

Part 5

Moving Forward as Changemakers

So What does it Mean to Be Anti-Racist...

The Choice



Anti-Racism Action in our Organization

Anti-racism is the deliberate act of opposing racism. The goal of anti-racism is to challenge racism and actively change the policies, behaviors, and beliefs that perpetuate racist ideas and actions.

As a member of the our collective community, we recognize that being anti-racist involves action and we all play a part.

The government of British Columbia engaged with youth to create an anti-racism Campaign. Where participants created a series of anti-racism reminders.

Let us take a [look](#).

Anti-Racism Reminders

To culminate this unit, we are going to engage in creating our own anti-racism reminders.

You are going to reflect on the knowledge acquired throughout this unit and your understanding anti-Black racism and turn that insight into a clear, concise, actionable item. **Make it personal.**

When complete, we will share as a group and brainstorm ways in which we can share with the larger school community.

We will also revisit these reminders as a way to hold ourselves accountable to action on these reminders.

Let us move towards an anti-racist future.