

## Reading around racism and anti-racism: recommended starting points

The ongoing Black Lives Matter demonstrations along with other, related actions have helped shine a light on racism and anti-racism in the UK. Amongst other things, it's made clear the extent to which many of us are unconscious of the racism experienced by ethnic minorities<sup>1</sup> and the extent to which addressing such racism requires us to be more than just "not racist".

If you're one of the many people wanting to become better-informed about racism and how to be actively "anti-racist", please take a look at the list of recommended resources below. The list ultimately reflects my choices, as do the comments on each resource, but those choices have been shaped by advice and guidance from activists seeking to help represent those suffering discrimination.

Many of the lists circulating online are limited to resources focused on the US. My list is focused far more on the UK context. The suggestions are by no means meant to be exhaustive, and only scratch the surface of what is a complex and highly contentious issue. The list is organised according to format: books, articles, videos and audio, and other resources.

If you need help accessing any of these resources, have suggestions for additions to the list, or criticism of items on the list, please let me know.

Graham

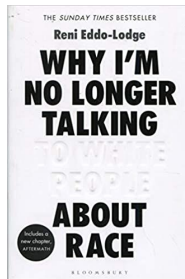
---

<sup>1</sup> I'm using the term 'ethnic minorities' because, while it's not without problems, it's [regarded as the most appropriate term by the UK government](#) and by the majority of those to whom it refers, and as such is preferable to acronyms such as BAME or BME.



Images: [\[https://unsplash.com/photos/4KDNgW9vWwoj\]](https://unsplash.com/photos/4KDNgW9vWwoj); [\[https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2020/06/07/max-fooster-global-protests-george-floyd-pkg-vpx.cnn\]](https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2020/06/07/max-fooster-global-protests-george-floyd-pkg-vpx.cnn); [\[https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2020/06/07/max-fooster-global-protests-george-floyd-pkg-vpx.cnn\]](https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2020/06/07/max-fooster-global-protests-george-floyd-pkg-vpx.cnn); [\[https://vimeopro.com/unicornriot/unicornriot/video/283645588\]](https://vimeopro.com/unicornriot/unicornriot/video/283645588); [\[https://www.flickr.com/photos/becker271/49947845852/\]](https://www.flickr.com/photos/becker271/49947845852/)

## BOOKS

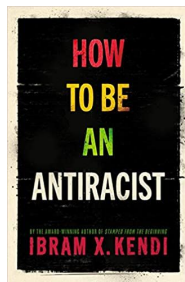


*Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race* by Reni Eddo-Lodge

Don't be put off by the provocative title; this book wasn't, as the author makes clear, written 'with the intention of prompting guilt in white people.' Rather, she seeks to explain her acute frustration with the widespread refusal of many people to accept that 'not everyone experiences the world as they do,' and to inspire more meaningful and more useful conversations around race, racism and anti-racism.

A revelation... essential. *Spectator*

A wake-up call to a nation in denial about the structural and institutional racisms occurring in our homes, offices and communities. *Observer*

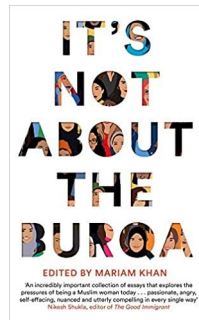


*How to be an antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi

Combining autobiography and insightful analysis, Ibram X. Kendi shows that when it comes to racism, we are either part of the problem or part of the solution; none of us can be neutral. He helps us understand when we can unwittingly be complicit in the perpetuation of racism and how, instead, to be genuinely anti-racist.

The most courageous book to date on the problem of race in the Western mind, *New York Times*

Vital and hopeful... Whether you're an institution ... or an individual in moral paralysis, dumbfounded by the febrile emotions now at large ... you are not alone; hope is on its way., *Observer*

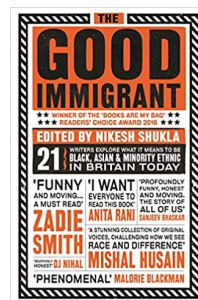


*It's not about the burqa*  
edited by Mariam Khan

We typically hear about Muslim women from commentators who are neither Muslim nor female. In this book you'll find accounts of diverse identities, experiences and points of view that rarely if ever make it into the mainstream media: 'Seventeen Muslim women speaking frankly about the hijab and wavering faith, about love and divorce, about feminism, queer identity, sex, and the twin threats of a disapproving community and a racist country.'

An incredibly important collection of essays that explores the pressures of being a Muslim woman today. Nikesh Shukla, editor of *The Good Immigrant*

Shortlisted for Foyles Non-Fiction Book of the Year



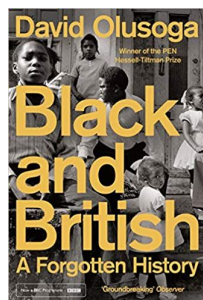
*The good immigrant*  
edited by Nikesh Shukla

Arguments about immigration are inextricably entangled with arguments around race and racism. Much of the media regularly depicts ethnic minorities as "bad" immigrants - coming over here, taking our jobs, scrounging off the state - unless and until - by winning Olympic gold, becoming a celebrity, saving lives on the NHS "front line" - they prove themselves "good". In 21 essays, representing some of the diversity of immigrants and their descendants in Britain, this ground-breaking book looks at the multiple and sometimes surprising reasons people come to the UK, why they choose to remain, and the realities of

perpetually being regarded as Other in a country that's also "home".

Highly recommended ... It's precisely those who might at first think this book is not about us, who should read it. *Spectator*

The stories are sometimes funny, sometimes brutal, always honest ... if I could, I'd push a copy of this through the letter box of every front door in Britain. *Independent*



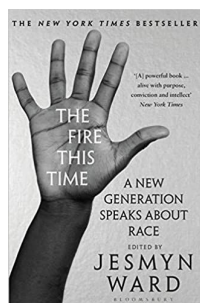
*Black and British: a forgotten history* by David Olusoga

In a historical discussion of the experience of ethnic minorities in Britain, David Olusoga examines the lengthy relationship between

Britain and the peoples of Africa and the Caribbean, emphasising the extent to which that history, going back hundreds of years, is integral to the development and identity of the UK.

Winner of the 2017 PEN Hessel-Tiltman Prize.

Winner of the Longman History Today Trustees' Award



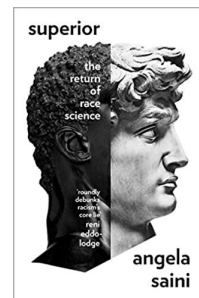
*The fire this time: a new generation speaks about race* edited by Jesmyn Ward

This book, imagined as a response to James Baldwin's seminal 1963 essay 'The fire next time', brings together a

new generation of writers and activists to speak about race and racism in present-day America. Their 'voices shine a light on the darkest corners of American history, wrestle with the struggles the

country faces today and imagine a better future.'

Alive with purpose, conviction and intellect (*New York Times*)



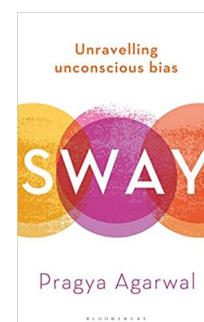
*Superior: the return of race science* by Angela Saini

*Superior* examines racial bias in science, past and present, arguing that science and racism have a long and close relationship. Angela Saini

argues that while "race" as a concept has no scientific basis, racism in science persists to this day, not just in the hi-jacking of sound scientific studies by "alt-right" ideologues on YouTube but also in arguments made by respected scientists that represent social injustices as biological inevitabilities.

Financial Times Book of the Year

Telegraph Top 50 Books of the Year



*Sway: unravelling unconscious bias* by Pragma Agarwal

Much racism, like other prejudices, is unconscious, as are missed opportunities to combat discrimination. Behavioural scientist Dr

Pragma Ararwal explores, without judgement, how we are often biased in ways we are entirely unaware of (and in many instances would be horrified by). These unconscious biases shape both our perceptions and our actions. Becoming aware of them helps us ensure that our thinking and behaviour reflect our values.

If you think you don't need to read this book, you really need to read this book. Jane Garvey, R4

## ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

[Racism is rife in modern Britain. Nothing can change until we admit it](#) by Hasnet Lais

This wide-ranging article summarizes and synthesises the findings of numerous reports on racism in the UK, arguing that from ‘education and employment to the criminal justice system, structural racism is very much at the heart of Britain’s treatment of ethnic minorities.’

[Black pupils warn of n-word abuse in UK private schools](#) by Catherine Lough

Catherine Lough reports on a letter sent to the Independent Schools Council in May 2020 from ethnic minority students. The letter calls for independent schools to do much more to tackle endemic racism, describing experiences ranging from teachers joking about segregation to use of the N-word and bananas left by a locker. The article reproduces the letter.

[As a history teacher, I'm horrified by the whitewashing of my curriculum](#) by Hasnet Lais

A secondary school History teacher argues that recent reforms to the National Curriculum have made it harder than ever ‘for anyone guided by our conscience,’ because the syllabus and textbooks largely render British imperialism and colonialism as ‘a civilising historical force with a humanising mission,’ glossing over brutal realities. *For a more recent take on this, see [White guilt on its own won't fix racism': decolonising Britain's schools](#)*

[Put our colonial history on the curriculum – then we'll understand who we really are](#) by Maya Goodfellow

Maya Goodfellow argues that the history of the British empire and colonialism should be taught much more systematically and comprehensively than it is at present. Such teaching would not

try to make students feel guilty or present one-dimensional views of the past; rather, she argues, it would help foster a more ‘nuanced, inclusive understanding’ of a multiracial present and past.

[Are medical schools turning a blind eye to racism?](#) by Zosia Kmietowicz

This report on an investigation for the British Medical Journal, one of the world’s oldest and most respected publications for the medical community, finds that medical schools in the UK are failing to monitor racial harassment or adequately deal with racism towards medical students from ethnic minorities.

[Extent of institutional racism in British universities revealed](#) by Katy Sian

This article, by a university lecturer, argues bluntly that ‘racism in British universities is endemic,’ highlighting research on workforce demographics, pay and promotion prospects and the stories of 20 academics demonstrating the prevalence of “liberal racism”.

[Drama school racism: Students call out top schools and reveal stories of abuse](#)

The Stage, the UK’s leading newspaper and website covering the entertainment industry, reports increasing numbers of students calling out UK drama schools for systemic, institutionalised racism and highlights the experiences of four students in particular.

[Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race](#) by Reni Eddo-Lodge

Author Reni Eddo-Lodge discusses how the “invisibility” of race and racism to many of those who don’t experience institutionalised discrimination leads to those who benefit most from privilege denying its very existence and refusing to engage in serious conversations about injustice. [You can also listen to the audio version, read by the author \(30 minutes\).](#)

[“We have to stop thinking about racism as someone who says the N-word”](#) by Nosheen Iqbal

An interview with Dr Robin DiAngelo, Associate Professor of Education at the University of Washington, who argues that many white people find it very difficult to talk about racism because it requires them to recognise and confront their own privilege. This often leads them to be dismissive of accounts of systemic racial discrimination and to instinctively resist the idea that in the UK and US, as she puts it, most institutions ‘benefit and privilege whiteness by every economic and social measure.’

[Reverse racism does not exist](#) by Michelle Houlston

Michelle Houlston deconstructs the notion of “reverse racism” - people from ethnic minorities demonstrating prejudice towards white people - on the basis that it wrongly implies or assumes a level playing field. While she condemns prejudice in all its forms, she argues that racism ‘is more complicated than a person of one race disliking a person of another race and acting on it;’ rather, racism is embedded in the institutionalised privileges enjoyed by white people.

For an argument in the same vein but from a very different perspective, see [Reverse Racism, or How the Pot got to Call the Kettle Black](#) by Stanley Fish.

[Can white people experience racism?](#) from The Economist

This contribution to the Economist’s Open Future strand discusses responses to anti-white satire and stereotyping and asks if they can and should be regarded as equivalent to systemic, institutionalised racism against ethnic minorities. The answer is a clear “no”, but also that ‘tolerance of extreme, generalising statements about whites’ is dangerous.

## VIDEO AND AUDIO

[Black Sheep](#) (27 minutes)



This Oscar-nominated documentary tells the story of Cornelius Walker, whose mother moved him out of London in an effort to keep him from harm. Living on an estate ruled by racists, Cornelius became submerged in a culture of violence and hatred as he battled to survive.

[13th](#), directed by Ava DuVernay (100 minutes)

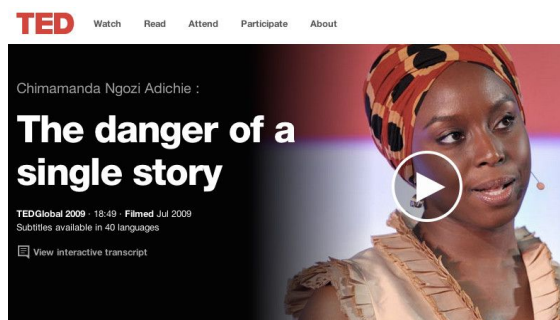


This documentary combines archival footage with contributions from activists and academics to show how the long history of racism in the US has helped drive the incarceration of so many young black men. Winner of an Emmy and BAFTA, it includes strong language and scenes of violence. Netflix rates it as 18+.

[Why I’m no longer talking to white people about race](#) by Reni Eddo-Lodge

Author Reni Eddo-Lodge discusses how the “invisibility” of race and racism to many of those who don’t experience institutionalised discrimination leads to those who benefit most from privilege denying its very existence and refusing to engage in serious conversations about injustice. This is an audio version of [her essay in The Guardian](#)

## [The danger of a single story](#) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (20 minutes)



The acclaimed Nigerian writer discusses the tendency of Western culture to reduce the complexity of ethnic minorities to simplistic narratives. Such narratives, she argues, even if portraying their subjects positively, or as blameless victims, inhibit true connections and authentic relations between people of different cultures.

## [Deconstructing White Privilege with Dr. Robin DiAngelo](#) (20 minutes)



Educationalist Dr Robin DiAngelo talks about how hard it can be for white people to understand institutionalised racism, and their tendency to become defensive when asked to engage with the idea that their ethnic identity grants them privileges of which they are often entirely unaware.

## OTHER RESOURCES

### [Racism is still a huge problem in UK's workplaces](#), from Manchester University

In 2018, researchers from Manchester University, commissioned by the TUC,

surveyed more than 5,000 people about their everyday working lives. More than 70% of those from an ethnic minority reported experiences of racial harassment at work, with almost half saying that they had been subject to racist abuse and 60% describing unfair treatment by their employer because of their ethnicity.

### [Visible and Invisible Barriers: the impact of racism on BME teachers](#) by Dr Zubada Haque and Sian Elliott

This study of ethnic minority teachers in England, commissioned by the NUT, found that 'discrimination based on race is one of the more significant and deep-rooted factors that affect the experience of teaching and career progression for BME teachers. Differences in experiences in school and career progression are particularly marked for Black Caribbean and Black African teachers in comparison to other minority ethnic groups.'

### [Project Implicit](#)

Project Implicit is an online, peer-reviewed test, developed by Professor Anthony Greenwald, Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington, to help individuals recognise and tackle their unconscious biases around race, gender and sexuality. It's hugely popular, but [most people who take it are dismayed at the results](#).

### [Institutionalized Racism: A Syllabus](#)

If you're interested in understanding the extent to which the current Black Lives Matter protests in the US are rooted in that country's history of institutionalized racism, take a look at [Institutionalized Racism: A Syllabus](#). Put together by JSTOR, which provides access to the archives of scholarly journals, it brings together a series of articles to 'help contextualize, teach, and understand these events as parts of a broader pattern.'