

"One either allows racial inequities to  
persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial  
inequities, as an anti-racist."  
- Dr. Ibram Kendi

## Week #3 Discussion

For Discussion #3, you will need to write a **two-part response** to the first several chapters of Kendi's book (his Intro, and Chapters 1, 2, and 3). (See the [Week #3 Overview Page](#) for a review of **What to Look For** in each chapter.)

### Part 1:

Write a **personal response**, describing either your own "origin story" and your own family background, or describe an early episode in your life in which you experienced "race consciousness," or your own awareness of your own cultural identity.

### Part 2:

Extend the discussion with **research** on one of the topics, events, or people mentioned in Kendi's Intro or in Chapters 1, 2, or 3, or do some research on the history of your own cultural group. (**You should use sources other than *Wikipedia* for your research.**)

Some possible research topics from Kendi's book: Stonewall Jackson, Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, Donald Trump's anti-immigration policies, *Plessy v. Ferguson* and Jim Crow segregation, Black Liberation Theology, Stokely Carmichael, the Great Migration, the Reagan-era war on drugs, the crack cocaine epidemic of the 1980s, W.E.B. Du Bois, Portugal and the slave trade of the 1400s, Henry the Navigator.

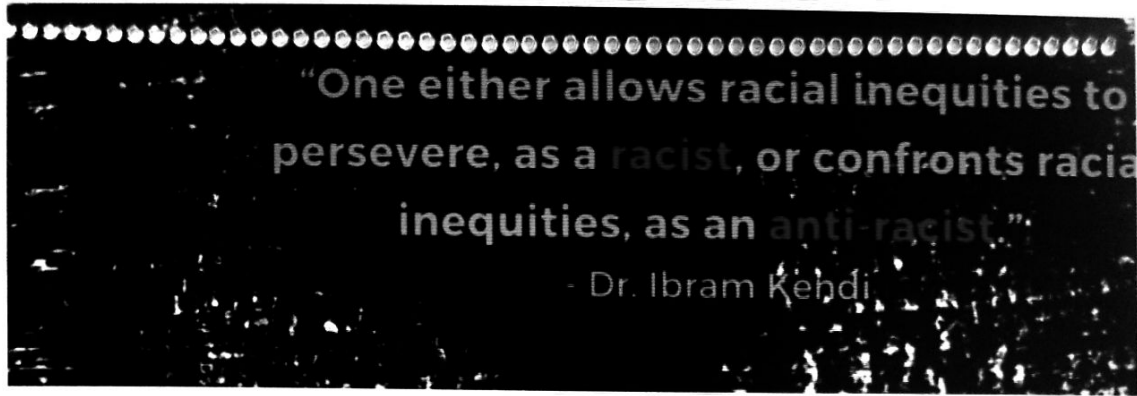
- **Both parts of the write-up should relate in some way to Kendi's first few chapters.** You should be making connections with the reading in each section.
- Your write-up should include **three quotes, minimum, from the first few chapters of Kendi**, as well as **three quotes, minimum, from your research.**
- Be sure to include a **Works Cited list** (in [MLA format](#)) at the end for any sources used in your research.
- Remember to **cite your sources within your write-up** for any quoted or paraphrased data or ideas from research.

(Approx. 450-500 words; more is fine.)

You will also need to respond to another student's post.

(All Discussion posts are due by 11:59pm on the due dates.)

# Week #3 Overview



The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, 26 June 2020

## Welcome to Week #3!

This week, we will begin our unit on our main text, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to Be an Antiracist*. We will spend the next six weeks on this book before moving on to our exploration of various multi-cultural memoirs in the second half of the semester. This week, we will be discussing Kendi's Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

The **Week #3 Discussion** will include personal self-reflection, along with research, in connection to the first several chapters of Kendi's book, and will be due at the end of Week #3, Sun 9/19.

## Reminder: Discussion #2 due Sun 9/12

\*\*Just a reminder that the **Week #2 Discussion** is due Sun 9/12, by 11:59pm.



Photo: Jeff Watts

## Week #3: Kendi, Introduction, and Chapters 1, 2, and 3

### "My Racist Introduction"

#### What to Look For:

Kendi tells a story from a key moment in his life in the Introduction. Think about how and why he makes use of this story here--how does it serve as a launching point for the rest of the book and for the larger point he will be making? Notice also how he uses this anecdote as a stepping stone to bring in other related historical background information and also current events, combining all of these to illustrate his central idea. Note Kendi's use of metaphor, also, near the end of the Introduction, as he describes the journey he made and which he tells us he will be relaying in the book--what is this journey about? What stages are part of the journey? Where does it end up? And how do the images brought forth through his use of metaphor help convey these ideas?

These techniques of weaving together personal storytelling with historical and current events, key figures, statistics, examples, and metaphors, along with expert testimony, will recur throughout the book. Watch how Kendi uses these elements in each upcoming chapter.

# Chapter 1: "Definitions"

## What to Look For:

This chapter is key for several reasons: First, Kendi takes the time to present a clear definition of antiracism right at the start of his project. This is a common move in an argument: to define key terms near the beginning and discuss the complications and nuances that the idea embodies or conveys. He gets to this analysis a bit later in the chapter, but you'll notice a couple of basic definitions (of "Racist" and "Antiracist") listed right at the beginning, and the chapter itself is entitled, "Definitions." If you flip through the chapters, you'll see that this listing of definitions right at the start of each chapter is a recurring "convention" (or standard strategy) that Kendi makes use of throughout the book, as a way to start off, or "frame," his chapters. It's similar to the way a writer might start a paper, a key passage, or a new chapter with a relevant quote that embodies the key concepts that will be discussed in that particular paper or in a section of a longer work.

This chapter is also important as it presents Kendi's "origin story." Here, he begins to tell us the story of how his parents met, and a bit about their own backgrounds and their parents' backgrounds. Kendi positions himself as part of a "lineage," and also shows how his own ideas about antiracism have much deeper roots. As you read, you can consider your own lineage--what is your ancestry? How far back can you trace your own origins? And how have attitudes in your own family evolved, grown, and blossomed over time?

# Chapter 2: "Dueling Consciousness"

## What to Look For:

Kendi continues his analysis of definitions of key terms in Chapter Two, exploring the distinctions between assimilationists, segregationists, and antiracists, and discusses the concept of "dueling consciousness" (29). Kendi continues his origin story, describing how he came to be born in 1982, and provides background information on the political climate of the time, with Reagan's tough-on-crime policies, in particular his war on drugs. As in Chapter One, here, too, Kendi provides a plethora of statistics, showing the disproportionate impact of Reagan's policies on the African American and Latinx communities.

## Kendi's Notes

You can find Kendi's citations for all his sources in his Notes section at the end of the book, which is organized by chapter. You can see in the Notes section the relative recency of most of his sources, and you can also see when Kendi is using older "primary source texts," or historical sources from the actual time period being discussed. W. E. B. Du Bois, for example, whose 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Kendi mentions for the first time in this chapter, is referenced quite often throughout the book.

## Parallelism and Repetition

Another thing to note, and which you will see throughout Kendi's book, is his liberal use of parallelism and repetition. You may have already become aware of Kendi's use of this technique as early as his Introduction, for example, when he differentiates between racist and antiracist ideas. Kendi states,

- "One endorses either the idea of a racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an antiracist. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an antiracist. One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist" (9).

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Kendi's definitions, which begin each chapter, also illustrate this type of parallelism, which is a type of repetition with a twist—where the sentence structure is the same for each definition, or each sentence, with only a few words changed. At the beginning of Chapter 1, Kendi lists the definitions for "Racist" and "Antiracist":

- "Racist: One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea" (13).
- "Antiracist: One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea" (13).

Similarly, Kendi opens Chapter 2 with several definitions of key terms, also written in parallel form:

- "Assimilationist: One who is expressing the racist idea that a racial group is culturally or behaviorally inferior and is supporting cultural or behavioral enrichment programs to develop that racial group" (24).
- "Segregationist: One who is expressing the racist idea that a permanently inferior racial group can never be developed and is supporting policy that segregates away that racial group" (24).
- "Antiracist: One who is expressing the idea that racial groups are equals and none needs developing, and is supporting policy that reduces racial inequity" (24).

These are techniques that are used for emphasis and to help show similarities and/or differences between ideas and topics. Parallelism and repetition can also act as Appeals to Emotions or Values, to evoke an emotional response in the reader/audience, or to connect with the audience's values and beliefs. These are common techniques often used in oratory, speech making, sermons, and debate. You can watch for Kendi's use of parallelism and repetition throughout the book.

## Chapter 3: "Power"

### What to Look For:

Kendi opens this chapter with a definition of "Race," and later explores the power dynamics behind this social construct. Kendi begins the chapter with a description of an incident from his young life, when he and his parents went to visit a potential school. In this anecdote from his childhood, Kendi depicts an early memory of coming to "racial consciousness" (37); he later discusses how "race is a mirage" (37), but one that we cannot overlook, due to the way it is used by those in power to manipulate and exert influence over various groups. Kendi then discusses the earliest uses of the term, and the earliest global power to make use of the concept of race to legitimize the race-based slave trade in Portugal in the 1400s. He emphasizes here how racist ideas have always been created after the fact--to justify racist policies which, as Kendi explains, have always, and still now, come first, not the other way around, as most of us are often led to believe.

## Discussion #3 Due Sun 9/19

Kendi is already weaving together many strands in these opening chapters. His personal story—his journey—will be a golden strand running through the book, reflecting/mirroring, illuminating, and connecting a myriad of ideas, historical and current events, people, concepts, attitudes, and policies on racism and antiracism, the main cords that braid the entire text into one complex tapestry. In this week's Discussion, we will begin to braid our own stories, and will integrate these stories with research on some of the topics, people, events, and policies brought up in these first few chapters. **The Week #3 Discussion will be due Sun 9/19, 11:59pm.**