

Reading to Raise Anti-Racists

A Yearlong Initiative at Orchard School 2020-2021

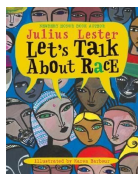
Rationale: Children’s sensibilities and attitudes about race start forming at a very early age. If we want to change racialized systems, then we have to deliberately engage kids in dialogue about the complexities of race early on in their development. A recent article from Teaching Tolerance illuminates the ever increasing need to take an activist approach and go beyond teaching kindness towards teaching justice [[Teaching Kindness Isn’t Enough](#)]. During this year-long project, we plan to use picture books as a springboard for meaningful, transformative, conversations about race because when we “read race” we are helping children develop the skills to see the world through a critical race lens. These books were specifically chosen for the following reasons: they feature Black, Indigenous People, and People of Color (BIPOC) as the main character, they avoid stereotypical portrayals of BIPOC, and they are written by authors/illustrators who share an identity with the characters in the book. Some are stories of racism and oppression, but others introduce, explore, and celebrate human differences and show BIPOC children in everyday situations because we don’t want to send the message that struggle alone defines the BIPOC experience. Our hope is that as a result of engaging in this school-wide reading and conversation, students will be inspired to become active anti-racists and ask questions like “What can we do?” or “How can we change that?”, as they fight for racial justice.

This document from Teaching Tolerance is a good introduction to this work and includes the opportunity for some self-assessment:

[Let’s Talk!: Discussing Race, Racism, and Other Difficult Topics with Students](#)

Age appropriate standards for anti-bias, multicultural, and social justice education:

[Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards K-2 and 3-5](#)



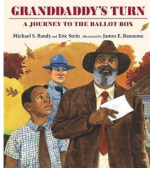
SEPTEMBER

[Let’s Talk About Race](#) by Julius Lester

This book helps students understand that everyone is the same on the inside. The differences are in the details of each person’s own stories. It allows students to explore their own thoughts about race and what makes each person unique. It’s a fine book for starting a discussion about race and judging people based on their skin color, hair, clothes, etc.

Selected Resources:

- [Guidelines and questions for discussion](#) from Teaching Children Philosophy
- [Lesson Plan](#) created by Sarah Thomas
- Author Jelani Memory reads his [A Kids Book About Racism](#)



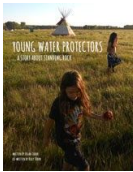
OCTOBER

Granddaddy's Turn: A Journey to the Ballot Box by Michael S. Bandy and Eric Stein

Based on a true story of a family in the South facing segregation, this book tells of a young boy as he witnesses his grandfather's proud attempt to vote for the first time. Sadly, the grandfather is denied the right to vote because he can't read. Decades later, the grandson brings along a picture of his grandfather when he successfully casts his first ballot.

Selected Resources:

- [Teachers' Guide](#) from Candlewick Press
- [1964 State of Louisiana Literacy Test \(Actual photocopy of test\)](#)
- [Literacy Test and Voter Registration Information](#) from Civil Rights Movement Archive



NOVEMBER

Young Water Protectors: A Story About Standing Rock by Aslan Tudor and Kelly Tudor

Written by a 10 year old boy from the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas about his experience visiting the Standing Rock Sioux camps protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline being built on their land. The protest managed to delay the pipeline, but it was later completed. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe is still fighting the pipeline in court.

Selected Resources:

- [Information about Aslan](#) from his tribe's website and [Indian Country Today](#)
- [Key Moments in the Dakota Access Pipeline Fight](#) from NPR
- [Dakota Access Pipeline](#) website
- [March 25, 2020 court decision](#) in favor of Standing Rock Tribe
- [July 2020 US District Court decision](#) in favor of Standing Rock Tribe via AP News
- [ABC documentary](#) on Dakota Access Pipeline protest highlighting youth
- [A Racial Justice Guide to Thanksgiving](#)
- [Honor Native Land](#) from US Dept. of Arts and Culture



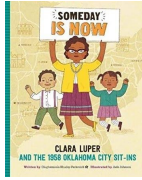
DECEMBER

Saturday by Oge Mora

Ava cherishes Saturdays! On Saturdays she and her mother have adventures and spend quality time together. On this particular Saturday, nothing goes as planned, yet Ava still loves and appreciates the time she is able to spend with her mother.

Selected Resources:

- [YouTube reading of Saturday](#) by the author
- [Discussion of illustrations with Oge Mora](#) plus puppet making idea from Plainfield-Guilford Township Public Library
- [Activity ideas](#) from Pittsburgh Public Schools



JANUARY

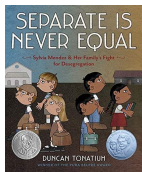
Someday is Now: Clara Luper and the 1958 Oklahoma City Sit-Ins by
Olugbemisola

Rhuday-Perkovich

As a child, Clara saw how segregation affected her life. Her journey famously led her to Oklahoma, where she and her students desegregated stores and restaurants that were closed to African Americans. With **courage and conviction**, Clara Luper led young people to “do what had to be done.”

Selected Resources:

- <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/katz-drugstore-sit-ins/>
More about Clara Luper including a photo and related books on a great site!
- [“Counter Histories: Documenting the Struggle to Desegregate Southern Restaurants”](#) - Each of the 5 short films tells the story of a lunch counter sit-in in one Southern city or town.



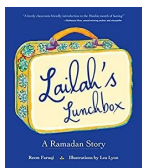
FEBRUARY

Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation by
Duncan Tonatiuh

Almost 10 years before Brown vs. Board of Education, Sylvia Mendez and her parents helped end school segregation in California. An American citizen of Mexican and Puerto Rican heritage who spoke and wrote perfect English, Mendez was denied enrollment to a “Whites only” school. Her parents took action by organizing the Hispanic community and filing a lawsuit in federal district court. Their success eventually brought an end to the era of segregated education in California.

Selected Resources:

- [An Educator's Guide with vocab, lesson plans, etc.](#)
- [Sylvia Mendez](#) video with archival photographs
- [Watch a trailer for the book!](#)
- [A RIF Guide for Educators](#)
- [Vocabulary Scaffold](#)



MARCH

Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story by Reem Faruqi

A story about a young Muslim girl who is fasting for the first time during Ramadan. She is far away from where she grew up, missing her friends and is unsure if her teacher and classmates will understand what Ramadan is and why she is fasting.

Selected Resources:

- [Ramadan Video](#): Young children explain what Ramadan is and how they celebrate it
- [Teacher's Guide](#) (from the Anti-Defamation League)
- [A Resource for Parents and Educators](#)

- [Ramadan and Eid Teach-in](#) is a recording of a webinar with Asma Elhuni that was sponsored by the Vermont Coalition for Ethnic and Social Equity in Schools. It's excellent information to understand the month and the holiday.



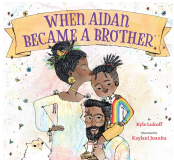
APRIL

Can I Touch Your Hair by Irene Latham & Charles Waters

When students Irene and Charles end up as partners for a poem-writing project, they slowly and bravely begin to explore how the issue of race affects their lives. Irene's white perspective and Charles's black perspective are inherent even when they begin by writing about a subject seemingly devoid of racial context—shoes. Their next topic, hair, opens a dialogue that includes the emotional effects of race-based conflicts at school.

Selected Resources:

- [Teachers' Guide](#) from co-author Irene Latham
- [YouTube Playlist](#) of 6 poems from the book read by co-author Charles Waters
- [Online or Printable Word Searches and Crossword Puzzles](#) from Reading Is Fundamental
- [Q & A](#) with co-authors Irene Latham and Charles Waters



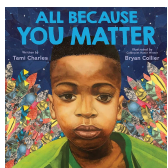
MAY

When Aidan Became a Brother by Kyle Lukoff

This book is the story of a transgender, soon-to-be older sibling and his anxieties regarding his family's new addition to the family. Rather than worrying about having to share his parents' affections and his toys, however, Aidan is afraid that this new baby will feel out of place in the world chosen for them, just as he did when he was born.

Selected Resources

- There are three copies of It Feels Good to Be Yourself: A Book About Gender Identity available in the library.
- [Teacher's Guide](#)
- [The Gender Wheel Pronoun Protocol](#)
- [No More Gender Roles](#) (YouTube video)
- [T is for TRANS](#) (YouTube video)



JUNE

All Because You Matter by Tami Charles

A beautiful love poem, written for the author's son, to provide educators with "a starting point for conversations about the racial climate in our country today," and "to remind all children, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, that no matter where they come from, they matter."

Selected Resources:

- [YouTube video](#) - Author Tami Charles and illustrator Bryan Collier talk about their book

- [Interview with Tami Charles including book trailer](#) from We Need Diverse Books blog