

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

RISE UP! HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST WHITE SUPREMACY

BY CRYSTAL M. FLEMING

Rise Up! is a brilliant call to action for young people, challenging them to join the fight against white supremacy. Crystal M. Fleming's challenge to dismantle racism does not come without the requisite tools to take on this monumental fight. The greatest tool she gives young people is knowledge. Her book is replete with the history of institutionalized racism and its effects, from the inequities in the legal justice system to inequities in sports. Perhaps the most important aspect of this knowledge is the "why." Young readers will gain an understanding of why different groups of people have vastly different experiences and qualities of life and how this entangled system of institutionalized racism has upheld the continuation of inequity for generations.

With as much prowess, *Rise Up!* illuminates the work that antiracists have been doing since the 1800s. Through Fleming's words we are anchored and grounded in the knowledge that our ancestors and others who came before us believed that change was possible and fought for it. Readers learn about people of many groups coming together to improve the treatment and quality of life for all Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Young people will easily come to see that the work of dismantling racism does not start with them but must continue through them.

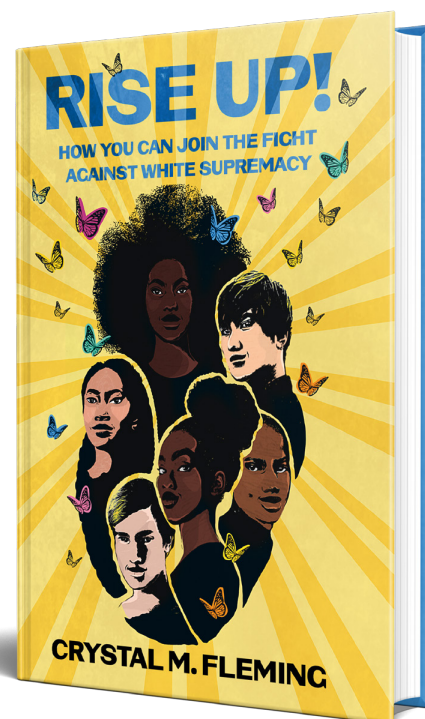
To ensure her readers are equipped for this challenge, Fleming also empowers young people with a list of action steps for creating antiracist change. This list is geared toward young people and shares safe, actionable ways to help build a more just and equitable world.

Rise Up! is an essential guide for looking at modern-day society through the lens of social, political, and economic dominance. Not only will it help young people see the relevance in past practices rooted in racism today; they will have the opportunity to understand how these practices affect Black, Indigenous, and people of color on many different levels and how their voices have the power to bring about change.



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A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

Thank you for choosing to read *Rise Up!* with your students. There is no better time than now to have conversations about white supremacy and how to dismantle it. Although racism is a difficult topic to discuss, *Rise Up!* shares relevant information that empowers your students with a strong knowledge of the roots and effects of racism, grounding your conversations in facts.

Rise Up! will enlighten your students on the roots of white supremacy, its impact on all facets of society, and strategies for dismantling it. Fleming does an exceptional job of bringing to the fore the poisonous effects of white supremacy on historically oppressed groups. *Rise Up!* also addresses the negative impact of racism and white supremacy on white people. Armed with this knowledge, conversations that arise may prompt your students to examine the effects of racism not only on their own ethnic group but on all ethnic groups. What an invaluable lesson. Perhaps the best part of *Rise Up!* is the list of actionable steps that young people can take to join the movement of those coming together to challenge racism.

Enjoy this journey that you and your students are about to undertake!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe your racial or ethnic identity?
2. Do you remember the first time you learned about race?
3. Have you ever discussed race or racism with your family members?
4. What, if anything, have you learned about racism at school?

INTRODUCTION

1. On page vi, Fleming connects the dots between her school experience and what schools can start doing now for Black students. Although each point is important, is there one that feels personal to you? Explain.
2. When we review pages x through xii, we see the creation of a system of racism. Choose one example from these pages that proves racism is a system of power.
3. On page xviii, Fleming lists positive emotions that we can feel when learning about racism. Which speaks to you most? Explain.



CHAPTER 1: (UN)LEARNING RACISM



1. What role do families play in our socialization? Is this more or less important than the role that the media plays in our socialization? Explain.
2. After reading this chapter, can you recall any subtle messages that perpetuate the racial prejudice that you witnessed in the media? If so, share what you remember.
3. How might Jane Elliott's work in ending racism make significant strides?
4. On page 7, Fleming writes, "One of the most important steps in unlearning racism is realizing that it should not be normal to oppress people because of their skin color or ethnic background." This seems like such a simple idea. Why do you think she sees it as one of the most important steps?

CHAPTER 2: WHAT THE HECK IS WHITE SUPREMACY?

1. Based on what you learned about the wealth gap, why is it more difficult for Black, Indigenous, and people of color to get out of poverty than whites? Explain.
2. Discuss one example of white supremacy that you learned about in this chapter. Why does this example stand out to you?
3. Would you agree with the statement that white supremacy is ingrained in the fabric of our country? Explain.

CHAPTER 3: STEALING AMERICA



1. We learned a great deal in this chapter about the horrific treatment of Native people in the United States. Talk about one thing that you learned that really stands out to you. Why did you choose this? Explain.
2. Think of the information you learned regarding the truth about Thanksgiving. How will you use this new knowledge? Explain.
3. Imagine you are one of the young people protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline. Think about everything that you learned in this chapter. What would you say to reporters when asked why you are protesting?

CHAPTER 4: WHY SLAVERY STILL MATTERS

1. Throughout the book, Fleming speaks about the importance of connecting the dots between the past and the present. When considering all that you learned in this chapter about the history of slavery in the United States, why does slavery still matter today?
2. Reread the portion of Frederick Douglass's fiery speech about the Fourth of July found on page 57. Consider his thoughts on this holiday. Do you now have new thinking about the Fourth of July or do you feel the same as you always have about this day? Explain.
3. Think about everything that you learned about slavery in this chapter. If you were giving a speech in favor of reparations, what information would you include in your speech? Explain.



CHAPTER 5: SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS

1. Let's connect the dots again between the past and the present. In 1942, President Roosevelt ordered all Japanese Americans to be placed in internment camps. Does this remind you of any present-day events in the United States? Would you say these present-day events are directly tied to racist ideology? Explain.
2. In this chapter, we learn that African American men were not given the right to vote until 1870 and Native Americans in 1965, almost a hundred years later. How does this connect to present-day events on voting? Would you say these present-day events are directly tied to racist ideology? Explain.
3. Discuss in detail new information that you learned in this chapter about racist policies inflicted upon a specific group of people.

CHAPTER 6: CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

1. In this chapter, Fleming shares a great deal of statistical data. What statistics stood out to you? Why do you think they impacted you?
2. Share how you feel after reading this chapter. Did you find any positive takeaways? Explain.



CHAPTER 7: THE IMAGES WE SEE

1. In this chapter, Fleming continues to detail the history of racism. Here we see it through the overt and subliminal messages found in the media. When thinking about all that she shared regarding misrepresentation, especially in film and television, is there anything in this chapter that was eye-opening to you? Explain.
2. Remember that as you read *Rise Up!* you are free to share your thoughts. With that said, think back on all that you learned about the dangers of racist images in this chapter. As you learned about this type of misrepresentation that perpetuates stereotypes, did you learn about a stereotype that you didn't realize you were holding about a specific group? If so, explain.
3. Discuss or draw an image that you believe shares a positive representation of a group of people.

CHAPTER 8: RACISM AND ANTIRACISM IN SPORTS

1. In this chapter we learn that sports have historically been intertwined with systemic racism. Discuss an example of protest that you learned about in this chapter (or that you already knew about) that has made conditions better for athletes of color.
2. On page 136, Fleming writes about how Native American children were forced to assimilate when torn from their families and placed in boarding schools. We also see how this forced assimilation played out through sports. What effects do you think this had on Native American child athletes? Explain.



3. On pages 141 to 142, we learn about Tommie Smith, John Carlos, and Peter Norman who protested racism in the United States when receiving their medals at the 1968 Olympics. The photo of the raised fists of Smith and Carlos are iconic. When thinking about all of the backlash that Smith, Carlos, and Norman endured, would you say their protest of racism was successful? Explain.

CHAPTER 9:

1. You have lived through the time of COVID-19. Discuss how you have or have not felt the disparities in the effects of this virus in your home or community.
2. During COVID-19, anti-Asian hate greatly increased due to the unfounded, inflammatory remarks of some political leaders. How is this an act of white supremacy?
3. In the section “The Impact of Advocacy,” how does communication play a role in changing the way people think? Explain.
4. Review the section “Five Steps for Creating Antiracist Change.” Which steps did you find most beneficial to the work that you will start doing toward dismantling white supremacy? Explain.

POST-READING QUESTIONS

(The following questions refer to material on page 160. Now that you have finished reading the book, let's revisit those questions.)

1. What would it be like to live in a society without racist beliefs, racial violence, and discrimination?
2. Can you think of any political, economic, and social transformations that might help bring an end to racism and other forms of oppression?
3. What does the word “freedom” mean to you? What would it feel like to be free?



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