



Recommending Reading List

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?

Beverly Daniel Tatum

Genre: Non-Fiction

Book Jacket

Walk into any racially mixed high school, and you will see Black, White, and Latino youth clustered in their own groups. Is this self-segregation a problem to address or a coping strategy? Beverly Daniel Tatum, a renowned authority on the psychology of racism, argues that straight talk about our racial identities is essential if we are serious about enabling communication across racial and ethnic divides. These topics have only become more urgent as the national conversation about race is increasingly acrimonious. This fully revised edition is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of race in America.

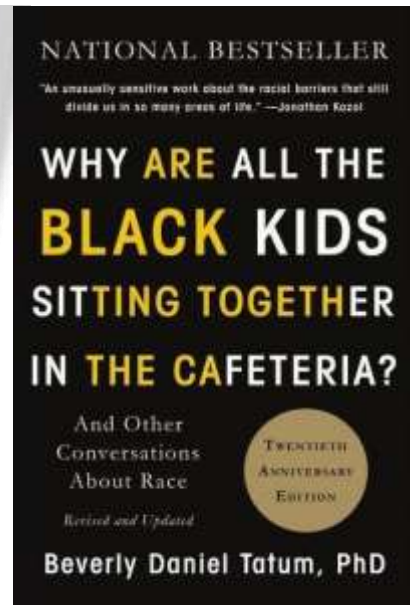
Connection to Pipeline

Beverly Tatum's book *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* begins with the most well-developed, detailed, and systematically succinct historical narrative of United States History from the perspective of an African-American, slavery to 2016. If you are wondering, "how did we (America) get to this point of racial tension today?" especially as it pertains to relationships between African-Americans and White Americans, Beverly Tatum gives you concrete answers. She then connects history to how it impacts students in the public education system. *Pipeline* is a play that reveals a true yet fictional depiction of what Beverly reveals in the data and research. Dominique Morisseau has done an excellent job of portraying a multi-layered situation of teacher and mother, just as Beverly Tatum does when her work as an educator connects to her personal life.

Guiding Questions

- What new understanding did you come away with from reading the prologue and introduction?
- What would be your answer to the book's title after finishing?
- Did you see yourself in the book, or identify with any of the information, personal stories, or references? If so, what was it and why? If not, why do you think you were unable to connect with the writing?
- What practical action step was spurred from the reading?
- What questions do you feel were unanswered and would you like to discuss with others in the field of education?

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? will be the subject of our Connections Book Club event on October 4th, 2022 at 7 pm. **The conversation will be facilitated by local educator and historian, Charnise Mangle.** Remote participation is welcome! Email Jay Briggs, Director of Education & Community Engagement, for more information.



The Nickel Boys

Colson Whitehead

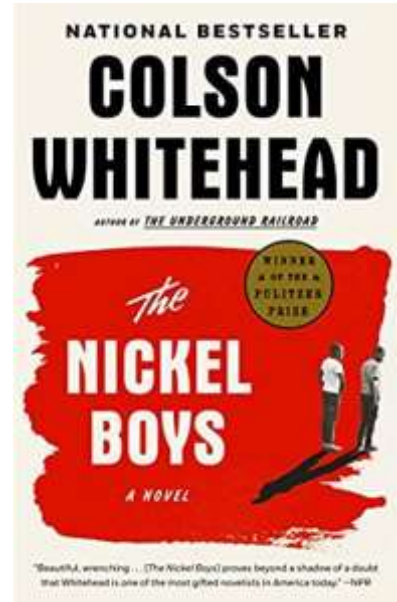
Genre: Historical Fiction

Book Jacket

Elwood Curtis has taken the words of Dr. Martin Luther King to heart: he is as good as anyone. Abandoned by his parents and brought up by his loving, strict, and clear-sighted grandmother, Elwood is about to enroll in the local black college. But given the time and the place, one innocent mistake is enough to destroy his future, and so Elwood arrives at The Nickel Academy, which claims to provide 'physical, intellectual and moral training which will equip its inmates to become 'honorable and honest men.

In reality, the Nickel Academy is a chamber of horrors, where physical, emotional, and sexual abuse is rife, where corrupt officials and tradesmen do a brisk trade in supplies intended for the school, and where any boy who resists is likely to disappear 'out back.' Stunned to find himself in this vicious environment,

Elwood tries to hold on to Dr. King's ringing assertion, 'Throw us in jail, and we will still love you.' But Elwood's fellow inmate and new friend Turner thinks Elwood is naive and worse; the world is crooked, and the only way to survive is to emulate the cruelty and cynicism of their oppressors. The tension between Elwood's idealism and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision that will have decades-long repercussions. Based on the history of a real reform school in Florida that operated for one hundred and eleven years and warped and destroyed the lives of thousands of children, *The Nickel Boys* is a devastating, driven narrative by a great American novelist whose work is essential to understanding the current reality of the United States.



Connection to Pipeline

Dominique Morisseau's play *Pipeline* tells the story of a teacher-student altercation gone wrong from the lens of a mother primarily. In *Nickel Boys* we get Colson Whitehead's vision of what can happen to a young African-American boy after an incident has happened and the punishment decided. Is "one innocent mistake enough to destroy [a] future" for far too many young African-Americans the answer is yes. Both *Pipeline* and *Nickel Boys* take you on a journey of how.

Guiding Questions

- What part of the book do you find unshakable, and why?
- Though a fictional account of a reform school in the Florida Panhandle, how did the author bring the characters alive to you? Did you research the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys at any point during your reading?
- Do you feel like we have progressed from these types of reform schools in America today? If so, why and what evidence would you use to support your response? If not, why and what evidence would you use to support your response?
- What practical action step was spurred from the reading?
- What lingering questions do you have for the author or the book itself?

Monster

Walter Dean Myers

Genre: Young Adult

Book Jacket

Sometimes I feel like I have walked into the middle of a movie. Maybe I can make my own movie. The film will be the story of my life. No, not my life, but of this experience. I'll call it what the lady who is the prosecutor called me. Monster.

Fade In: Interior Court. A guard sits at a desk behind Steve. Kathy O'Brien, Steve's lawyer, is all business as she talks to Steve.

O'Brien: Let me make sure you understand what's going on. Both you and this king character are on trial for felony murder. Felony Murder is as serious as it gets... When you're in court, you sit there and pay attention. You let the jury know that you think the case is as serious as they do....

Steve: You think we're going to win?

O'Brien (seriously): It probably depends on what you mean by "win."

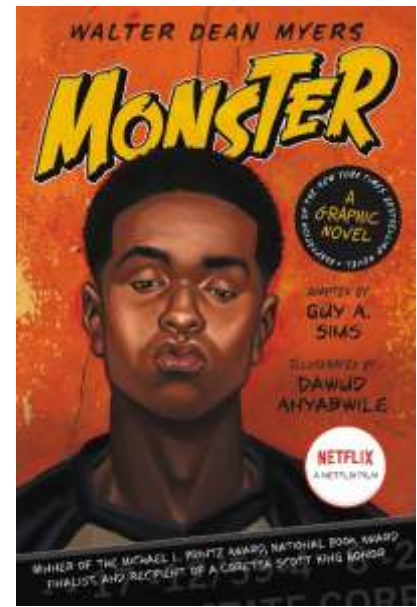
Sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon is on trial for murder. A Harlem drugstore owner was shot and killed in his store, and the word is that Steve served as the lookout. Guilty or innocent, Steve becomes a pawn in the hands of "the system," cluttered with cynical authority figures and unscrupulous inmates who will turn in anyone to shorten their own sentences. For the first time, Steve is forced to think about who he is as he faces prison, where he may spend all the tomorrows of his life. As a way of coping with the horrific events that entangle him, Steve, an amateur filmmaker, decides to transcribe his trial into a script, just like in the movies. He writes it all down, scene by scene, the story of how his whole life was turned around in an instant. But despite his efforts, reality is blurred, and his vision obscured until he can no longer tell who he is or what is the truth. This compelling novel is Walter Dean Myers's writing at its best.

Connection to Pipeline

Walter Dean Myers' book *Monster* is a fictional story with a direct narrative that powerfully grips the reader from the opening pages, just as Dominique Morisseau's play *Pipeline* draws the audience in during the opening scene by breaking the fourth wall and speaking directly to the audience. The audience doesn't have to wonder for long what the main character, Nya, is thinking because she's going to tell us in her own words. Just as Steve will tell the reader in his personal diary and screenplay starring himself. With an approximate run time of ninety minutes *Pipeline* is a quick watch, and *Monster* is also a quick read coming in at less than four hours. The viewer and reader will be asking for more by the curtains' close and the last page.

Guiding Questions

- Did you have to do any realignments with your thoughts while reading this book? If so, what were they? If not, why did all of this book make sense to you?
- How could this book be used to contextualize current events?
- Students often read this book in high school today. How might this book have resonated with you as a high school student?
- What practical action step was spurred from the reading?
- Was there a moment when you disagreed with the author? If so, why, what scene? If not, why, what scene did you most agree with?



Miles Morales: Spider-Man

Jason Reynolds

Genre: Marvel Novel

Book Jacket

"Everyone gets mad at hustlers, especially if you're on the victim side of the hustle. And Miles knew hustling was in his veins."

Miles Morales is just your average teenager. Dinner every Sunday with his parents, chilling out playing old-school video games with his best friend, Ganke, crushing on brainy, beautiful poet Alicia. He's even got a scholarship spot at the prestigious Brooklyn Visions Academy. Oh yeah, and he's Spider-Man. But lately, Miles's spidey-sense has been on the fritz. When a misunderstanding leads to his suspension from school, Miles begins to question his abilities. After all, his dad and uncle were Brooklyn jack-boys with criminal records. Maybe kids like Miles aren't meant to be superheroes. Maybe Miles should take his dad's advice and focus on saving himself. As Miles tries to get his school life back on track, he can't shake the vivid nightmares that continue to haunt him. Nor can he avoid the relentless buzz of his spidey-sense every day in history class amidst his teacher's lectures on the historical "benefits" of slavery and the modern-day prison system. But after his scholarship is threatened, Miles uncovers a chilling plot, one that puts his friends, his neighborhood, and himself at risk. **It's time for Miles to suit up.**



Connection to Pipeline

A teacher altercation is the igniting spark in both *Pipeline* and *Miles Morales: Spider-Man*, which could make the viewer and reader wonder, "why can't these two boys just obey their teacher?" but there is so much more.

Guiding Questions

- Do you feel like your life is falling apart as Miles felt at times? If so, why, how can you connect with your spidey sense from within?
- Miles is a reflective teenager, would you say this is true of you today, why are why not?
- What was your read on Mr. Chamberlain, especially at the beginning of the book, and why did you think that?
- What practical action step was spurred from the reading?
- Was there a moment when you disagreed with the author? If so, why, what scene? If not, why, what scene did you most agree with?

List Curated and Study Guides Crafted by Charnise Mangle

Charnise Mangle is an extraordinary social studies teacher and certified literacy teacher and coach. She has created a classroom where students can learn about United States History and the Constitution, United States government, economics and politics in a fun and creative way, as she guides them on a journey of personal civic duty and community understanding. She believes she has been called to raise the next generation to become critical thinkers and people of progress. She currently teaches at the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities.

Charnise is a Greenville native, Bachelors of Science undergraduate from Clemson University, and Master's of Arts graduate from Furman University.



Charnise serves on several boards and committees as a thought leader in the Greenville Community on discussions of education, race and community-wide public policy.

Charnise opens her classroom to all people who want to begin a journey of self-education with her ebook entitled, *Understanding Race and Racism: A Collection of Resources on Race in the United States of America for Self-Exploration*, released in 2020. As an African-American United States History teacher and active community member, she has seen a void in education as it pertains to discussion on American racism. She has compiled this list of resources to help guide those who would like on a journey of self-education about racism in the United States of America.

According to Mrs. Rita Pierson, the educator who has profoundly impacted Ms. Mangle, "every child deserves a champion -- an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be."

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