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## Selecting and Teaching Young Adult Literature Through Black Historical Consciousness Principles

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**ABSTRACT:** In this practitioner article, we detail how American English language arts and social studies teachers can select and teach young adult literature using LaGarrett King’s Black historical consciousness framework. We provide supplemental, related research along with teaching suggestions and titles for each of the Black historical consciousness principles. We end by calling on educators to reimagine both English language arts and social studies curriculum to challenge curricular anti-Blackness and center Black authors, writings, and philosophies.

**KEYWORDS:** Black history, English education, social studies, young adult literature, cross-curricular

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American educators are in an era of state legislative and district-level book bans that overwhelmingly target Black authors (Arceneaux, 2022) and history curriculum that grapples with the legacy of anti-Black racism in the United States (Steinberg, 2022). Our contemporary book and curriculum banning moment echoes the past. For instance, writings that espoused anti-slavery sentiment were commonly silenced in the 19th century and bans against anti-racist pamphlets in the Jim Crow south were a frequent tactic of racist leaders (Blackmore, 2023; Cantor, 2023). Journalist Danielle Buckingham (2023) draws parallels between the past and present by noting the wave of book bans is “comparable to restricting enslaved folks from reading anything that might affirm their humanity” (para. 22). Similarly, scholar Kendra Bryant (2022) sees book banning as a “covert Jim Crow-ing practice” (para. 8). Like the echoes from the past, the current book and curricular banning moment is about far more than books. Policy analyst Gabriella Cantor (2023) argues that the banning of books is “part of a broader movement to remove marginalized voices from the public forum and legislative chamber” (para. 9) while legal scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (2022) reminds us that “suppression of votes and the silencing of voices have always been deeply intertwined” (para 6). In short, banning Black history and literature from public spaces like schools is part of a political project bent on nullifying pluralistic democracy. Book and curricular bans are an attack on the very idea of multicultural education.

This political moment demands that we as educators craft new and inventive ways to advocate for and teach Black authors, narratives, and histories. Thus, we consider how the principles of Black historical consciousness (King, 2020) can inform young adult literature selection for three major reasons: (1) to encourage social studies teachers to consider literary texts like young adult literature as part of their history curriculum; (2) to provide English teachers principles for selecting and teaching young adult literature in their English language arts classes; and (3) to encourage interdisciplinary, cross-curricular teaching that braids together social studies and English language arts. Muhammad (2020) posits that “using Black history as a model for text selection and teaching helps teachers to be excellent in their profession and not basic” (p. 152). We agree and offer some considerations for text selection in the remainder of the article.

We approached this project as a writing group focused on generating cross-disciplinary curricular ideas for teaching Black history and Black authors. Our multiracial, interdisciplinary writing group is composed of four teacher educators and two teacher candidates. Two teacher educators are Black and two are white; both teacher candidates are Black. Our experiences and expertise span secondary English and social studies education, elementary teaching, and educational leadership. Our identities and perspectives inform this work in the sense that we are all invested in intentionally including texts in K-12 and post-secondary spaces that highlight important contributions of Black scholars, artists, and writers.

Our work takes place in a state that provides tenure protections for K-12 teachers and is governed by a Democratic majority. The partisan lean of our state is important to note given that draconian curricular and book bans are only being

enacted in states controlled by the Republican Party (Petri, 2023). It is true that the political makeup of our state legislative body provides some protection from book banning policies and attacks on teachers. However, our immediate context is not immune to political movements and national headlines. For instance, practicing teachers and preservice teachers we work with have shared their experiences navigating parents who echoed right-wing talking points about “CRT,” “gender ideology,” and “making kids hate America.” In other words, K-12 teachers in our state have a layer of defense against the current wave of book and curricular ban legislation but they are not completely immune. We provide suggestions for navigating the current political landscape towards the end of this manuscript. First, we detail why and how teachers should turn to the Black historical consciousness framework for teaching young adult literature.

### Teaching Young Adult Literature

Including young adult literature in secondary social studies classes is a pathway for teachers to support disciplinary literacy learning and skills (George & Stix, 2000; Roberts, 2012; Smyth & Hansen, 2016). Smyth and Hansen (2016) argue that using YA in social studies is a way to surface understandings beyond traditional texts; as such, students can support students to: “engage with the content information, activate their background knowledge, and provide them with a window into the time periods and cultures being studied” (p. 340). Yet, it is important that teachers do not attempt to incorporate literature into their curriculum without critical thought and development of appropriate pedagogy. Harrison (2021) contends that teachers, both practicing and preservice, need to develop a “strong foundation in the history of multicultural literary movements and diverse literacy movements” (p. 28) in order to incorporate the teaching of literature in social studies classrooms effectively and critically.

Young adult literature can be powerful curricular tools for developing justice-oriented social studies curriculum (Holmes, 2019; Rice, 2006; Rodríguez et al., 2022; Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2021; Smyth & Hanson, 2016). Further, social studies teachers who focus on young adult literature that is “more multicultural and culturally relevant” provide social studies students with the opportunity to read additional voices and experiences that can better understand historical events and concepts (Holmes, 2019). Olan and Richmond (2017) found that early career teachers can thoughtfully approach including YA literature in their courses as an avenue to promote culturally responsive practices and to cultivate a more equitable curriculum by honoring additional voices and stories. Focusing specifically on Black voices and literature, Jackson and Boutte (2009) note the need for teachers to form and teach through an “African-centered perspective” (p. 115) with literature since literary texts are an avenue for children to “construct messages about their cultures and roles in society” (p. 112). These scholars remind us to pay attention to both the literature and the accompanying pedagogical moves and curricular framing of such literary texts.

King (2023d) calls for educators to develop plans for teaching Black histories with “complexity, criticality, and nuance” at “each level of schooling” (para 1). The work to thoughtfully incorporate Black histories throughout curricula will need to be multifaceted and coordinated across various teachers, educators, and community members (King, 2023a). Locating young adult and children’s literature as sites for teaching Black history can be one method to spread the goal of teaching Black history across grade-levels, disciplines, and schools. For instance, social studies scholars have called for elementary social studies education to incorporate children’s literature as a method for teaching Black historical consciousness (Keegan & Gough, 2023; Pitts & James, 2023). Pairing Black young adult literature with a Black historical consciousness framework can push against what Jackson and Boutte (2009) see as limiting Black literature and history to “one or two books during Black history month” (p. 112).

### **Black Historical Consciousness**

Refuting the popular (though accurate) sentiment that “Black history is American history,” King (2020) argues that the phrase is used as an appeasement tool that promotes a “non-controversial, palatable, and whitewashed discourse” (p. 335) that does little to improve the quality of teaching Black history. Rather than foster a critical approach to Black history that questions the legacy of anti-Black racism, “Black history is American history” is a phrase and accompanying curricular belief that erroneously perpetuates an idea of America as a country whose universal drive for liberty was flawed but inherently aspirational; an idea that intentionally or not erases the historical fact that America is a system built on the legacies of slavery, settler colonialism, and genocide. “Black history is American history” suggests a false “shared historical legacy between white and Black people” (p. 335), that can mask the fact that white people built systems around racial hierarchies. King (2020) posits Black historical consciousness as an approach that centers the “many Black historical perspectives” that are frequently conflated, diluted, or omitted in the whitewashed “Black history is American history” approach (p. 337).

King’s (2020) principles for Black historical consciousness seek to challenge dominant ways of teaching Black history in order to “explore Black identity through complex and nuanced narratives that attempt to get at the full humanity of Black people” (p. 337). Six guiding principles that should be understood and taught construct the Black historical consciousness model: power and oppression; Black agency, resistance, and perseverance; Africa and the African diaspora; Black joy; Black identities; and Black historical contention (p. 339). These six principles guide the curricular and teaching suggestions we outline in this article. We consider how a framework that emerged from social studies education can inform the teaching of young adult literature.

In 2023, King introduced an updated version of the Black historical consciousness Framework (King, 2023c), and then wrote about the framework

specifically for elementary school educators (King, 2023b). This expanded framework includes two additional principles that were not addressed in our research: community, local, and social histories, and Black futurism. These two principles are highly pertinent to young adult literature selection and should be taken into account when developing curricula, instructional strategies, and selecting literary materials. However, for the scope of this article, we attend to the original six principles outlined by King's (2020) original framework. Narrowing our focus to the original six principles helps us specify the types of young adult titles we select and advocate for teachers to incorporate. We detail that selection and teaching process in the following section.

### **Selecting and Teaching YAL Through a Black Historical Consciousness Framework**

In this section we outline King's (2020) six principles of Black historical consciousness. We detail how King has constructed the principles and how we see other scholarship relating to young adult literature and social studies education working in tandem with the principles. Finally, we offer ideas for teaching the principle using young adult titles. Our full list of young adult titles and their embodiment of Black historical consciousness principles is in the Appendix.

Before proceeding, it's important we note our own self-imposed limitations and criteria. We agree with scholars who have called for the inclusion of Black young adult literature characters in a range of genres, especially speculative works like science fiction and fantasy (Hines & Menefee, 2022; Toliver, 2018; Toliver & Timmons-Long, 2023). Given the focus on historical thinking in this article, we narrow our scope to only include realistic fiction and nonfiction in our analysis and teaching suggestions. Science fiction and fantasy can supplement historical thinking, for instance Octavia Butler's (1979) *Kindred*. However, speculative work is beyond the analytical scope of this piece. Future work should consider how King's (2023b; 2023c) concept of Black futurism can be applied to speculative fiction and fantasy young adult literature.

Additionally, we want to note that, while historical thinking guides the texts we address, we do not limit our suggested titles to only historical fiction. Rather, we seek to consider how even realistic fiction set in contemporary times can illuminate historical truths and knowledge when paired with intentional texts and thoughtful pedagogy. Coles (2019) notes that, "when it comes to striving for racial equity, severing the present from the past is not beneficial, but in fact, violent" (p. 11). Similarly, Busey and Walker (2017) posit that "narratives of Black history must expand beyond temporal movements of resistance" (p. 477). Because the ideas we outline in this article rest at the intersection of English language arts and social studies, we draw on norms from both disciplines to expand each other. The teaching we detail below can ideally be done as cross-disciplinary co-teaching between ELA and social studies teachers. If not feasible, our suggestions can be taken up in both ELA and social studies classes alone.

Finally, we stress that the titles we detail are not exhaustive. We read and identified young adult titles that we felt aligned with one or more of the principles outlined by King (2020). However, the list of titles we write about is not bound to methodological criteria; this work is not a critical content analysis or a critical engagement with a particular text. Rather, we offer up titles and detail their engagement with Black historical consciousness. Our hope is that English and social studies teachers will expand how they position texts and engage across disciplines by reading how we model young adult text selection and teaching through the lens of Black historical consciousness.

### **Power, Oppression, and Racism**

King (2020) notes that the three concepts of power, oppression, and racism are vital concepts for students to learn in order to understand how “systems and institutions have victimized Black people throughout history” (p. 337). Important to these understandings is Coles’ (2019) detailing of how the neoliberal ideas of multiculturalism that permeate our public discourses work to “disconnect Black history and suffering from the consciousness of American citizens” (p. 2), which causes Black and non-Black citizens to inadequately challenge racist policies and systems because the “issues are positioned as newly emerged, rather than connect to a deep history of racial animus.” Thus, text selections and curricular planning need to fuse understandings of the history of racism and its continued legacy in contemporary society.

When creating curricula to teach this principle with young adult literature, teachers should be clear in teaching the definitions of the three concepts of “power,” “oppression,” and “racism.” Teachers can provide students the definition of the phrases and then ask students to write the definition in their own words, including examples from both history and contemporary life, and pull quotes from literature that demonstrate the concept (Miller et al., 2021). Clear, explicit definitions can help sharpen students’ analytical abilities and ensure a structural understanding of racism and oppression rather than an individual one. Teachers should also support students in making connections between systemic oppression throughout time periods to illustrate how oppression and racism of yesterday created the seeds of today’s oppression and racism.

Drawing from texts like *Stamped (for Kids): Racism, Anti-racism, and You* (Cherry-Paul et al., 2021), young adult readers will gain an understanding of the history of racist ideas and anti-Blackness. Not only will they discover where these racist ideas were created, but also identify how these ideas impact their lives today. This historical context will increase their understanding of oppression, power, and racism as it increases their awareness of the complexities of racism and how it impacts the social, political, and economic systems in our country and the world. The book also teaches students how oppression and inequitable treatment are perpetuated by racial biases, stereotypes, and discrimination. Additionally, teachers can position young adult narratives to animate how the structural nature

of oppression and racism shape the lives of individual people. For instance, a graphic novel like *Incognegro: A Graphic Mystery* (Johnson & Pleece, 2008) narrates the systemic features of Jim Crow while highlighting how the legal system enacted terrorism on Black communities and individuals. In short, teachers should teach “power,” “oppression,” and “racism” as concepts with real, material impact on Black people.

### **Black Agency, Resistance, and Perseverance**

The concepts of Black agency, resistance, and perseverance illuminate the difference between “Black victimization and Black victimhood” (King, 2020, p. 338), while also highlighting how Black people historically and contemporarily fight against oppressive structures and systems. Teaching about Black agency and resistance is especially important when discussing slavery and enslaved people in the United States. A 2018 survey by the Southern Poverty Law Center revealed that many states fail to adequately teach slavery and its role in the formation and shaping of the United States government. Entitled *Teaching Hard History: American Slavery*, the report called for educators to include examples of enslaved people resisting enslavers and attempting to end slavery through their own methods. This recommendation echoes King’s principle and should inform text selections. In selecting young adult literature that tells stories of enslaved people, young adult literature scholar Ebony Elizabeth Thomas and colleagues (2016) urges teachers to search for books that include “fully developed enslaved characters, characters who have desires and agency, who act for change, even if they don’t always achieve it” (Frank, 2019, para 28). This call for literature material aligns with Coles’ (2019) point that, while enslaved Black people were denied access to literacy through legal measures, enslaved Black people were still “engaging in very dynamic literacy practices that were subversive to white racial domination” (p. 8). Literary texts can help illuminate these acts of resistance, as children’s literature offers narratives of resistance to enslavement that teachers can incorporate into their curriculum alongside primary sources (Keegan & Gough, 2023).

Teachers should also be critical of how dominant narratives solidified in social studies curriculum can lead to a distorted understanding of Black agency, resistance, and perseverance. Social studies curriculum, as embodied by the patchwork of state standards, elevates the biographies and work of Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Harriet Tubman at the expense of other Black activists throughout history (Busey & Walker, 2017; Wineburg & Monte-Sano, 2008). The overemphasis on King, Parks, and Tubman in social studies curriculum leads to the “deradicalization of Black acts of critical patriotism and the promotion of particular individuals as inhuman-like figures” (Busey & Walker, 2017, p. 478). The figures of King, Parks, and Tubman also reflect the reality that space for Black activism and history is frequently limited to slavery, the Civil War, and the Civil Rights Movement. Social studies curriculum associated with those time periods

often omits other pivotal leaders. For instance, both Pauli Murray (Patterson, 2021) and Bayard Rustin (Mayo, 2017; O'Brien & Mitchell, 2018) are frequently erased in teaching about the Civil Rights Movement due to their politics centering Black queer thought. Finally, young adult literature can sanitize the radical nature of the Civil Rights Movement (Rodríguez & Vickery, 2020) in ways that erase the critiques Civil Rights Movement activists had of American systems.

Teachers should work to draw connective curricular tissue between the resistance of enslaved people, Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, and pockets of activism in between those chronological markers to demonstrate how models of Black agency, resistance, and perseverance draw on and expand from different historical points (Busey & Walker, 2017; Coles, 2019; King et al, 2016). The Black Lives Matter movement has become an important topic to address in both English language arts (Polleck & Spence-David, 2020; Winn, 2018) and social studies (Mathews & Jones, 2022) curriculum.

When selecting books and creating curriculum for this principle, teachers should consider texts that demonstrate different methods and strategies of Black agency, resistance, and perseverance in different temporal contexts. For example, the graphic novels *Wake: The Hidden History of Women-led Slave Revolts* (Hall et al., 2021) and *Incognero: A Graphic Mystery* (Johnson & Pleece, 2018) both illustrate how Black individuals and communities fought state-sanctioned racist violence against Black people during slavery and the Jim Crow south, respectively. These texts can expand upon what and who are taught about in social studies curriculum during those historical moments. Equally important, both texts demonstrate different strategies Black people used historically to fight against systemic oppression. *Incognero: A Graphic Mystery* (Johnson & Pleece, 2018) details how Black people who were white-passing developed espionage tactics to undermine organized lynching. Teachers could have students read a range of texts about Black resistance and develop themes from their shared readings. For instance, commonalities of strategies could guide students in understanding how Black agency and resistance have operated similarly and differently across temporal contexts. Teachers could ask how protesting, writing, and community organizing have been employed across different periods of history. Students could make connections between nonfiction texts and young adult literature to illustrate different manifestations of Black agency and resistance.

### **Africa and the African Diaspora**

Teaching Africa and the African diaspora are important as African history did not begin with enslavement and historical understandings of Black people should not “begin with European contact but with ancient African civilizations” (King, 2020, p. 338). Students should learn about African and other Indigenous cultures before learning about the enslavement of Africans in the United States.



Additionally, teachers should accurately center Africa as the origin of civilization for all humans (Wiehe, 2020).

When teaching about Africa and the African diaspora, American and other non-African educators must be aware of their own misconceptions and those held by students, which are often perpetuated by our school systems and society. It is the responsibility of teachers to challenge the Eurocentric perspective that is commonly used when teaching Black history (King, 2020), as this contributes to miseducation and global anti-Blackness (Johnson, 2016). The use of Eurocentric texts, materials, and standards devalues Black people and perpetuates curricular and pedagogical anti-Black violence (Cridland-Hughes & King, 2015). Educators should clearly define Africa, the African Diaspora, and Pan-Africanism. Despite the fact that over 170 million people of African descent exist worldwide, representing 20% of the world's population, African Diaspora literacy is often overlooked in K-20 curricula (Jackson, 2022). A foundational understanding of global African representation, both within and outside the continent, is essential for appreciating the diversity and complexity of Africa and reinforcing its connection to the world.

One recommended text that facilitates this understanding is *Awake: The Hidden History of Women Led Slave Revolts* by Rebecca Hall (2021). By incorporating primary documents, this text provides young adult readers with an accurate historical account of the connections between Africa and the world. The author's personal and professional search for historical truth highlights the enduring presence of Africans across the globe, allowing young readers to explore and develop their African Diaspora literacy. As a graphic novel and memoir, this connection is further emphasized with the author's reflection on her identity as a descendant of enslaved Africans, powerful visuals, and poignant dialogue throughout the text.

When selecting books that depict Africa, it is important to focus on voices, visuals, and connections (Brown, 1996), as well as issues of justice (Wheeler & Ntahirageza, 2013), which can ensure a more comprehensive, accurate, and nuanced understanding of Africa and the African Diaspora, fostering appreciation, critical thinking, and responsiveness. For too long, the visual representations of Africa have been inaccurate, Eurocentric, and negative (Jackson, 2022). These inaccurate beliefs have consequences on students' experiences and learning. For instance, Johnson's (2016) study on an after-school program on African history found that many students felt embarrassment or anger at not learning more accurate depictions of the continent, while African-descendant students expressed both shame and pride in identifying as African. Educators must be explicit and intentional in providing complementary visuals that accurately and humanely depict Africa, countering the negative images pervasive in various forms of media. This includes showcasing African people in their diverse daily lives, work, education, and problem-solving. Accuracy in representing African regional and environmental geography, including the continent's actual size, is crucial. Teachers can pair books with images of urban, modern, and rural settings, along with various architectural and landscape features.

As a resource for text selection, the Boston University African Studies Center for K-16 Educational Preparation offers a collaborative framework for evaluating books about Africa, titled "What are the features of a Good Book about Africa?" (Wiehe, 2022). This framework, based on a 1-10 scale, includes guiding questions across seven categories: general geographical features, African autonomy in problem-solving, people diversity and complexity, realistic everyday activities, historically and culturally accurate topics, non-stereotypical images and illustrations, and word choice devoid of disparaging language. This framework serves as a shared document for practitioners to capture and share their reviews and feedback on books about Africa.

## Black Joy

More than just happiness, Black joy is the "love, collegiality, and collectiveness that Black people have exhibited throughout history" in fact of oppression; Black joy "resists the notion that Black people are unworthy and sub-human" (King, 2020, p. 338). Duncan et al. (2023) further elaborate that Black joy is "consciousness, embodied knowledge, and a fugitive space that refuses Black oppression and suffering both individually and collectively" (p. 3). Black joy is especially important given the role Black pain plays in social studies curriculum. Duncan et al. (2023) note that social studies curriculum is often a site of Black suffering, with Black joy frequently relegated to the Harlem Renaissance and political wins in the Civil Rights Movements of the 1950s and 1960s, in part due to state standards. Locating Black joy in the social studies content of history, economics, and geography, Duncan et al. (2023) call for educators to locate the "numerous instances of Black joy that exist beyond these [commonly taught] narratives" (p. 3). We believe young adult literature can be an avenue to teaching about Black joy in historical and contemporary moments.

However, we must also note that young adult literature can also be a popular site for Black pain. McKinney (2020) warns that popular titles such as *Dear Martin* (Stone, 2018) and *All American Boys* (Reynolds, 2017), when siloed in the curriculum or taught with only Black-authored books that focus on oppression, can replicate harm for Black students. McKinney further cautions that only teaching Black-authored texts as ways to raise awareness for non-Black students can result in performative activism in which non-Black students "manag[e] activism by bearing witness to the events of the book, but then don't follow up with seeking change in the real world" (para 12). Speaking specifically of the way Black-authored young adult titles can be positioned in ways that "commodify Black pain," McKinney (2020) asserts that classroom libraries need young adult titles that are not just "issue" books to "provide an opportunity for Black readers to have a moment for themselves, to take a breath, readjust, and simply exist, and for non-Black readers to see us as fully human" (para 13). Similarly, martin (2020) asserts that "relying on the consumption of trauma to evoke empathy is not sustainable for our work toward liberation" (para 9).

Equally important, centering joy as a criterion for selection of Black young adult literature can support teachers in balancing the need to “address the very real challenges our students [of color] face due to their undeserved oppression” while being “mindful that this is not the only story we tell to and about them” (Reid, 2020, para 14). In writing about Black girl literary characters, Toliver and Timmons-Long (2023) note that “Black healing, joy, and trauma can exist simultaneously in one body” (p. 11). Black joy has acted as a form of resistance by “offering a counternarrative that neither minimizes nor dismisses Black pain, but rather recognizes that Black suffering and Black joy can coexist” (Duncan et al, 2023, p. 3) When selecting books for this principle, teachers should also consider how joy operates across characters, family structures, and communities. Teachers should include books that demonstrate joy that is “inclusive of many [Black] families” (Cherry-Paul, 2021, para 12). Additionally, books should feature single parent households, multiracial families, and intergenerational families. Teachers should select text that positively shows the strength and resilience of Black communities and not just the dominant narrative. When considering racial and cultural diversity, teachers should use authentic texts that demonstrate how Black people speak and how language and traditions are developed.

## Black Identities

King (2020) calls for an expansion of the narratives typically taught in social studies curriculum, which are “largely geared towards Black males who are middle class, heterosexual, Christian, and able bodied”; in order to provide a more complete, diverse, and equitable Black history that speaks to the “multiple identities that inform Blackness and look at each positionality as important in gaining a total understanding of Black history” (p. 340). Young adult literature that centers on Black women, Black LGBTQ people, working class Black people, disabled Black people, Black people of various religious identities, and Black people whose identities span across multiple of those named identities can support the expanding of whose stories are told in schools.

Several scholars have called for centering the narratives and experiences of Black girls and women through children and young adult literature. For instance, Hines and Menefee (2022) call for revamping curriculum to include titles that narrate “nuanced ways of being for Black girls and the multiple identities they encompass” (p. 71). Specifically, scholars have located young adult literature as a pathway that make visible the often invisible role Black women and girls have played in history. Vickery and Rodríguez (2021) see the contributions of Black women in socio-political movements as crucial, yet “largely absent in the social studies curriculum” (p. 61), an absence that could be remedied with the teaching of literature in social studies classrooms. Similarly, Howard and Ryan (2017) outline how *One Crazy Summer* (Williams-Garcia, 2011) can be positioned to teach the role that young Black girls in the liminal “tween” space played in the Civil Rights Movement. Young adult literature can often highlight the specific nature of

oppression that Black women have faced in history. Coleman-King and Groenke (2019) detail how *Copper Sun* can be positioned to teach how both racism and sexism intersect to create historic oppression of enslaved Black women, a topic which is frequently neglected in secondary classrooms. Taken together, this body of scholarship details the potential young adult literature has in illuminating Black women and girls within social studies and English language arts classrooms.

Importantly, teachers should also work to include Black LGBTQ narratives within social studies and English language arts classrooms, as Black LGBTQ people, narratives, and experiences are frequently omitted from curriculum, even curriculum that proports to be LGBTQ inclusive (Brockenbrough, 2015; Reid, 2022). Narratives that center Black LGBTQ characters have the potential to “help readers expand their notions of who ‘counts’ in various racial, sexual minority, and religious communities” (Hermann-Wilmarth & Ryan, 2015, p. 97). That expansion can be fostered through an approach to reading that promotes an intersectional lens. Approaching narratives by and of Black LGBTQ youth from an intersectional approach can help students understanding how race, gender, and sexuality are “constructed by the individual characters, by the group or cultural communities to which they belong, and by the institutions with which they interact” (Durand, 2015, p. 77). Similarly, Hermann-Wilmarth and Ryan (2015) argue that students need an intersectional approach to analyzing LGBTQ characters of color to “take into account the racialized, classed, and gendered ways sexuality is embodied and lived” (p. 89). Young adult literature featuring Black LGBTQ characters has the potential to expand whose stories are told when discussing Black history (King, 2020) and push against the erasure of Black LGBTQ people that plagues many types of LGBTQ curriculum (Brockenbrough, 2015; Reid, 2022).

Incorporating Black LGBTQ characters can also be a way to teach how Black LGBTQ activists’ identities shaped their approach to activism and methods of change. As noted earlier, civil rights activists Pauli Murray and Bayard Rustin are often omitted from social studies standards and curriculum pertaining to the Civil Rights Movement. Incorporating the stories and politics of both activists can counter homophobic erasure in social studies curriculum and challenge the overwhelming whiteness that shapes LGBTQ topics in English curriculum (Shelton, 2017). Mayo (2017) reminds that the dimensions of social studies education align with the content of historical and contemporary LGBTQ political movements. Patterson (2021) demonstrates how incorporating the work of legal activist Pauli Murray could offer a transformative view of social studies education that centers queer Black feminist thinking and writing in conceptualizations of American law and government. The young adult title *Pauli Murray: The Life of a Pioneering Feminist and Civil Rights Activist* (Stevens-Holsey & Jennings, 2022) provides the esteemed lawyer’s thoughts and writings in a narrative form for adolescent readers. Incorporating young adult literature that centers Black LGBTQ characters and the socio-political pressures and barriers they must navigate is one way to combat racist and homophobic curricular erasure.

When selecting books for this principle, teachers should consider which Black characters are centered in stories and curriculum and which Black stories

are neglected. Teachers can complete an audit with typically ignored identities, such as LGBTQ characters, and begin to select books that fill in absences. Additionally, English teachers can evaluate which Black stories are told in social studies courses and supplement missing voices in their own classes using young adult literature. For instance, if a curricular unit on the Civil Rights Movement does not honor the legacies of Black LGBTQ activists, then English teachers can bring in the aforementioned book on Pauli Murray to repair the omission. Taking a holistic approach to curriculum and inclusion can be an important step for teachers to identify whose stories are absent in students' reading experiences. Ideally, teachers could work together either on department-level or grade-level to identify curricular silences that need to be addressed.

### **Black Historical Contention**

Teaching Black historical contention means seeing the range of Black political thought and challenging assumed monolithic views. King (2020) calls for educators to grapple with the ways “sexism, capitalism, and Black ethnic subjugation” (p. 340) have shaped some Black political thought. Teaching Black historical contentions is a way to represent the fullness of Black humanity by stressing that teachers “not merely teach and present positive Black histories and images” but rather “introduce a complete history that addresses humanity that includes Black people’s deficiencies and vulnerabilities” (King, 2020, p. 340). Teaching Black historical contention is especially vital today as public figures who oppose racial justice often invoke, cynically and incorrectly, the Civil Rights Movement to justify opposition towards Black Lives Matter (Hoskin, 2020 Theoharis, 2018). Subsequently, privileging one form of Black political thought, tradition, and organizing can mask real ideological differences between different racial justice movements and approaches.

Young adult literature may not offer as many opportunities to approach this principle when compared to the previous detailed principles. Yet, some titles offer potential. For instance, *Angel of Greenwood* (Pink, 2021) provides an inspiring and relevant example of Black historical contention through two main characters advocating for different approaches to “Black freedom,” represented by the views of Black thought leaders of their era, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. This text includes quotes from both Du Bois’s and Washington’s work, introducing young adult readers to their varying perspectives. The characters in the book, Angel and Isaiah, question each other’s perspective and demonstrate how to hold space for differences, engage in critical dialogue, and think critically about how political ideas connect to their lived experiences as Black youth in the 1920’s.

When selecting books and creating curriculum for this principle, teachers should consider an interdisciplinary approach that emphasizes the diverse perspectives within Black communities. This approach could mean placing supplemental material (such as speeches, videos, and audio material) alongside a young adult title. Such supplemental material can help correct sanitized versions

of the Civil Rights Movement that appear in some children's books (Rodríguez & Vickery, 2020). Contributions, achievements, resistance, resilience and joy are represented in a variety of ways within Black histories and communities. Accordingly, literature, curriculum, and sources should represent the diverse voices and perspectives of Black historians, scholars, activists, athletes, political leaders, inventors, entrepreneurs, and artists throughout history and into the present.

### Teaching in a Time of Book Bans and Curricular Gag Orders

As noted in the beginning of this manuscript, we write and implement this work in a time of book bans and curricular gag orders. Several right-wing-governed states have enacted explicit bans on books authored by Black authors and passed policies that make teaching history critically and honestly illegal (Arceneaux, 2022; Blackmore, 2023; Buckingham, 2023; Cantor, 2023; Crenshaw, 2022). These laws are attacking *what* is being taught and *who* is doing the teaching; Black educators in K-12 public schools are being pushed and bullied out of positions in the wake of such laws (Carr, 2022). Teachers need strategies to teach in the context of this movement and work to counter the policies that are narrowing curricular options. We offer three suggestions in response.

First, educators should turn to professional educational organizations that have crafted tools to fight book bans and censorship. For instance, the National Council of Teachers of English (2022) is developing a bank of book rationales that can be used to counter attacks on intellectual freedom. As NCTE (2022) notes, “having book rationales confirms the methodology and planning used in selecting books for the classroom and libraries” (para 2), which can be a powerful aegis against censorship efforts. The National Coalition Against Censorship (ncaac.org) has a resource center dedicated to helping teachers defeat book bans and censorship efforts. We urge educators to turn to the book rationale database (and similar efforts by other professional education organizations) before selecting titles like the ones we have outlined in this article.

Second, educators can create professional learning networks and communities centered on pushing against the wave of book bans. Critical collegiality, in the form of professional learning networks and communities, can support teachers in overcoming challenges in text selection and literature teaching (Boyd et al., 2021). Educators can create these networks and communities within their own departments and schools or look to online platforms to find educators seeking to teach in ways that promote justice and equity (Collins, 2019). Critical collegiality can support educators in developing skills to fight against book bans and provide feedback on teaching ideas relating to the literature we have outlined throughout the article.

Finally, educators and community members must organize to win power at the school board, state legislative, and federal levels. By winning power through

the electoral system, educators and their allies can ensure that laws banning books and honest history are unable to pass. Book bans and curricular gag orders are happening at district and state levels currently, thus controlling power of those positions is an immediate step. Stopping politicians who ban books and curriculum is the first step. We also need to consolidate power in order to pass legislation that bans book banning, which is seeing nascent success as Illinois recently became the first state to ban book bans (Degman, 2023). In the long term, educators should work with unions and other organized political actors to pass the federal Right to Read Act, which would enshrine a degree of protection against book bans at the federal level (Albanese, 2023). The threat of book bans and curricular gag orders is one born from electoral politics; its remedy can also reside in electoral politics. We urge educators and allies alike to engage in electoral politics to fight the wave of book bans.

### Conclusion and Further Considerations

Toliver and Hadley (2021) remind us that “text selection is a political act” (p. 14). The cross-disciplinary work we have outlined in this article has the potential to challenge reified curricular hierarchies associated with both English language arts and social studies as content area subjects. Canonical knowledge associated with both English language arts (Worlds & Miller, 2019; de los Ríos et al., 2019; Toliver & Hadley, 2021) and social studies (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2021; Mathews & Jones, 2022) are buttressed on legacies of white supremacy, colonialism, and anti-Black racism. Both text selection and curricular positioning must be leveraged as part of a broader project that seeks to radically rework the two disciplines.

Our hope is that both English language arts and social studies teachers take up our call to incorporate Black young adult literature using Black historical consciousness into their curriculum. It’s important to note that incorporation into curriculum is only the primer for the type of transformative teaching of Black narratives our schools need. Instruction and assessment as well as teachers’ own historical and pedagogical knowledge are all vital pieces of teaching. The scope of our article was concerned with text selection using the Black historical consciousness framework. However, we do want to end by briefly touching on assessment practices and teachers’ own professional learning. King (2020) warns that approaching the teaching of Black history with “revised assessments where rote memorization is the goal” (p. 340) will continue to dilute the radical and transformative nature of teaching Black history honestly and holistically. Similarly, teaching Black-centered young adult literature in ways that privilege memorization and regurgitation of central plot points and literary devices will not fulfill King’s call for a critical, honest teaching of Black history. We are adamant in warning against coupling the titles we’ve outlined with worksheets that do not move beyond comprehension and summarization.

Instead, King (2020) sees “project and problem-based assessments, media development, community engagement, and action research” (p. 340) as more

effective modes of assessment when teaching Black history. Each of King's recommendations can be adapted to conclude curricular units that center or include the titles we have outlined. For instance, students could create short videos that incorporate primary and secondary research to explain the life and impact of Pauli Murray's legal thinking on contemporary social movements. Students could surface a socio-political issue a young adult title addresses and consider how action they can take in their own lives and communities can prompt change. Additionally, students can create projects that document how young adult titles can push against white-washed histories that commonly populate social studies textbooks. We encourage English language arts and social studies teachers and teams to work together to create collaborative projects that push students' thinking and critical capacities in both content areas.

Subsequently, we stress the importance of teachers, especially non-Black teachers, making a commitment to continue learning about Black history, as well as Black educational and political schools of thought. The best texts that center Black characters and experiences can still do harm, intentionally or not, when placed in the hands of teachers who have not committed themselves to deepening their knowledge of and informing their thinking by a panoply of Black scholars, activists, and educators. King (2020) provides a list of titles toward the end of his foundational article on Black historical consciousness. We could add to that list by including C. Riley Snorton's (2017) *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*, Wanda Hendricks' (2013) *Fannie Barrier Williams: Crossing the Borders of Region and Race*, and Mikki Kendall (2020)'s *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women That a Movement Forgot*. No one list can be exhaustive and that is true of our recommendations here as well. We hope these titles can provide additional knowledge and insight for both English language arts and social studies teachers.

The type of curricular thinking and text selection mechanisms we have offered in this article can support social studies teachers in incorporating literary texts into their curriculum, provide guidance for selecting young adult titles for English language arts teachers, and prompt cross-curricular projects that critically engage and deepen both content areas. King (2020) warns that transformative teaching will not be an overnight event. Indeed, teaching that truly uproots and reimagines how Black people have been conceptualized and discussed in schools shaped around white supremacist thinking and ideology is a lifelong project, a project focused on change within classrooms that crests into broader socio-political change in our civic landscape.

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## Appendix

## Young Adult Literature Paired with Black Historical Consciousness Principles

Young Adult Title	Summary of Book & Principle(s) the Book Addresses
<p>Acevedo, E. (2020). <i>Clap when you land</i>. HarperTeen.</p>	<p>Grades 8-12. Two sisters, who both love their father, learn of his tragic death in a plane crash and are enveloped in grief. However, with this earth-shattering change, they also learn of each other, previously unaware that either had a sister. One sister lives in the Dominican Republic and one lives in New York City. This novel weaves together the prose style narratives of two girls learning to grow up and love in the shadow of their father's death.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> The sisters and the Rios family have to navigate a variety of systems for Papi's funeral. First, they must decide what to do with the money from the airline. Additionally, Camino works hard to avoid El Cero, a local criminal. Yahaira finds a way to go to the Dominican Republic to find closure and connection. The family must also find a way to bring Camino back to New York.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> Both sisters express and experience moments of joy and wonder throughout the novel. They find joy in who they are, their family relationships, and within themselves.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> The characters are Afro-Latina and celebrate their culture and identity in the story. As Afro-Latinas from the Dominican Republic, both characters share connections to their culture and experiences as they come of age.</p>
<p>Alexander, K. &amp; Anyabwile, D. (2019). <i>The crossover: Graphic novel adaptation</i>. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.</p>	<p>Grades 6-8. <i>The Crossover: Graphic Novel Adaptation</i> shares the story of twin brothers on the precipice of their teen years as they navigate the joy of sports, friendship, and family. Sons of a celebrated basketball athlete, both brothers want to go on and play basketball at the college level. This novel uses prose and image to convey the angst and happiness that goes along with growing up.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> Twins Josh and Jordan are gifted athletes who love to play basketball and have a celebrated athletic style and approach to the game. Further, Josh has a gift for storytelling through prose.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> The brothers' story shows what it means to be a young Black teen in the context of their community. They are individuals exploring music, creativity, and school interests. Additionally, the reader learns about teen love and how relationships change and evolve as children come of age.</p>
<p>Callender, K. (2020). <i>Felix ever after</i>. Balzer + Bray.</p>	<p>Grades 9-12. The main character is navigating questions of identity and relationships in his senior year of high school. While excited for the prospects of life after high school, Felix is being tormented by a mysterious bully who mocks his gender identity and expression. All the while, Felix is unsure how his feelings towards a friend are developing.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Felix shows resistance and agency in navigating school life while being tormented by an anonymous bully. Felix turns to his community of friends for support in the face of discrimination.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> Felix experiences various moments of joy that stem from a number of relationships: familial, platonic, and romance. The story highlights how Felix navigates his tormentor and experiences moments of genuine joy and happiness.</p>



	<p><b>Black identities:</b> The story is told from Felix’s perspective. Felix is a Black trans teen who speaks about his experiences with transition, family acceptance, and understanding his own gender identity and expression.</p>
<p>Charles, T. (2021). <i>Muted</i>. Scholastic Press.</p>	<p>Grades 9-12. Denver is a musically talented dreamer who is looking forward to her big break. When a famous musician performs near her town, Denver and her friends excitedly attend the concert. However, once Denver takes the risk and decides to follow her idol around in the name of actualizing her own career, she comes face-to-face with the hidden abuse and violence of the music industry.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> Denver’s personal life and the story of how her family came to live in Pennsylvania from New York highlights the racial and class-based tensions that Denver and her family feel and experience. Denver considers how cost of housing, access to education, and professional opportunities can serve as potential barriers to personal success.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Denver shows that, regardless of what happens to her, she is someone who is going to survive. Denver faces some horrific things on her journey to musical notoriety; however, she is brave and manages to persevere throughout the experiences.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> Denver is a wonderfully talented young woman. The narrative format of this text is verse and through this format the reader has the chance to experience Denver’s flair for writing music and her gift of language. Denver experiences music in the most joyous way. Further, Denver’s sister is incredibly successful at college and has her own passions and joy that Denver admires.</p>
<p>Draper, S. (2008). <i>Copper sun</i>. Atheneum Books for Young Readers.</p>	<p>Grades 9-12. Amari is a young woman in the Ewe tribe, located in Ghana. Her life is upended when enslavers arrive and kidnap her. The book details Amari’s journey from Ghana across the Atlantic to Derbyshire farms, where she is enslaved. The book details how Amari survives enslavement and ultimately gains freedom.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> The book details the physical, psychological, familial, communal, and social destruction caused by slavery. Through Amari’s perspective, the book demonstrates how white people upheld the logics and systems of slavery in their daily lives. The book details how the slave trade was a global, multinational operation that turned humans into commodities and was justified through anti-Black racism.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Amari gains her freedom in part because of the knowledge of Cato, a person who has been enslaved for years. Due to Cato’s knowledge and insistence, Amari is able to escape into the woods and survive weeks before reaching Fort Moses, a Spanish territory in the US South where the US does not have jurisdiction over Amari’s former status as an enslaved person. Amari’s survival in the woods is built on her perseverance, instinct, and developed knowledge from listening to Cato.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> The book details Amari’s life as a member of the Ewe people in Ziavi, Ghana. Her whole humanity is told, including her life before enslavement. Through Amari, the book details how slavery inflicted specific harms upon enslaved African women.</p>
<p>Hall, R., &amp; Martin, H. (2021). <i>Wake: The hidden history of women-led slave revolts</i>. Simon &amp; Schuster.</p>	<p>Grades 9-12. Researcher and historian Rachel Hall chronicles her investigation into the history of Black women-led slave revolts in <i>Wake</i>. <i>Wake</i> is a graphic novel written in a memoir framework weaving together history and imagination to tell the story of women warriors who have been excluded from our history. Hall’s work embodies voice, connection, and visuals that share the history of African women with a profound humanity and accuracy. The illustrations clearly show the human emotion of African people fighting for their freedom. This work also clearly demonstrates Hall’s passionate pursuit of truth despite the intentional hiding of information. Her journey strongly connects to our current battles for historical truth and accuracy. Her story reinforces the importance of seeking the truth and knowing our true history.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> Racism is explored through the author’s experiences as a Black researcher and through the fight against the institution of chattel slavery.</p>

	<p><b>Black identities:</b> The author and historian Dr. Rebecca Hall explores her identity as a Black woman researcher seeking truth from a history that has been erased. Dr. Hall's identity as a Black woman proposes several challenges as she is denied access to historical documents, resources, and materials needed for her research. Through this research, the reader learns about the remarkable hidden history of Black women who led slave revolts. The women's identities are explored as their backgrounds span various continents and time periods. Black women are identified as leaders who planned and executed revolts. Intersectionality of gender and race are discussed through the roles of these warrior women.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> Dr. Hall poignantly shares her need for balance and "joy" as a respite from the haunting history she is researching. The text intentionally includes scenes from Dr. Hall's life with her family and young child. There are scenes of Dr. Hall in nature and on the beach and relaxing. The author acknowledges the need for a "...much needed break with my family to restore my energy" (p. 81).</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> There are many untold stories of enslaved African revolts and the insurrections led by Black women. The author's research uncovers this hidden history by examining historical documents that provide accounts of slave revolts led by Black women. Black women fought enslavers during the Middle Passage and led revolts in Colonial New York.</p> <p><b>Africa and the African Diaspora:</b> The author not only examines the history of slave revolts in the United States but her research connects slavery to England and America.</p>
<p>Johnson, M. (2018). <i>Incognegro: A graphic mystery</i>. Berger Books.</p>	<p>Grades 9-12. Zane Pinchback is a Black journalist who is able to "pass" as white. He is part of a collective of "white passing" Black journalists who use their passing privilege to investigate lynchings in the US South. These journalists report their findings in the US North to expose the anti-Black legal regime of the Jim Crow south. Zane is drawn to a new case in a small town in Mississippi after his own brother is killed.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> The book details the anti-Black legal regime that ruled the Jim Crow South in addition to highlighting how "everyday" white people upheld anti-Black racist violence through lynching mobs. The book also details how legal and social power were hoarded and only available to white people or Black people who could "pass" as white.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Zane demonstrates how Black people who could "pass" as white risked their lives to investigate lynching mobs. Through Zane and his network of supporters, the book details how Black activists in the Jim Crow south and beyond developed models of resistance to topple anti-Black legal structures.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> Zane is a "white-passing" Black reporter who details how the social construction of race is not static but dynamic and contextual. Zane, and the narrative in general, detail how "white-passing" Black identity provides access to certain spaces, and how that access can be leveraged to fight anti-Black racism.</p> <p><b>Black historical contention:</b> The book details one strategy to fight anti-Black racism in the Jim Crow South through Zane's investigation into lynching. Zane is able to complete the investigative reporting because he is able to pass as white and enter white supremacist spaces. This strategy was only available to Black activists who could "pass." Zane's strategy is markedly different from public protests, civil disobedience, and sit-ins that are more remembered when teaching about the Civil Rights Movement.</p>
<p>Pink, R. (2021). <i>Angel of greenwood</i>. Feiwel &amp; Friends.</p>	<p>Grades 9-12. Pink shares a coming of age love story between two Black teens, high school juniors Angel Hill and Isaiah Wilson, who are citizens of the Tulsa, Oklahoma district of Greenwood, in 1921. This story chronicles the 12 days before the tragic racially-motivated massacre and destruction of the Black community of Greenwood, commonly known as Black Wall Street. Although Isaiah appears to be the town troublemaker, he is a prolific poet and avid reader, who passionately follows W.E.B. Du Bois. Angel Hill also loves to read, attends church regularly, and is an exquisite dancer who helps to take care of her ailing father. Angel follows the writing of Booker T. Washington. Their high school English literature teacher provides a summer job opportunity for Angel and Isaiah to work together creating and operating a mobile library. This project brings Angel and Isaiah closer as they learn from</p>

	<p>each other’s perspectives and fall in love. Their love story is abruptly interrupted by the May 31st, 1921 Massacre of Greenwood. Angel, Isahai, and their friend Muggy demonstrate leadership and bravery by helping the citizens of Greenwood find safety during the burning, looting, and destruction of Greenwood.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> The Greenwood District (Black Wall Street) in Tulsa Oklahoma was a prosperous Black community in 1921. This community personified the power of Black people in the midst of racial oppression across the United States. The text provides a look at this affluent community with Black-owned banks, shops, movie theaters, and schools.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> Two Black teens, Angel Hill and Isaiah Wilson, explore their identities as Greenwood residents/community members, high school students, and Black teenagers living in America. Over the course of 12 days, Angel and Isaiah learn more about themselves and their world under the impending 1921 Tulsa massacre of their thriving Black community. There are powerful portrayals of Black educators through the character Miss Ferris, their high school English teacher, along with a Black school administrator, Mr. Anniston. The text also explores Black identity in America through the writings of Black historians W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, which are skillfully woven into the text. The Black people in this story are portrayed with authentic complexity and varying socio-economic backgrounds, including lower income, working class, and wealthy.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> This is a story of young love between Angel and Isaiah that celebrates Black love amidst the oppression and devastation that impacts their community. Additionally, the author highlights everyday instances of Black Joy found in the ice-cream parlor, Sunday church service, juniper trees, writing poetry, dancing, and reading books. These experiences reinforce the humanity of Black people and provide a glimpse into the everyday lives of a Black community.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance and perseverance:</b> Miss Ferris, Angel and Isaiah’s English literature teacher, brings the two teens together to deliver books to children in a low income community. Their community-focused book project demonstrates the power of literacy and Black youth agency. Additionally, as young leaders in their community, Angel, Isaiah, and Muggy demonstrate extraordinary courage and selflessness to ensure the safety of the citizens of Greenwood.</p> <p><b>Black historical contention:</b> The two main characters hold differing views of two influential Black thought leaders of their time, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington. The good-natured tension between Angel and Isaiah includes thought-provoking discussions about the opposing views of W. E. B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington. This subtext provides the reader with a rich context for exploring the complex ideas related to Civil Rights in America.</p> <p><b>Africa and the African Diaspora:</b> African and the African Diaspora is explored indirectly through the focus on the Black thought leaders, W. E. B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington. W. E. B. Dubois’ idea of double consciousness explores the dual identity of Black people as both African and American.</p>
<p>Sabreen, L. (2022). <i>You truly assumed</i>. Inkyard Press.</p>	<p>Grades 9-12. Sabriya, Zakat, and Farah are three Black Muslim teens. They unite through the trauma they are enduring due to the rise of Islamophobia because of a terrorist attack taking place in the United States. They created a blog for Muslim teens who can relate to them and bring comfort during a tragic time. The blog eventually receives pushback and threats are sent in against one of the young teens. This sends them in a search to find who is the one threatening them or if shutting down the blog is more important than the virtual safe haven they created.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> This story follows three Black Muslim teens and explores oppression faced due to being Black and being Muslims, while also taking on what it is to be young women. The story expresses how the intertwining of these identities can maintain resilience, hope, and possible differences.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> The story begins with expressing how these three different girls have unique hobbies that do not encompass race or religion. The book addresses their aspirations, like preparing for college or becoming a part of a big dance team they dreamt of before the tragic incident took place, showcasing that they are more than what they are assumed to be.</p>

	<p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Sabriya makes social change by standing up to a racist in her class. Zakat and a few of her friends fight neighborhood bigots regarding religion and race. Farah navigates her perspective on having a mixed-race family. They eventually create a blog that aids in standing against prejudice.</p> <p><b>African and the African diaspora:</b> The book demonstrates how Black Muslims and Muslims around the world felt many of the same emotions as the main characters.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> The book demonstrates the pervasiveness of Islamophobia in America and around the world after 9/11.</p>
<p>Stevens-Holsey, S. &amp; Jennings, T.C. (2022). <i>Pauli Murray: The life of a pioneering feminist and civil rights activist</i>. Yellow Jacket.</p>	<p>Grades 6-9. Told in verse by one of the main activist's nieces, the book chronicles the life of legal trailblazer Pauli Murray. The book narrates the life of Murray chronologically and highlights major social movements and activists working alongside the major milestones in Murray's life to illustrate how she was informed by and informed the legal, social, and political landscapes around her.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> Pauli experiences the erasure of Black people from school curriculum and the way school systems perpetuate harmful lies about Black communities throughout history. Through the story of Pauli's family and neighbors, the book addresses colorism and how adjacency to whiteness created hierarchies among Black southerners. Additionally, Pauli comes to detail how poverty harms all people, especially when poverty intersects with racism and sexism. Pauli notes that systemic underfunding and lack of opportunities are the only reasons Black people have not had the same success as their white counterparts. She dedicated her life and career to challenging these systems through legal activism; her most impactful contribution to legal thinking and activism was her concept of "Jane Crow," which detailed how Black women were oppressed in specific and unique ways in the Jim Crow south.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Murray dedicated her adult life to fighting the systems of Jim and Jane Crow through legal means. The book details how Murray developed an analysis of power that understood legality as a manifestation of power, not morality. The story details how Murray came to understand the way Black people were talked about in history and schools as inaccurate, and how she fought harmful depictions of Black people in history curriculum throughout her adult life. The book details how Murray learned about Black history and art at Howard University, which demonstrated to Murray how Black intellectuals built a scholarly community despite anti-Black racism in higher education and policy. Finally, the book details how Murray engaged in activism during the Great Depression.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> From the opening chapter, the book centers the fact that Murray's life as a queer Black woman guided her approach to activism and legal thinking. The ending of the book notes that, by today's standards, Murray may be considered trans and could possibly use they/them/their pronouns, all suggesting Murray was not cisgender. However, the book is careful to note that these hypotheses are using the contemporary understanding of gender identity to describe Murray, who never used those words herself. Additionally, the book details how race and skin color are socially and politically constructed within the United States by narrating how Murray knew Black people who could "pass" as white. Murray also comes to learn how the "one-drop" rule meant anyone with any Black ancestry, including people with white parent(s), was positioned as Black in the United States, especially the Jim Crow South.</p> <p><b>Black historical contention:</b> The book details a tension between daily, on the ground activists who were calling for immediate change and legal activists who built legal cases over a longer period of time to persuade the judicial branch of government to rule in their favor. Additionally, the book details how Murray believed the Civil Rights Movement did not center the issues most impacting Black women, while the Women's Rights Movement of the time largely focused on issues pertaining to white women. The book details how Murray worked within these contested spaces to advocate for creating a just society for Black women.</p>
<p>Stone, N. (2020).</p>	<p>Grades 6-8. Scoob is a middle school boy who is having a hard time at school, which results in tension between him and his dad. Unexpectedly, his grandmother shows up to whisk him away on a</p>

<p><i>Clean getaway.</i> Crown Books for Young Readers.</p>	<p>road trip through the US South. Scoob's grandmother uses the Green Book guide as their roadmap for their adventure. Throughout their travels, Scoob comes to learn more about his grandmother and the other members of his family.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> Scoob's grandmother teaches her grandson about the Jim Crow South, including the legal segregation and its economic and emotional impact on Black communities.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Scoob's grandmother teaches her grandson about historical figures who resisted the legal structures of the Jim Crow South. Scoob also learns how his own grandmother and late grandfather resisted social and political turmoil to be married as an interracial couple. Scoob's grandmother also teaches him how Black people in the South created the Green Book network as a way to resist racist travel laws.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> Scoob's grandmother narrates how she and her husband found joy and love despite anti-miscegenation laws in the Jim Crow South.</p>
<p>Williams-Garcia, R. (2010). <i>One crazy summer.</i> Quill Tree Books.</p>	<p>Grades 6-8. Delphine is a responsible and loving girl who is eleven and soon to turn twelve. Her mother left the family years earlier and so Delphine has assumed the responsibility of looking after her sisters. One summer, her father packs her and her sisters off to see their estranged mother, who sends the girls to Black Panther camp for children.</p> <p><b>Power and oppression:</b> The book takes place in the late 1960s and shows glimpses of Delphine's life as a young Black girl. For example, Delphine's father is pulled over by a police officer and Delphine is very frightened. The book also addresses racial injustice and inequality.</p> <p><b>Black agency, resistance, and perseverance:</b> Delphine and her sisters spend their summer with their mother learning about the Black Panthers, who patrol and protect the local community. The girls learn about the power of community.</p> <p><b>Black historical contention:</b> This book takes place during the late 1960s and shows the power of community and resilience during a period of racial oppression. It also addresses who the Black Panthers were and their role in Delphine's community.</p>
<p>Woodson, J. (2016). <i>Brown girl dreaming.</i> Nancy Paulsen Books.</p>	<p>Grades 6-8. Told in a sequence of poems, Jacqueline Woodson writes about how she views the world through the lens of her childhood self. This collection of poems discusses her family tree and how each individual in her family affected her life. Bouncing from Columbus, Ohio where she was born, to Greenville, South Carolina where her grandparents live, to Brooklyn, New York where her mother builds their new home. You travel with Woodson as she tries to grasp the understanding of what the definition of a true home is and the value of family.</p> <p><b>Black joy:</b> The book encompasses the importance of knowing your family tree and the impact in receiving your name and owning your name. This free verse book shows a strong Black family practicing family traditions while living through the remnants of the Jim Crow era. Racism and having grandparents and other relatives who experienced share cropping or endured later effects of slavery and racism are prevalent, but do not overpower the theme of a Black girl dreaming and having her innocence.</p> <p><b>Black agency, prevalence, and resistance:</b> Woodson expresses Black humanity through this free verse book. By allowing a Black main character to imagine and carry free thought while living through the Civil Rights Movement, Woodson exposes lies and misconceptions of racism while resisting the objectification of Black Americans and their struggles. The Black Panthers are also introduced. This book takes place in a variety of time spans, including the 1970's when Woodson's grandfather is talking about Black resistance to engrain in her mind that being Black is something worth dying for.</p> <p><b>Black historical contention:</b> The Black experience is not just about slavery; horrific times illustrate the becoming of America. The Black experience includes love, laughter, family, and unity beyond race.</p> <p><b>Black identities:</b> Jacqueline Woodson is African American and the free-verse story follows her and her family's unwillingness to surrender to false narratives about being Black. The narrative examines</p>

the protagonist's her experiences moving from the north to the south. These experiences have a heavy impact on how Woodson evolves and comes to terms with her racial identity. This story tackles colorism and beauty standards by addressing how Black must appeal to the "white" eye, having straight hair instead of curly kinks, for example.

**African and the African diaspora:** Woodson expresses her experience with the different African American people she encountered in Ohio, New York, and South Carolina. She shares how these experiences played a part in understanding her racial identity.

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