White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism
by Robin DiAngelo

Antiracist educator DiAngelo explains what white fragility is, how it furthers racial inequality, and what we can do to more constructively engage in preventing racism.

Between the World and Me
by Ta-Nehisi Coates

The late Toni Morrison called this National Book Award–winning book “required reading,” but do not approach this as boring schoolwork: these are riveting, heartrending stories of how racism is the filter through which the rest of the world regards a Black man. Told as a letter to his son, Coates’ short but powerful book explores the history of race through personal narrative, history, and reportage.

How to Be an Antiracist
by Ibram X. Kendi

Kendi looks to history, ethics, law, and his own personal history to talk about the concept of antiracism, which he defines as an actionable plan for defeating racism. This book is for anyone who wants to know how to enact change in today’s world. If you want to travel deeper into the history of racism, pick up Kendi’s Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America, which won the National Book Award.
Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out
by Ruth King

For those who think racism can’t be eradicated, King offers a place to start: with yourself. A meditation teacher, King offers her experience in how to recognize fear, trigger points, and opportunities for mindfulness while navigating and changing the world.

So You Want to Talk About Race
by Ijeoma Oluo

For the reader who wants to start an honest conversation about race and racism but is afraid to offend, this best-selling book is the answer. Oluo fearlessly dives into how to improve communication, no matter how uncomfortable, and also offers encouragement for taking the next step: walking the talk.

How to Be Less Stupid About Race: On Racism, White Supremacy, and the Racial Divide
by Crystal M. Fleming

Sociologist Fleming uses straight talk and humor to discuss racism, recognize systemic injustice, and ignite meaningful societal change.
Are Prisons Obsolete?
Angela Y. Davis

“The prison therefore functions ideologically as an abstract site into which undesirables are deposited, relieving us of the responsibility of thinking about the real issues afflicting those communities from which prisoners are drawn in such disproportionate numbers. This is the ideological work that the prison performs — it relieves us of the responsibility of seriously engaging with the problems of our society, especially those produced by racism and, increasingly, global capitalism.”

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness
Michelle Alexander

“In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don’t. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind. Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you’re labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination — employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service — are suddenly legal. As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.”
The Fire Next Time
James Baldwin

A national bestseller when it first appeared in 1963, The Fire Next Time galvanized the nation and gave passionate voice to the emerging civil rights movement. At once a powerful evocation of James Baldwin’s early life in Harlem and a disturbing examination of the consequences of racial injustice, the book is an intensely personal and provocative document.

Citizen: An American Lyric
Claudia Rankine

A provocative meditation on race, Claudia Rankine’s long-awaited follow up to her groundbreaking book Don't Let Me Be Lonely: An American Lyric.

Claudia Rankine’s bold new book recounts mounting racial aggressions in ongoing encounters in twenty-first-century daily life and in the media. Some of these encounters are slights, seeming slips of the tongue, and some are intentional offensives in the classroom, at the supermarket, at home, on the tennis court with Serena Williams and the soccer field with Zinedine Zidane, online, on TV–everywhere, all the time.

Black Feminist Thought
Patricia Hill Collins

In spite of the double burden of racial and gender discrimination, African–American women have developed a rich intellectual tradition that is not widely known. In Black Feminist Thought, Patricia Hill Collins explores the words and ideas of Black feminist intellectuals as well as those African–American women outside academe.
"Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference — those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older — know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support."

"When feminists acknowledge in one breath that black women are victimized and in the same breath emphasize their strength, they imply that though black women are oppressed they manage to circumvent the damaging impact of oppression by being strong — and that is simply not the case. Usually, when people talk about the “strength” of black women they are referring to the way in which they perceive black women coping with oppression. They ignore the reality that to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be confused with transformation."
We Live for the We: The Political Power of Black Motherhood
Dani McClain

“I imagine that for us, news events will play a big part in my daughter’s political education. Something disturbing and illustrative of society’s ills will happen, and I will need to decide whether I want to shelter Is from the news or discuss it with her. As a toddler, she already asks “Who’s that?” of nearly everyone she sees in the magazines lying about the house—from The New Yorker to The Nation to Essence — and on the TV screen. Soon she will begin to remember and make meaning of our answers. Even if I’m not actively engaging her in activism, the world will make its way into our home. I will need to decide what to do with that, how to shape it for her developing mind, how to know what an age-appropriate rendering of the truth is, and what is too much.”

They Can’t Kill Us All
Wesley Lowery

“Ferguson would birth a movement and set the nation on a course for a still-ongoing public hearing on race that stretched far past the killing of unarmed residents — from daily policing to Confederate imagery to respectability politics to cultural appropriation. The social justice movement spawned from Mike Brown’s blood would force city after city to grapple with its own fraught histories of race and policing.”

Heavy
Kiese Laymon

“Our superpower, I was told since I was a child, was perseverance, the ability to survive no matter how much they took from us. I never understood how surviving was our collective superpower when white folk made sure so many of us didn’t survive. And those of us who did survive practiced bending so much that breaking seemed inevitable.”
Black in Place: The Spatial Aesthetics of Race in a Post–Chocolate City
Brandi Thompson Summers

While Washington, D.C., is still often referred to as "Chocolate City," it has undergone significant demographic, political, and economic change in the last decade. In D.C., no place represents this shift better than the H Street corridor. In this book, Brandi Thompson Summers documents D.C.'s shift to a "post–chocolate" cosmopolitan metropolis by charting H Street's economic and racial developments. In doing so, she offers a theoretical framework for understanding how blackness is aestheticized and deployed to organize landscapes and raise capital.

The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America
by Khalil Gibran Muhammad

Lynch mobs, chain gangs, and popular views of black southern criminals that defined the Jim Crow South are well known. We know less about the role of the urban North in shaping views of race and crime in American society.

Nobody: Casualties of America's War on the Vulnerable, from Ferguson to Flint and Beyond
by Marc Lamont Hill, Todd Brewster (Foreword)

Named a Best Book of 2016 by Kirkus Reviews
A New York Times Editor’s Choice
Nautilus Award Winner

“A worthy and necessary addition to the contemporary canon of civil rights literature.” —New York Times