

Discussion Questions

Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas by Ibram X. Kendi



Questions adapted from:

- Hachette Book Club Guide, *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, www.hachettebookgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/StampedBookClubGuide.pdf
- Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers, www.washingtongrantmakers.org/sites/default/files/resources/Discussion%20Guide%20-%20Ibram%20Kendi%20on%20Structural%20Racism.pdf
- Society for U.S. Intellectual History, s-usih.org/2017/11/salon-post-1-on-ibram-kendis-stamped-from-the-beginning/
- SuperSummary, www.supersummary.com/stamped-from-the-beginning/essay-topics/

1. Were you familiar with the terms *segregationists*, *assimilationists*, and *antiracists* before you read *Stamped*? Did your understanding of these words change by the end?
2. As seen with movies like *Tarzan*, *Planet of the Apes*, and *Rocky*, pop culture and media have played a large role in reinforcing racist ideas, whether their stories are overtly racist or are a bit sneakier in their propagation of racist ideas. What current movies, TV shows, and stories promote racist ideas, and how?
3. Dr. Kendi states that racist ideas make it possible to have and sustain racist policies. What are examples of current racist ideas that influence current policies in your community or career? How are these racist ideas impacting the issues you are trying to address?
4. It is often said that people who express racist ideas are “ignorant and the source of racist ideas is ignorance.” Considering the examples of racist ideas that Dr. Kendi shares, what might have been other motives for racist ideas? What is the significance of the relationship between racist policies and racist ideas? How might understanding that relationship influence philanthropy’s approach to addressing structural racism?
5. Abraham Lincoln, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington are remembered as defenders of Black liberation. How did these figures propel antiracist thought and enforce racist ideas? Can a person have racist, segregationist, and antiracist ideas all at once? How?
6. Kendi very clearly centers his work in the present political moment: #BlackLivesMatter and the post-Obama era. How does this affect his argument? What value does this add to the book?
7. What does *Stamped From the Beginning* add to our understanding of American intellectual history? Has it reframed your conception of intellectual history in any way?

8. How do gender and sexual orientation contribute to Kendi's discussion of race?
9. Kendi reaches across centuries to show the scientific, or pseudo-scientific, roots of the idea of race. How does science relate to racist ideas? How do biologists and medical scientists connect to the production of racist policies and ideas?
10. How does art enhance, complicate, and/or promote the development of racist or antiracist thought in America?