Recognizing Inequities & Standing For Equality

A RESOURCE FOR PRINCETON STUDENTS

DISCOVER AND PRACTICE ANTI-RACISM IN EVERYDAY LIVING
WHAT IS RISE?

Service at Princeton University is about responding to the needs of the world. In response to persistent, recent, and continuing acts of racism, the John H. Pace, Jr. '39 Center for Civic Engagement launched Princeton RISE (Recognizing Inequities and Standing for Equality), an anti-racist grant initiative. Partners submitted racial justice projects and the Pace Center matched students’ interests and skills to those needs. During the summer of 2020, Princeton RISE fellows had an opportunity to listen to and work with communities, explore and advocate for racial justice broadly, learn about societal inequities in areas such as health, criminal justice, and education, and make a substantive contribution to the research and mission of campus and community partners.

The Pace Center for Civic Engagement is grateful for the partnership and support of the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality + Cultural Understanding, High Meadows Environmental Institute, and Princeton School of Public and International Affairs. Thank you to the Office of the President and Office of the Vice President for their continued support of the RISE Initiative. We are grateful to our community and campus partners, RISE fellows and peer facilitators for their meaningful contributions and engagement. We also thank Julianna Revelo '23 for her work on program evaluation.
Recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, police violence, and hate crimes have placed a spotlight on the ever-present racial inequities in our communities and world. As we work to combat persistent acts of systemic racism, we have to first learn about these systems – where they come from and how they currently manifest.

This resource guide provides an accessible framework for learning about systemic racism and reflecting on actions we can take as individuals to build an equitable and just world.

Table of Contents
Historical Context: Systemic Racism in the United States ................................................................. 4
The Power of Community: Social Justice & Civil Rights Movements ............................................... 6
Navigating Power and Privilege ........................................................................................................... 8
Cultivating Empathy .......................................................................................................................... 10
Being an Ally, Advocate, and Accomplice ......................................................................................... 12

Each module contains foundational information, links to a variety of resources, and a set of reflection questions which can be completed individually or in small groups. It is our hope that this resource will serve as a useful tool for each of your journeys towards becoming advocates of racial justice, and that you find it makes a meaningful impact on the way you interact in your academic, professional, and personal domains of everyday life.
Using History To Understand the Present

Did you know that in 2010, Black Americans made up 13% of the population but had only 2.7% of the country’s wealth? What about how over the course of the past 60 years, Black unemployment has been consistently about twice as high as white unemployment? Whether the matter is the racial wealth gap, discrimination in employment policies, or unequal incarceration, systemic racism impacts influences our experiences and how we view the world.

Historically, racist views have been used to justify the unfair treatment and oppression of people of color, and in order to pave the way for a more just society, each of us must commit to making unbiased choices and being anti-racist in all aspects of our lives. In order to successfully dismantle racism on the individual, interpersonal, structural, and institutional level, a thorough understanding of the historical context is necessary. When we take a step back to learn about the oppression that people of color have suffered at the hands of a system laden with privilege and injustice (whether those examples are enslavement, segregation, or internment), one question that comes to mind is: how did we get here?

RESOURCES

The New York Times’ 1619 Project (Essays)
The goal of the 1619 Project is to reframe the country’s history through essays and literary works.

Defining Confirmation Bias (Video)
What is “confirmation bias” and how does it shape the way we process information?

National Museum of African American History and Culture: Being Antiracist (Article)
Unbiased choices are key to creating a just society.
A closer examination of the historical context of contemporary manifestations of racial prejudice and discrimination may be useful in helping us answer this question.

A good place to start is the year 1619, which is not a year that most Americans recall at the top of their heads as a notable date in our country’s history. But it was in August 1619 that the first ships of the Atlantic Slave trade docked in Virginia, marking the moment that American slavery was born. 400 years later, it remains impossible to truthfully and fully understand our country’s history, without placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of black Americans at the center of our national narrative.

Reframing our existing understanding of American history to include the full depth of experiences of those who are marginalized allows us to see how deeply rooted systemic racism still is in the United States. It allows us to understand that the America we know today has emerged from a history of slavery and anti-black racism. Taking time to learn about the historical context of systemic racism is not meant to discourage our hopes and dreams for a more just world, but to empower us to honestly confront the story we tell ourselves about who we are as a country, and arm ourselves with such knowledge as we forge a commitment to anti-racism in Princeton and beyond.

**Reflection Questions**

1. **Why do you want to be anti-racist?** Considering the breadth and depth of racism across the history of society, committing to being anti-racist can feel overwhelming. However, small everyday choices can add up to big changes. Reflect on some choices you make in your daily life (i.e., who you spend time with, what forms of media you follow, where you shop). How can these everyday choices reflect a commitment to being anti-racist?

2. Take a moment to reflect on the organizations and institutions you are involved with. Organizations can fall anywhere in the anti-racist spectrum: some might have been working on race issues for decades. Others may have more invisible or complicated histories regarding the organization’s relationship with race. Take a moment to research the history of race at your organization and identify a trusted point of contact, whether that be a peer or mentor, and start a conversation about this history. Seek clarity and a complete perspective to understand this history.
How Can Communities Support Racial Justice?

“Choose confrontation wisely, but when it is your time don’t be afraid to stand up, speak up, and speak out against injustice. And if you follow your truth down the road to peace and the affirmation of love, if you shine like a beacon for all to see, then the poetry of all the great dreamers and philosophers is yours to manifest in a nation, a world community, and a Beloved Community that is finally at peace with itself.” - Congressman John Lewis

Congressman John Lewis, a civil rights icon who passed away on June 17, 2020, wrote these words in his book Across That Bridge: A Vision for Change and the Future of America. These words live on as testament to his commitment towards nurturing the power of community and movements for justice and equity. Community is not limited to a tangible location or group or people, but additionally serves as a powerful vector for us to manifest social justice in our everyday actions and values. The members of various communities may overlap with each other; an individual can view themselves as being part of more than one.

RESOURCES

**Code Switch Podcast: On Strike! Blow It Up! (Podcast)**
How a multi-racial coalition of college students had an impact on higher education in the 1970s

**Defining Civil Rights, Social Justice, Community, and Social Movements (Webpages)**
Find definitions that work for you and share your understanding of these terms with others.
Moreover, within a specific community, different members may serve diverse and multiple roles towards influencing that community to achieve social justice goals.

In movements, there are often icons and figureheads like John Lewis, as well as other members who are doing equally important work, but are unrecognized, ignored, and even criminalized. For instance, Black Transgender folk, women and femmes have been integral leaders in the movements for Black Lives, LGBTQIA+ Rights, Labor Rights, and more, but have been historically left out of mainstream narratives and calls for change. This point of detail is critical to understand because movements are the most powerful and successful in achieving their goals when the needs, voices, and leadership of the most oppressed are given their rightful place. As different communities team up in support of a social movement, and as members of different roles in each of those communities pool together their resources and strengths to this end, it’s important to keep in mind that the power of community and of movements takes many forms, and no single individual’s role is necessarily more important than another’s. As we continue to plow forward in the midst of a historically-significant moral and political reckoning on black dignity and citizenship, RISE Princeton hopes to continue providing access to useful resources and lessons for activists and learners geared towards confronting racial injustice, building productive alliances, and transforming the current standards of equality.

Reflection Questions

1. Reflect on the communities you are a part of and how they might influence, challenge, and support both your work towards racial justice and the goals of the movements you believe in. Within these communities, are there certain voices or perspectives that tend to be heard most loudly, or not at all? Whose activism is most widely recognized in the movements? Whose isn’t?
2. Community can manifest itself through each of our individual actions, and each individual presents unique contributions to and roles within each community, whether that role refers to that community’s dreamers, philosophers, ancestors, poets or more. There are countless ways to make positive change and be a part of social justice movements. Take a moment to consider your specific values and passions. What kind of roles come to mind for you?

RESOURCES

Dispelling "Savior Complexes" (Webpage)
Why good intentions may have negative outcomes

Dolores Huerta: Each Of Us Has A Voice, How Can We Use It For Social Change? (Ted Talk)
How to overcome apathy and find your power

From The 1960s To 2020: Civil Unrest In The Face Of Systematic Injustice (Radio Talk and Short Article)
Interviewing Peniel Joseph, director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy at the University of Texas at Austin

1968-2020: A Tale Of Two Uprisings (Article)
1968 was a catalyst for change. How will 2020 witness the rise of new visions and leaders?

The New Sounds of Protest and Hope (Article and Protest Playlist)
Check out Kimya Dawson, "At the Seams", Eric Bellinger, "Enough", and more.
How Do Power and Privilege Complicate our Fight for Racial Justice?

You cannot change any society unless you take responsibility for it, unless you see yourself as belonging to it and responsible for changing it. – Grace Lee Boggs

Grace Lee Boggs was a Chinese-American activist and philosopher who saw change as radiating from individuals to society. She was known for being open to new and different thinking and experiences, and for changing her own views towards activism over the course of her century-long life, emerging to leave a legacy that challenges people to rethink how they view activism. One of the ways we might begin rethinking how to manifest activism in our lives is to reconsider the unearned advantages we have and the systemic ways that power can be unfairly exerted in our world. For those of us who are a part of powerful institutions, and that is all of us at Princeton, a crucial step in our activism might be to help our institutions change in ways that benefit the most disadvantaged communities.

RESOURCES

Sometimes You're a Caterpillar (Video)
A cartoon on privilege.

What Is: Intersectionality (Video)
You've heard of intersectionality, but where did it come from and what does it mean?

What is Anti-Blackness ft. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi (Video)
In this video, panellists explain the meaning of anti-Black racism and the different ways in which anti-Black racism is present.
Power can exist to reinforce unfair existing norms and treat those with the least power in unjust ways. That being said, power can also productively disrupt abuse and create systems that allow more of us to flourish.

Did you know that Princeton’s formal motto is “Under God’s power she flourishes”? The Latin word for “flourishes” connotes not just healthy growth, but is related to eudaimonia, which is about achieving the highest good that humans can possibly achieve. This is a concept from Aristotle, who, as a practical philosopher, believed that this achievement wasn’t merely intellectual, but was fundamentally a way of living. Therefore, you might know what it is to flourish, but unless you were applying it to your life, you weren’t necessarily reaching eudaimonia.

Privilege isn’t a new topic at Princeton in 2020, and while Princeton has grown and changed since 1746, there is still more change we can support in the University’s structures and processes to make sure that as Princeton flourishes, every Princetonian can succeed. Every one of us at Princeton can recognize our privileges and leverage the power we have to take responsibility for the most marginalized in our society.

Reflection Questions
1. Across your life and communities, what institutions are you a part of? How do these institutions use their power to benefit themselves and their members? How might these institutions have conferred privilege onto you? How might you step up to be part of changing those institutions to benefit others, especially those with the least power?

2. Hidden bias and unconscious prejudice can manifest themselves through our various interactions and thoughts in daily life, sometimes without our awareness. Some of the concrete steps one might take in their activism journey include purposefully mentoring those who might not be most similar to you, being proactive about recognizing other people’s different capabilities, and evaluating your personal actions daily and honestly. In a small group of people you trust, have an open discussion about implicit bias, why and how it exists, and ways you can recognize and avoid acting on bias.

RESOURCES

Tips For Rooting Out Hidden Bias (Article)
Everyone harbors unconscious prejudice. The trick is gaining enough insight to prevent it from affecting how you treat people.

Implicit Bias – Ted Talk (Video)
Everyone makes assumptions about people they don’t know. In this video, Melanie Funchess (Director of Community Engagement at the Mental Health Association) teaches us to recognize these assumptions and work toward a common understanding.

The Intersectionality Wars (Article)
When Kimberlé Crenshaw (professor at Columbia and the University of California Los Angeles) coined the term 30 years ago, it was a relatively obscure legal concept. Then it went viral.

How To Overcome Our Biases? Walk Boldly Towards Them (Ted Talk)
Diversity advocate Vernā Myers provides an engaging and fun talk on how to confront your unconscious biases productively.
How Does Empathy Support Racial Justice?

The concept of empathy is one that is elevated frequently as a cornerstone of building and nurturing meaningful relationships. When you look up the definition of empathy in the dictionary, you will see that empathy is classified as a noun and centers on our ability to understand the feelings and experiences of others. Scholars and practitioners have created a multitude of resources about empathy, such as this video short set to the words of researcher and storyteller Brene Brown.

When we map empathy onto anti-racism work, the complexities and nuances of the concept become illuminated. Questions about the relationship between power and empathy, such as whether it is possible to fully understand feelings and experiences that are different than our own, arise for consideration. Are there limits to empathy—or at least the ways in which we can achieve it? What pitfalls do we need to be aware of as we engage in empathy as part of our racial justice work? In a recent interview, Stanford University psychology professor Jamil Zaki notes that power often limits empathy because individuals with power are less likely to need others and/or focus on the needs of others.

RESOURCES

How To Be More Empathetic (Article).
Some people can be naturally more empathetic, but there are exercises available to help us all improve.

Does Empathy Have a Dark Side? (Article).
Believe it or not, it can be possible to commit hurtful actions even from an empathetic vantage point.

On Empathy: Some Advice For White Folk From A Black Coach (Article).
How can we better express empathy when it comes to race?
When you think about empathy, try thinking of it as a verb rather than a noun. As a verb, empathy becomes an action, a state of being, a skill. As with any skill we have the ability to strengthen empathy over time through consistent and intentional practice. And, as with any complex skill, the less we practice, the harder empathy becomes to execute. This small shift in framing calls all of us to embrace empathy (and the vulnerability it brings) wholeheartedly and courageously, recognizing that empathy requires our continual practice and active engagement. It creates room for us to tailor our empathy practice in ways that honor every interaction and relationship as unique and sacred. It demands a steadfast commitment to being present with each other and for each other, when it's easy and when it's hard — especially when it’s hard.

What does it mean to be of service in a world that is aching? How do we prepare ourselves for the work that lies ahead? How do we engage in the work of anti-racism every day— as a friend, neighbor, ally, community member, and co-conspirator? The answers to these questions are complex at best, and we are called to wrestle with them individually and collectively. While each of our journeys will look different, empathy is surely part of the answer for us all.

“I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it.”  
- Maya Angelou

Reflection Questions

Contrary to its nominal role as a noun, empathy might be better thought of as an action or intention, especially when we want to implement it in anti-racism efforts. Throughout each of our unique communities, networks, and ecosystems, there are countless ways to practice empathy through actions, everyday conversations and engagement:

1. How might you listen to the voices you don’t hear? (spelled 'here' intentionally)
2. How might you create space for and prioritize meaningful connections with others?
3. How might your actions be fueled by compassion?
4. How might you let a genuine care for others be the lens with which you view the world and act in the world?
5. How might you strengthen your empathy skill set daily?

RESOURCES

From Empathy to Equity - The ebb and flow of reciprocal leadership (Ted Talk)  
Watch Dr. Ebony Green explain how teachers can both literally and figuratively shape their students into empathetic leaders of the world.

Codeswitch Podcast: The Limits Of Empathy (Podcast)  
Listen to journalist Grace Halsell's story of literally stepping into Black peoples' shoes and the lessons learned about why empathy sometimes isn't enough.

Empathy and Community Service (Article)  
How can we overcome issues of power and privilege using empathy?

About Empathy Podcast: Approaching on a Systems Level (Podcast)  
About Empathy focuses on healthcare stories that inspire compassion among listeners. The goal of sharing these stories is to create empathic interactions in the healthcare community.

All My Relations (Podcast)  
All My Relations is podcast that discusses means to be a Native person, and was inspired by a desire to have more Indigenous voices accessible in mainstream media.
In the face of a crisis regarding social justice, it can be tempting to jump in with good intentions — but without a plan. How might we avoid wasting valuable energy on reactionary activism and instead create strategic, sustainable plans that will achieve widespread change? In order to make progress as activists, an effective strategy will require us to take up the various roles and definitions around the activism intentions, and reclaim them as our own. For instance, when someone calls themselves an "ally," what exactly do they mean? Is being an ally always helpful to the cause of marginalized groups, or can well-intentioned allyship go awry and end up being harmful? In a publication written for Forge Medium, speaker and facilitator Willie Jackson defines an ally as "simply someone who isn't part of a marginalized group but who supports that group actively." Since the word "actively" is intentionally used, it's clear that someone isn't an ally simply because they say they are. We must channel impulse towards allyship, into meaningful action, instead of relying on empty words. Simply put: if you're an ally, what does putting that identity into action look like? Jackson and others have even encouraged allies to go further and explore stepping up as accomplices.

RESOURCES

Performative Allyship Is Deadly (Here’s What to Do Instead) (Article)
Some people can be naturally more empathetic, but there are exercises available to help us all improve.

Don’t Be an Ally, Be an Accomplice (Article)
Being an effective advocate may require stepping out of your comfort zone.

Ally, Accomplice, Co-conspirator (Interview Clip)
In this 6-minute video, Brittany Packnett gives her advice to white allies.
It might be puzzling why this word is used nowadays. Traditionally, the term "accomplice" can have negative connotations: an accomplice from a thriller movie featuring a bank robbery or money laundering. The answers lie in a closer look at bringing history into focus: Countless liberties that we enjoy now, like voting rights for women and Black Americans, and the legalization of gay marriage, were only made possible by serious disruptions of the status quo. Like the perception of "accomplice," ideas of disruption trend toward being difficult and rude. However, being willing to take that step, and risk standing up against the status quo, is the key to becoming a true accomplice. The possibility that you, while working on being an accomplice, might risk losing something (your comfort and/or social standing) is likely terrifying, but as Jackson puts it, "real advocacy and comfort rarely go hand in hand (2)." Thankfully, there exists many "first steps" that aspiring accomplices can take. The space between ally and accomplice is unique to each individual. Stepping out of one’s comfort doesn't and shouldn’t look identical for anyone. One accomplice might prioritize slowing down in conversations to take up less space when historically silenced groups are sharing and becoming a more active listener. Another accomplice might work on admitting when they’ve made mistakes and offering sincere apologies to those harmed. The central idea is caring more, and taking action to express that care. Strategic action in the face of social justice crises can be difficult, but when the vision is for a better tomorrow, it’s an endeavor that each individual and community can rise up to face.

RESOURCES

Effective Activist Planning (Article)
Helpful tips on leveraging your power efficiently and creatively to create more impact.

Mapping Our Social Change Roles in Times of Crisis (Article)
In the face of social justice and global health crises, how do we effectively make sense of our roles and purpose within the social change ecosystem?

Social Justice Standards | Unpacking Action Lesson (Article)
Some self-paced exercises to do either individually or in a group.

That’s Not How That Works Podcast Ep 19: Let’s Cut the BS: From Ally to Accomplice (Podcast)
This podcast covers topics such as the journey from Ally to Accomplice, the problem of performative allyship, an overview of the journey towards becoming a partner in support of people of color.

Social Change Role Map, Descriptions, Reflection Guide (Article)
Useful resource for reflecting on your own role and contributions to a social change ecosystem.

Reflection Questions

1. In a small group of people you trust, define the roles of ally, accomplice, and co-conspirator for yourself and ask group members to share their definitions and ideas of these terms.

2. Give examples of allies, accomplices, and co-conspirators in your life/you see in media/news etc. Ask others to contribute examples. What do all these actors have in common, and how are they different?

3. Discuss the idea of different community members having Social Change Roles within the context of anti-racism efforts: do some roles need to be added, or are the roles that you identify with currently represented on the diagram?

4. What do you think are some of the most manageable first steps that people can take to move their knowledge about inequity and passions into action? What kind of actions have you seen in movements you care about?
SUGGESTED VIEWING

Selma
Just Mercy
Time
13th
Get Out
I Am Not Your Negro
Malcolm X
Do The Right Thing
All Saints
Tyrus
The Farewell
Walkout
Delores
Parasite
Better Luck Tomorrow

Support The Girls
Fruitvale Station
Blindspotting
Sorry To Bother You
Amreeka
Snowpiercer
Real Women Have Curves
Tangerine
The Life and Death of Marsha P. Johnson
Minari
Sin Nombre
Knock Down The House
Dawnland
Resist (Docuseries)
Watchmen (TV Show)

SUGGESTED READING

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin
How We Get Free Edited by Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor
The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson
The Next American Revolution by Grace Lee Boggs
Octavia’s Brood Edited by adrienne maree brown and Walidah Imarisha
This Changes Everything by Naomi Klein
Fatal Invention by Dorothy Roberts
The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison
The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Malcolm X and Alex Haley

Sister Outsider by Audre Lorde
Parable Series by Octavia Butler
We Too Sing America by Deepa Iyer
The City We Became by N.K. Jemisin
Wicked by Gregory Maguire
The House of Spirits by Isabel Allende
The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy
Invisible Man by Ralph Emerson
The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan
Night by Elie Weisel
Kindred by Octavia Butler
Stamped From The Beginning by Ibram X. Kendi
The Source of Self-Regard by Toni Morrison
The Pace Center for Civic Engagement would like to thank Catherine Yu for the curation of this resource & reflection guide. Catherine is a member of the Class of 2021 and serves as a Sustained Volunteering Fellow on the Student Development and Learning Team at the Pace Center. Previously, she has served as an Executive Board member on the Student Volunteers Council (SVC). When asked about her experience working on the RISE resource, Catherine credited her vision for long-term impact as the primary catalyst for this work. She hopes that this resource will serve as an accessible, engaging tool for students to learn and adopt anti-racism in their everyday lives, and a way to connect with others on the journey towards becoming life-long allies of racial justice. Many thanks to Charlotte Collins and Geralyn Williams for their continued support of this project.

Module 1: Historical Context
A. Bird on a Wire. Image by Dimitris Vetsikas from Pixabay.
B. Slaves working in the boiling house. Image taken from Ten Views in the Island of Antigua, in which are represented the process of sugar making, and the employment of the negroes...From drawings made by W. Clark, etc. (With descriptive letterpress). Originally published/produced in Thomas Clay: London, 1823.
Module 2: The Power of Community

C. U.S. Representative John Lewis poses for a photo at Black Lives Matter plaza in Washington DC. Photo by Clay Banks (IG: @clay.banks)

D. MLK in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday, August 28, 1963. The purpose of the march was to advocate for the civil and economic rights of African Americans. Photo by History in HD.

Module 3: Navigating Power and Privilege

E. Lady Justice. Tingey Injury Law Firm, West Charleston Boulevard, Las Vegas, NV, USA.

F. Gary Stevens, CC BY 2.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>, via Wikimedia Commons. Grace Lee Boggs autographing her latest book at the Chinese Cultural Center.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1c/Grace_Lee_Boggs_autographing_her_latest_book_at_the_Chinese_Cultural_Center.jpg

Module 4: Cultivating Empathy

G. Photo by Harli Marten.

H. By York College ISLGP - Flickr: Maya Angelou visits YCP! 2/4/13. CC By 2.0.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c4/Maya_Angelou_visits_YCP%21_2413.jpg/900px-Maya_Angelou_visits_YCP%21_2413.jpg

Module 5: Being an Ally, Advocate and Accomplice

I. Help Across The Water. Photo by Dane Deaner.

J. Group of People Looking at Laptop Screen.
