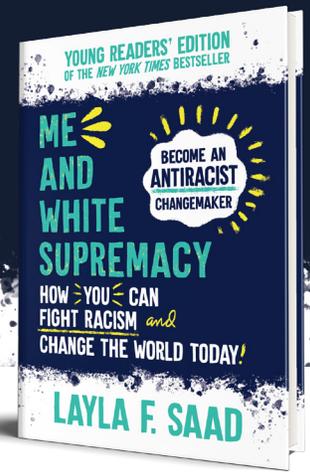


# ME AND WHITE SUPREMACY YOUNG READERS' EDITION

BY LAYLA F. SAAD | AGES 12 AND UP | Created by Keisha Rembert



## NOTE TO EDUCATORS

Your introduction of Layla F. Saad's book, *Me and White Supremacy: Young Reader's Edition*, to your students is a major step in creating a braver, more empathetic and antiracist world. While this may sound a bit hyperbolic, understanding white supremacy, white privilege, white exceptionalism and the other concepts Saad presents is paramount to existing in a society free of fear that ensnares us and impedes antiracist progress. Your classroom is the perfect place for students to grapple with these complex concepts and learn to fight against racism fulfilling the late John Lewis's desire that "each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society."

This guide does not include discussion prompts for students as Layla F. Saad provides easy-to-comprehend language, examples, and myriad opportunities for discussion through her own well-crafted and intentional discussion and reflective prompts that I hope become integral to the classroom study of this book.

## ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OF CARE

It is quite likely going to be the first time your students, and perhaps even you, are delving deep into topics of race and racism in the classroom. To help students understand that vulnerability is an important part of learning, it is imperative that you share your thoughts, feelings, and new understandings from this book with students. Your vulnerability will likely encourage students to be more open, thus increasing engagement and enriching their learning experience.

Some of the book's content will be challenging and may even be triggering for some of your students. A number of emotions may surface while reading and understanding its concepts. As Saad repeatedly reminds readers, this is expected and normal. The topics of this book are themselves filled with emotion because they have touched the lives of humans and humanity. It is important to recognize this as a class community. The concepts cannot be separated from the humans they impact, and this is one of the reasons they are good and necessary learning.

Before you begin the book with students, here are a few key questions to ask yourself and your students:

- What will students need as we prepare to tackle unfamiliar and emotionally challenging topics? (For students: What will you need as we begin to read and discuss unfamiliar, emotionally challenging, and sometimes uncomfortable topics?)
- What does a community of care, bravery, and safety for all students look, feel, and sound like?
- What may be the barriers to creating such a community in our classroom?

- How can we co-create this culture and community and own its effective operation?

As a class, outline agreed upon community norms and means of care. Discuss how students will hold each other accountable to the agreements. Create discussion protocols and practice them. Co-create sentence stems to keep the conversations brave, as well as, stems that assist students in keeping one another accountable in the event any of the agreements are not being met.

## RESOURCES:

Circle Way Discussion (suggested by Layla F. Saad)

<http://www.thecircleway.net/the-process>

Pacific Education Group Norms

<https://www.spps.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=59054&dataid=61146&FileName=Courageous%20Conversation%20Table%20Tent.pdf>

[ashx?moduleinstanceid=59054&dataid=61146&FileName=Courageous%20Conversation%20Table%20Tent.pdf](https://www.spps.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=59054&dataid=61146&FileName=Courageous%20Conversation%20Table%20Tent.pdf)

Ground Rules by EdChange

<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/groundrules.html>

## NOTE ABOUT STANDARDS

*Me and White Supremacy* lends itself to many middle-grade and high school standards in ELA and Social Studies. Below are standards from the Common Core Standards (CCSS) and the College, Career and Civic Life (3C) Framework for Social Studies State Standards.

ELA Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1

Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.D

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

### C3 Framework

#### D4.6.9-12.

Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

#### D4.7.9-12.

Assess options for individual and collective action to address local, regional, and global problems by engaging in self-reflection, strategy identification, and complex causal reasoning.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

There is a lot to learn and explore in this book, and here are two key questions to guide its reading: What is the impact of white supremacy on me, others, and society at large? What can I do to effect change?

## COMMUNITY PADLET OR GOOGLE JAMBOARD

While Saad makes concepts accessible and digestible for students, it is also crucial to have a space of free expression for students when they feel the weight of the book's topics. To this end, creating a community Padlet or Google Jamboard will give students a creative, emotionally expressive place to freely document their thoughts and feelings that does not require dialogue. Students can use the community Padlet/Jamboard to add images, music, poetry, gifs, etc. that reflect their learning or feelings.

## HISTORY

Throughout this book, Layla F. Saad makes powerful connections to her lived experience and world history to help students understand the intricacies of white supremacy. Saad asserts "to fully understand what white supremacy is, we also have to explore the history of European colonialism and how it created the world we live in today." Therefore a knowledge of history is essential to students' understanding of white supremacy and their quest to become antiracist changemakers.

The following resources are intended to provide students with some additional historical contexts for Saad's big topics.

- **The Origin of Race in the USA**  
<https://youtu.be/CVxAlmAPHec>
- **A History: The Construction of Race and Racism**  
[https://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/conference\\_websites/2017/documents/construction-of-race-and-racism.pdf](https://www.giarts.org/sites/default/files/conference_websites/2017/documents/construction-of-race-and-racism.pdf)
- **Black in Latin America**  
<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/black-in-latin-america/>
- **Challenges to Global Anti-Black Racism**  
<https://youtu.be/5k2Testkp0o> (this is a long webinar; viewing small excerpts are appropriate)
- **Looking at Racism Eugenics and Biopolitics in Europe**  
<https://www.europenowjournal.org/2020/12/07/looking-at-racism-eugenics-and-biopolitics-in-europe-historically-an-interview-with-marius-turda/> (excerpts of this interview may be useful for high school students)

## PART I: INTRODUCTION

The following activities correspond to chapters 1-4.

### Identity Web

In the book, Saad shares many parts of her identity with the reader. Students will follow Saad's lead and investigate their own identities. Students will use their identity webs to examine how their identities have shaped them and influenced their feelings, understanding, and/or experience with white supremacy.

As a class ...

- Generate a list to answer: *What defines one's identity?*
- Create an identity web for Saad based on the information provided (taking time to notice, wonder, and make connections).
- Discuss how her identities may have shaped her and affected how she understands and experiences white supremacy.

Students will ...

- Use the class-generated list of identity characteristics and Saad's web as model to create their own identity webs
- Share their identity webs with their peers (taking time to notice, wonder, and make connections) and discuss how their identities have influenced them.

- Write a reflection that highlights how their identities have shaped them and how it affects how they see, understand, and/or experience white supremacy.

*Making Meaning Thinking Routine*

The goal of this activity is for students to synthesize what they’ve read and co-construct a collective meaning of white supremacy after reading and gaining an initial understanding of the term.

Using white supremacy as the focal word, students will work through the following prompts (whole class or in small groups), recording their responses on chart paper or a digital whiteboard.

Students will ...

- Write white supremacy in the center of the page.
- Respond with new words that come to mind.
- Add onto each other’s words with additional words or phrases.
- Make connections to the ideas presented by drawing lines to connect ideas and writing how those ideas connect on each line.
- Record questions that arise anywhere on the page.
- Write their own definition of white supremacy on sticky notes based on the ideas generated and stick them on the chart paper/digital whiteboard.
- Discuss all ideas presented, including individual definitions.
- Craft a collective definition of white supremacy and add it to the page.

*Now I Know*

In part one of the book, Saad presents a lot of information that may be new to students and may require them to question what they thought they knew. This learning tracker allows students to track and process their new learning and separate it from misinformation.

Statement or Idea from the Book	Learning <i>I learned ... I now know..</i>	Unlearning <i>This is faulty/incorrect because ...</i>	Deeper Dive Resource I found this resource that corroborates and/or extends my new learning.
Polygenism ... we all come from different human origins. (27)	This was a popular theory to justify why different races had different characteristics. This theory was used to justify colonization that led to land theft and enslavement of non-European people. It also attributed untrue behaviors to different races (often negative).	Actually, we are all descendants of one human origin (monogenism). The division of people and subsequent stereotyping of people has had dire consequences (racism) that still plague us today.	The myth of Race, Debunked in 3 minutes from Vox <a href="https://youtu.be/VnFKgffCZ7U">https://youtu.be/VnFKgffCZ7U</a>

## PART II: EXPLORING WHITE SUPREMACY

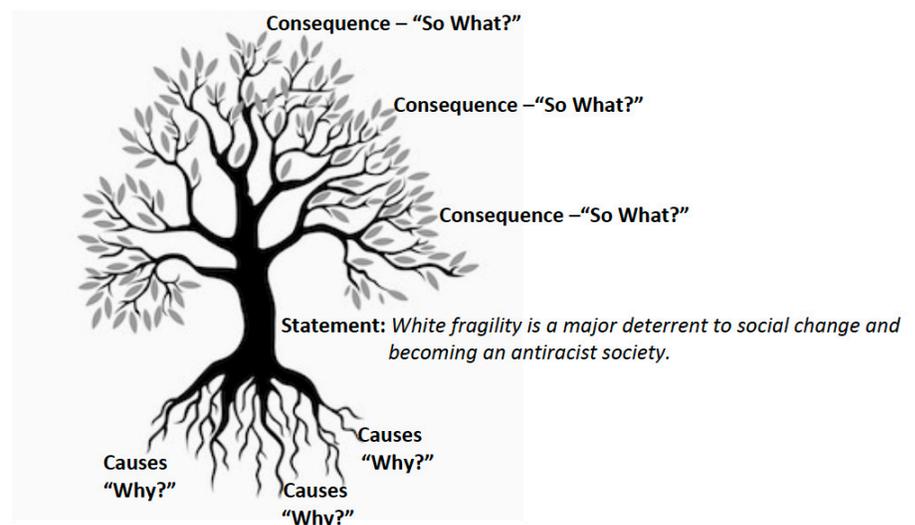
The following activities correspond to chapters 5-18.

### *“Why” and “So What” Trees*

As students seek to understand white fragility, this activity is a means of analyzing its causes and consequences. Using the tree graphic and metaphor, students will be able to visualize the effects of white fragility. Students will use the roots of the tree to identify causes—the “why?”—and the branches to identify the consequences—the “so what?”—with a problematized statement at the base of the tree to initiate the exploration of cause and consequence.

As a class or in small groups ...

- Review with the following statement (the base of the tree): *White fragility is a major deterrent to social change and becoming an antiracist society.*
- Consider a consequence of this statement (add the consequence to a branch on the tree).
  - Create a chain of consequences by continually asking and discussing “so what” of the preceding response (adding the chain of consequences on the same branch of the tree as the initial consequence).
  - Repeat twice. Consider a new consequence of the statement (add to new branch). Create a chain of consequences asking and discussing “so what?” (adding the chain of consequences to each corresponding branch).
- Examine the immediate causes of the statement (add causes to a root on the tree).
  - Ask and discuss “why?” these causes occurred (adding to the roots of the tree).
- Continue questioning and adding “whys,” noting where causes diverge and converge (Note: the roots will represent a complex web of interrelated causes.)
- Discuss the completed visual organizer. As a class, try to craft a new statement for another concept in the book.



### *The Danger of Silence*

To better understand white silence, students should view Clint Smith's TedTalk "The Danger of Silence" ([https://www.ted.com/talks/clint\\_smith\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_silence?utm\\_campaign=tedsbread&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=tedcomshare](https://www.ted.com/talks/clint_smith_the_danger_of_silence?utm_campaign=tedsbread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare)).

During his talk, Smith says "Silence is the residue of fear." Use this quote as a discussion starter. The following are additional discussion prompts for students:

- What does Smith mean by silence is the residue of fear?
- Have there been times when you were silent because you were afraid?
- How does fear connect with your own times of silence?
- What are the consequences of silence?
- How does Smith move beyond his fear?
- What is the relation and application of this video to white silence?

### *Silent Dialogue*

This activity can be done with any of the chapters in part II of the book. This example is connected to chapter 15 (cultural appropriation).

#### Step 1

1. Ask students to select one quote they considered thought provoking and would like to discuss further from the chapter.
2. Add their selected quotes (eliminating duplicates) to a voting mechanism like Google or Microsoft forms.
3. Using the form, students will choose three quotes they would like the class to discuss.
4. Use the top five or six quotes (depending on the size of the class) for this activity.

#### Step 2

On five separate pieces of chart paper or on several digital white boards, write one of the student-selected quotes or use any of the following quotes.

Quote 1: "There is not one definition of cultural appropriation, not one list of what is and isn't culturally appropriative, and no single authority on whether something is an insult or an homage to a particular culture." (184)

Quote 2: "...what is often missed from discussions about cultural appropriation is a deeper understanding of the impact of history, power, and dominance between the two cultures being discussed...the most important thing we need to understand is that it occurs between a dominant culture and a nondominant or marginalized culture." (184-185)

Quote 3: “The most harmful thing about cultural appropriation is that it seeks to use and exploit elements from a particular culture while actually continuing to marginalize and discriminate against people who belong to that culture. How is it possible to appreciate a culture when we don’t appreciate the people who created and represent that culture.” (193)

Quote 4: “Cultural appropriation upholds the white supremacist idea that white people can take whatever they want from Black and Brown people without consequences and that when a person with white privilege adopts something from a Black or Brown culture, they are somehow enhanced because it makes them look more exotic.” (195)

Quote 5: “Cultures are not costumes... White people can put a costume of Blackness (like hairstyles, slang, or darker makeup) on or take it off, and they will never have to deal with anti-Black racism.” (196)

### Step 3

Assign a small group of students to each quote. Instruct students they will be having a silent dialogue with one another following the steps outlined below.

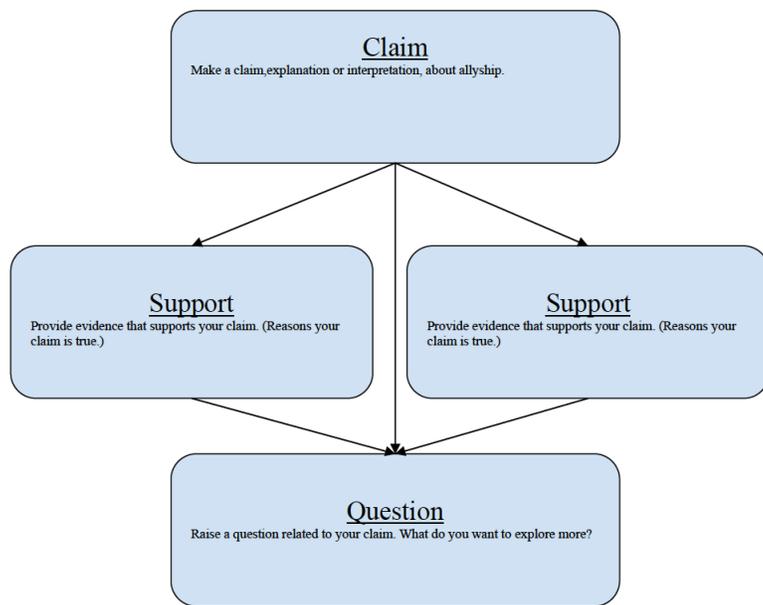
1. Through written comments and/or questions about the quote on the chart or digital whiteboard.
2. By reading the comments and/or questions of the members of their small group and building on their ideas. Remembering even though it’s silent, it’s still a dialogue.
3. Through continued probing and inquiry for the allotted time (10-15 minutes)

After the time elapses, students will be able to move around, still in silence, to other group’s charts/digital whiteboards, reading and adding responses for an additional 10 minutes.

The activity concludes with students returning to their initial chart/digital whiteboard to read and discuss—no longer in silence—the quote, the responses, and their overall perspectives as a group. Groups will share their key learning with the whole class.

### *Claim, Support, Question*

In her chapter on allyship, Saad makes a clear distinction between performative allies and true allyship. After reading chapter 17, students will outline and support their rationale for becoming a true ally.



Students will share their claim, support and question in small groups offering feedback to one another.

### *Pecha Kucha or Ignite Talk*

Students will select one of the chapters that resonated with them and create a Pecha Kucha or Ignite Talk to deliver to the whole class or teacher selected small groups.

A Pecha Kucha is a 20×20 presentation containing 20 slides with 20 seconds per slide, for a presentation time of exactly 6 minutes, 40 seconds. An Ignite Talk is a 20×15 presentation containing 20 slides with 15 seconds per slide, for a presentation lasting 5 minutes. This means students must be rehearsed masters of their content and able to think visually and succinctly to deliver a meaningful and coherent presentation. Here are some samples: Snakes and Staircases, <https://youtu.be/AtyydIDsS5I>, I love the Spelling Bee, [https://youtu.be/u9P\\_FoLFXw](https://youtu.be/u9P_FoLFXw)

Set up working groups for students so they can consult, peer edit, and practice with one another.

### Guidelines for students

1. Select a chapter/concept of interest.
2. In one or two sentences, identify the one thing the audience will know or understand better after your presentation.
3. In two to three sentences, describe your key message and how you will make it appealing and relevant to the audience. (Think about it like a story or an extended metaphor.)
4. Highlight key ideas in *Me and White Supremacy: Young Reader's Edition* that are important for your presentation. Look for visuals Saad provides as a starting point for your own ideas.
5. Sketch out a storyboard with visuals and a script for each slide. Remember, you will want to have VERY few words on your slides because your audience will not have time to read them.
6. Build the PPT/slideshow. 20 slides. Add your script to the notes section of the PPT/slideshow. Start adding the visuals.
7. Consult with your peers. Does it make sense? What are you missing? What can you delete?
8. Revise and edit.
9. Practice. Get feedback from your peers. Add the times it takes you to read each slide in the notes section.
10. Revise and edit.
11. Automate your PPT/slideshow. It should advance on its own at the appropriate time (every 20 or 15 seconds).
12. Present to your peers.

## PART III: PRACTICING ANTIRACISM

The following activity corresponds to chapter 19.

### *Envisioning an Antiracist World*

Saad asks students to assess their values and make commitments to be antiracist. Because they have become this work, it is important to envision a new world free of the concepts outlined in the book. For this activity, students will have to negotiate and determine the values and ideals necessary to an antiracist world now and in the future.

Here are the steps students will engage in for this activity (individually or in small groups):

#### Step 1: Brainstorming

- Brainstorm characteristics of an antiracist, just society by completing the following sentence starter: “In an antiracist world...”
  - Students should think of as many vision statements as they can, adding each of their statements to a different sticky note.
- Discuss the vision statements and their rationale, offering opinions and making connections to the concepts and learning from the book.

#### Step 2: Prioritizing

- Prioritize the sticky notes into categories
  - Students should review the vision statements discarding ones that, based on the discussion or their own thoughts, no longer feel applicable or viable. They will then try to evenly distribute the remaining sticky notes among the following categories:
    - **Essential**—*Non-negotiable attributes*
    - **Desirable**—*Important, but could tolerate without*
    - **Icing on the Cake**—*Wouldn't it be nice...*

#### Step 3: Coding

- Code the sticky notes within each category
  - Students will evaluate how these statements of antiracism are held and realized (or not) in our present, real-world society. Using yellow, green and pink highlights, students will code each statement based on the following:
    - **Green**—Foundational, widely held, and enjoyed by almost all (commonplace)
    - **Yellow**—A stated principle, but in practice only for a few (in principle only)
    - **Pink**—Not a part of our society's concept of antiracism or justice (not valued)

#### Step 4: Reflecting

- Reflect on this assignment and your overall learning from your reading of *Me and White Supremacy: Young Reader's Edition*.
  - Students will discuss their coding as class. Identifying the things that surprised and challenged them, answering what they have learned about the work that must be done to not only envision but create and sustain an antiracist world.
  - Students will write a reflection chronicling their learning from this activity and the biggest takeaway from their reading of *Me and White Supremacy: Young Reader's Edition*.