

# IS YOUR U.S. HISTORY TEXT RACIST?

## FIVE TOPICS OFTEN WHITEWASHED

Use this practical guide as a jumping-off point for thinking about how your curriculum choices can advance antiracism. By examining how your text or program treats these five topics, you and your colleagues may start noticing omissions and silences. After this review, you'll be better able to make choices to supplement the learning materials your students encounter. Each question is aligned to one or more of the CARE Principles:



Affirm the dignity and  
humanity of all people

[A]



Embrace  
historical truths

[B]



Develop a critical  
consciousness

[C]



Recognize race &  
confront racism

[D]



Create  
just systems

[E]

### TOPIC DOES THE TEXT...

- European Colonization**
- Discuss Indigenous people and societies as they existed before European arrival? [A]
  - Describe European explorers and their motivations in mostly positive terms? [B]
  - Name only European individuals and societies? [A,B]
  - Describe the encounter as an invasion? [C]
  - Discuss the systems colonizers devised to exploit and enslave both Africans and Indigenous people? [E]
  - Explicitly address how colonizers used racial and religious distinctions to justify their actions? [D]
  - Have absences and silences that a teacher would need to fill in? [D]

- Reconstruction**
- Say that Reconstruction failed, or that it was undermined? [B, D]
  - Discuss Reconstruction as a mostly federal effort? [B]
  - Describe the nature and extent of Southern elite resistance to Reconstruction? [D]
  - Provide examples of Black agency and use of power before and during Reconstruction? [A]
  - Relate Reconstruction to slavery and the present day? [C, E]

- Civil War & Emancipation**
- Identify the South's desire to preserve and extend slavery as the central cause of the Civil War? [B, D]
  - Examine the arguments for secession presented by Southern legislatures and leaders? [B, D]
  - Present emancipation only in terms of Lincoln and official acts of the federal government? [C]
  - Discuss the role that enslaved and formerly enslaved people played in the War effort? [A]
  - Explain the various efforts to continue exploitative and forced labor practices after emancipation? [B, D]
  - Describe the impact of emancipation only from the perspective of landowners? [A, B, D]

- Indigenous People**
- Discuss Indigenous people mostly in the past tense? [A, D]
  - Suggest that most Indigenous people have died out? [A, D]
  - Delve into Indigenous resistance to colonialism across North America? [A, B]
  - Explain the sovereignty of Native Nations? [A, E]
  - Portray a diversity of named Indigenous people and Native Nations? [A]
  - Describe Manifest Destiny and the Doctrine of Discovery from a settler perspective? [C, D]

- Civil Rights Movement**
- Imply that the civil rights movement's successes were part of steady progress toward realizing the nation's founding ideals? [B, C]
  - Focus mainly on major events and federal actions? [B, C]
  - Suggest the movement began in the 1950s and ended in the late 1960s? [B, E]
  - Situate the movement exclusively in the South? [B, D]
  - Depict debates about strategy and tactics with sophistication and nuance? [B]
  - Make connections to other movements and to the present? [A, E]
  - Portray the extent and scope of white resistance, North and South. [B, D]