

Proposed Social Studies Learning Resources Approval Spring 2020

[Stamped Remix](#)

This recently released adaptation by Jason Reynolds of Ibram X. Kendi's National Book Award winning Stamped From the Beginning is an excellent source to positively transform our history curriculum when paired with key primary sources that foster a critical understanding of history. Its anti-racist stance is vital to building the social-emotional skills our students need to construct a multi-racial, pluralistic democracy that offers equal justice and opportunity for all.

Reynolds takes Kendi's seminal history of the concept of race and the entrenchment of systemic racism and makes it accessible and approachable for students. The authors claim that this is not a history book, but one that is focused on the present and what we have inherited. However, the book does present a useful history of racist thinking which will help students be able to critique systems of power, with a particular focus on race.

Reviews

Booklist starred (January 1, 2020 (Vol. 116, No. 9))

Grades 7-12. Reynolds continues his prolific streak with an absorbing young reader's adaptation of Kendi's National Book Award-winning title, *Stamped from the Beginning* (2016). "This is not a history book" declares Reynolds at the outset, an announcement that instantly absorbs readers, displaying the author's singular way of communicating with young people. Reynolds' "remix" begins in 1415 and travels into the present in five well-paced sections, following the general outline of Kendi's comprehensive title. Through figures like Cotton Mather, W. E. B Du Bois, and Angela Davis, among others, the thought patterns of segregationists, assimilationists, and antiracists, respectively, are elucidated, along with the impact such ideas have on all aspects of American life. Throughout the book, Reynolds inserts literal pauses ("Record scratch"), and interjects with commentary ("Let that sink in") and clarifications, a way of insisting that the pages are not merely text, but a conversation. Readers will undoubtedly experience a mixture of feelings after finishing this book, but the encouragement to emerge as critical thinkers who can decipher coded language and harmful imagery stemming from racist ideas, which still linger in modern society and popular culture, will be the most empowering result. Thankfully, extensive back matter is included, with source notes and a dynamic further reading list. Required reading for everyone, especially those invested in the future of young people in America. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Reynolds is practically a household name in the kidlit community, and his lively take on Kendi's National Book Award-winning history of racism is sure to garner lots of attention.

Kirkus Reviews starred (December 1, 2019)

Award-winning author Reynolds (*Look Both Ways*, 2019, etc.) presents a young readers' version of American University professor Kendi's (*How To Be an Antiracist*, 2019, etc.) *Stamped From the Beginning* (2016). This volume, which is "not a history book," chronicles racist ideology, specifically anti-blackness in the U.S., from its genesis to its pernicious manifestations in the present day. In an open, conversational tone, Reynolds makes it clear that anti-black racist ideology in the U.S. has consistently relied on the erroneous belief that African people (and black people in general) are "dumb" and "savage," ideas perpetuated through the written word, other media, and pseudo-science. Using separatist, assimilationist, and anti-racist historical figures, a direct line is drawn throughout U.S history from chattel

slavery through the Civil War, Jim Crow, the civil rights era, the war on drugs, and #BlackLivesMatter, with plenty of little-known, compelling, and disturbing details inserted. Readers who want to truly understand how deeply embedded racism is in the very fabric of the U.S., its history, and its systems will come away educated and enlightened. It's a monumental feat to chronicle in so few pages the history of not only anti-black racism in the U.S., but also assimilationist and anti-racist thought as well. In the process it succeeds at connecting "history directly...to our lives as we live them right this minute." Worthy of inclusion in every home and in curricula and libraries everywhere. Impressive and much needed. (further reading, source notes, index) (Nonfiction. 12-adult)

Publishers Weekly (January 27, 2020)

Reynolds (Look Both Ways) lends his signature flair to remixing Kendi's award-winning Stamped from the Beginning into a powerful "not a history book" primer on the historical roots and present-day manifestations of antiblack racism in America. In five sections, Reynolds's conversational text discusses the influential figures, movements, and events that have propagated racist ideas, beginning in 1415 with the publication of the infamous work that laid the groundwork for subsequent religious justifications of enslaving African peoples and continuing through the "war on drugs" and #BlackLivesMatter. Employing a format that hews closely to Kendi's original, Reynolds discusses and differentiates between segregationist ("a hater"), assimilationist ("a coward"), and antiracist ("someone who truly loves") rhetoric via figures such as Angela Davis, W.E.B. DuBois, Thomas Jefferson, and Cotton Mather. Short chapters, lively phrasing ("You know what hits do-they spread"), and intentional breaks ("Time Out," "Let's all just take a deep breath") help maintain a brisk, compelling pace. Told impressively economically, loaded with historical details that connect clearly to current experiences, and bolstered with suggested reading and listening selected specifically for young readers, Kendi and Reynolds's volume is essential, meaningfully accessible reading. Ages 12-up. (Mar.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal (January 1, 2020)

Gr 7 Up-Reynolds's adaptation of Kendi's National Book Award-winning title teaches readers to think critically about racism and antiracism in the United States and the Western world. Within short chapters and a chronological format, the authors discuss specific people and/or historical events. Those selected examples are used to expand upon broader themes. There are no shallow representations of the men and women profiled in this book. The authors argue that people fit into three categories, some transitioning from one category to another: segregationists, assimilationists, and antiracists. The actions of President Thomas Jefferson, Cotton Mather, W.E.B. Du Bois, Martin Luther King Jr., Angela Davis, and President Barack Obama, among other U.S. presidents, citizens, and organized movements, are evaluated in relation to these categories. The varying text and sentence sizes, and the occasional font changes, effectively guide readers through the content. The tone of the writing varies from provocative to funny to gentle. Due to the work not being a straight narrative account, some passages may require readers to seek further information to fully understand the context. A recommended reading list features older and contemporary adult and young adult fiction and nonfiction titles. VERDICT Reynolds and Kendi eloquently challenge the common narrative attached to U.S. history. This adaptation, like the 2016 adult title, will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact. Highly recommended for libraries serving middle and high school students.-Hilary Writt, Sullivan University, Lexington, KY © Copyright 2020. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

