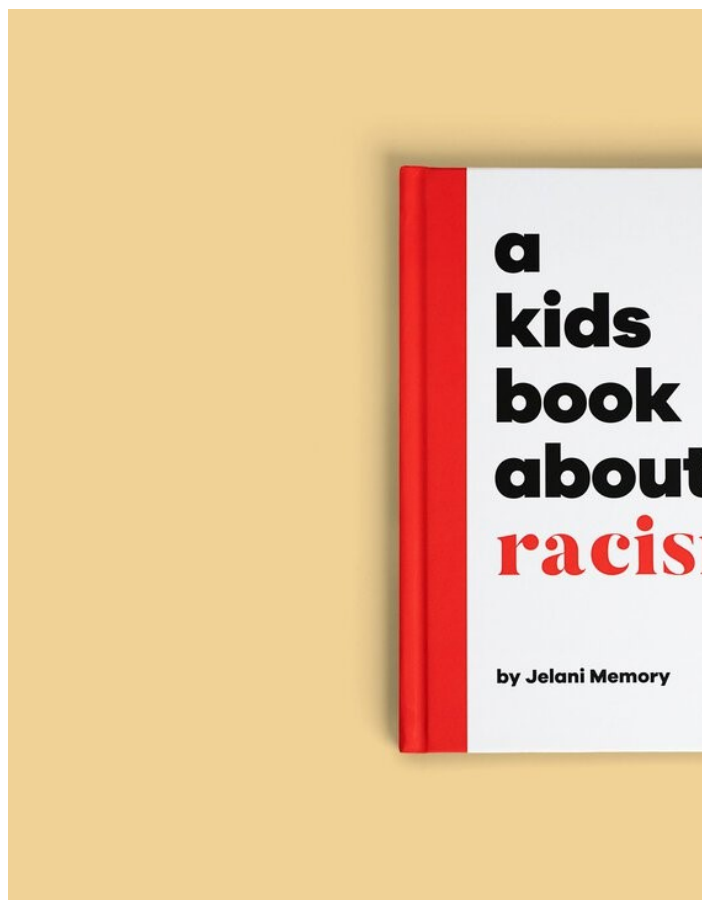


Books
The Seattle Times

Books for kids and teens about race, racism and police violence

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📷 1 of 7 | "A Kids Book About Racism" by Jelani Memory. (A Kids Book About)

By [Gemma Alexander](#)

Special to The Seattle Times

Kids feel the fear and pain of the recurring cycle of police violence and protests, but they need help to understand it. Parents owe it to their kids to talk to them about racism. (Even if the kids themselves are too old for them, picture books like

“Something Happened in Our Town” by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins and Ann Hazzard provide parents with helpful models for talking to kids about racism). Beyond those necessary conversations, here are books that young people can read on their own to help them make some sense of what’s going on. Roughly organized from the easiest to hardest reading level, the first three books are best for elementary students with the rest of the list aimed at teens.

“A Kids Book About Racism” by Jelani Memory (A Kids Book About, \$19.95). There are no pictures, but even very early readers can decipher the vocabulary in this book. Using different fonts and text colors to elaborate the meaning, Portland author Memory matter-of-factly presents racism in simple, child-friendly terms.

“We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices” edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson (Crown Books for Young Readers, \$10.99). The Hudsons have compiled poems, letters, essays and art from a diverse group of 50 well-known artists and children’s book authors in an anthology to help young people cope with cruelty and hate. It is not a guide to political activism; rather, it combines messages of community and hope with advice on everyday actions of kindness and friendship that kids can practice every day.

“Ghost Boys” by Jewell Parker Rhodes (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, \$16.99). The protagonist of this middle grade book is the ghost of Jerome, a 12-year-old boy shot by a police officer. He meets the ghost of Emmett Till, who was lynched in 1955 at age 14. Through his interactions with Emmett Till, Jerome learns the history of racism that led to their deaths. From the police officer’s daughter Sarah, the only living person who can see him, Jerome witnesses the impacts of his death as they expand outward through the community.

“This Book Is Anti-Racist: 20 Lessons on How to Wake Up, Take Action, and Do The Work” by Tiffany Jewell (Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, \$14.99). For tweens and teens who are ready to act after reading local author Ijeoma Oluo’s “So You Want to Talk About Race” primer on racism, the 20 chapters in this book are designed to educate, encourage introspection and help empower readers to actively defy racism.

“Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You: A Remix” by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, \$18.99). National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature and Newbery Award-winning children’s author Reynolds partnered with scholar and Atlantic columnist Kendi to adapt Kendi’s National Book

Award-winning “Stamped from the Beginning” for younger readers. Like the original, it examines the history of racist ideas in America and identifies strategies to oppose them.

“**Between the World and Me**” by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Spiegel & Grau, \$26). It wasn’t marketed for young adults, but it was written for one in response to another police shooting. Presented as a letter to his teenage son, Coates blends personal stories of growing up African American with history, politics and philosophy to contextualize race in America.

“**The Hate U Give**” by Angie Thomas (Balzer & Bray, \$18.99). Thomas’ powerful debut novel follows Starr Carter, a 16-year-old girl who is the only witness to her childhood friend’s death by a police bullet. Thomas never flinches from Starr’s trauma or the circumstances that she faces — from microaggressions at her elite private school to the poverty and crime in her segregated neighborhood — as she traces the young woman’s path to activism. (The book was made into a 2018 [movie starring Amandla Stenberg.](#))

Gemma Alexander is a Seattle-based freelance writer; gemmaalexander.com.

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