

DEAL WITH IT

WHITE PRIVILEGE

DEAL WITH IT IN ALL FAIRNESS



Catherine Inglis • Illustrated by Wang Xulin

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHY IT SEEMS HARDER FOR YOU TO GET AHEAD THAN YOUR WHITE FRIENDS? OR DO YOU WONDER WHAT ALL THE FUSS IS ABOUT RACE? THEN THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU.

White privilege is the unearned benefit that white people have because of the colour of their skin. It can be hard to see and difficult to talk about, but it is real. This book helps readers identify white privilege and start a conversation about how to deal with it.

- White Privilege 101 defines the issue and provides examples on how to identify it
- The roles of the Privileged, the Racialized, and the Witness approach the issue from three different points of view
- Quizzes and Q&As provide real-life scenarios and responses to white privilege

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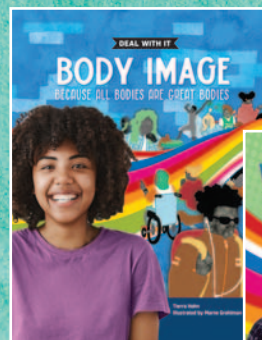
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You catch up to your friends on the way to school. They're talking about how a white kid played a prank on a teacher, but someone else got blamed. They are saying it's because the kid who got blamed isn't white.

Why have you never noticed this before?

Your Black friend notices your surprise. They tell you it's part of what they go through every day. They ask, "Didn't you notice how I could never find the right crayon for my self-portrait in art class? Or how most of our teachers are white? Or the way people always comment on my hair?"

White privilege is the advantage given to people just because they are white. It is based on the way white people look, dress, speak, and interact in society. Many people don't even notice it. But for those who are not white, it means they stand out and have to adjust to "fit in."

White privilege is everywhere.

White privilege is part of a larger racist system that gives unearned benefits to white people over those who aren't. It values actions, culture, language, and traditions of white people over anyone else's. And it can cause conflict.

This book can help you understand what white privilege is and isn't, and help you deal with white privilege as you encounter it.

WHAT IS WHITE PRIVILEGE?



What does it mean to be privileged? It means you're starting from a better place than someone else, and not because you've done something to deserve it. So when we're talking about white privilege, it means someone is ahead just because they were born white. Sometimes it can be hard to tell what white privilege looks like. It can look like "normal" to the rest of society. Think about:

- Band-Aids that match only lighter skin colours
- Store displays for holidays that are celebrated mostly by white people
- Grocery stores with separate food aisles marked "Ethnic"
- White people dominating history textbooks
- Main characters on TV shows mostly being white
- Black hair products in a special section of the drug store
- Mannequins in stores appearing white
- Having few teachers who are racialized
- When a book character's race isn't stated, the assumption is that they are white
- Someone being asked to shorten or change their name because it's "too hard to pronounce"

White privilege can lead to thinking that members of the group with privilege are better, smarter, and more deserving. It can lead to them being treated better and getting more chances. And that's just not right.

Racialized: Throughout this book, this term is used to refer to people who do not identify as white. This can include Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC). The term recognizes that race is like an adjective that is used to describe a person, and is put on them by others.

WHITE PRIVILEGE COMES FROM...

PREJUDICE

JAMES SHOPPING AT THE ELECTRONICS STORE



DUANTE SHOPPING AT THE ELECTRONICS STORE



PERCEPTION

CAROLYN'S FRIENDS COMMENT ON HER CLOTHES



SALENA'S FRIENDS COMMENT ON HER CLOTHES



PRESUMING

OLIVIA IS ASKED TO READ FOR THE CLASS



GURDEEP IS ASKED TO READ FOR THE CLASS



POWER

LIAM ASKS A QUESTION DURING A POLICE PRESENTATION



ABBAS ASKS A QUESTION DURING A POLICE PRESENTATION



WHITE PRIVILEGE OR NOT?

White privilege is sometimes hard to see since it's not as obvious as direct racist comments or actions. And sometimes people are unfair or mean for other reasons. Read the following scenarios and decide if the unfair treatment in the conflict is based on white privilege or something else.

1. **Paul and Cree are taking public transit together. A fare inspector asks Cree to show his ticket and receipt. He just glances at Paul's ticket.**

White privilege. This treatment of Cree is based solely on skin colour. The assumption that he is more likely to sneak on the bus comes from a stereotype of Indigenous people being criminals.



3. **Auditions are being held for a musical. Laney is the best singer, but the lead role is given to Molly because the story takes place in Europe and Laney is Asian.**

White privilege. Many plays and books were written by white people, which means more roles for white actors, even if there are better actors who are racialized.



2. **Mark and Mac are out shopping. They cannot enter a local store because there isn't an accessible entrance.**

Not white privilege. This is unfair because there isn't equal access to the store. This is a form of discrimination called ableism that unfairly disadvantages those who have physical or mental disabilities.



4. **Wenonah and her brother Geezis are visiting their neighbour. The neighbour speaks normally to Wenonah, but puts on a "baby" voice when speaking with Geezis, who wears his hair long and in braids.**

Not white privilege. This is unfair on the basis of age. This is called ageism and can happen to younger people or much older people.



5. On the news, two people are missing. One is described as “tall with blond hair.” The other is described as “Middle Eastern, medium build, wearing a ball cap.”

White privilege. There is an assumption that a person is white unless it is stated that they are not.



MISSING PERSONS

7. Makeda, who has an afro, has to buy her hair products in a different section of the store than Trixie, who has straight hair.

White privilege. Beauty companies and stores cater to those whom they perceive as being their best customers, even in neighbourhoods that might have more racialized community members.



9. Oday gets his hood pulled by Kyle, who is white, as they are walking in from recess. Oday pushes Kyle’s arm away. Only Oday is sent to the principal, who says Oday might be suspended.

White privilege. Kyle gets away with starting the incident. Oday is singled out as a “troubled Black boy,” even if he’s never been in trouble before.



6. Kayla and Keisha are playing basketball. Kayla dunks on Keisha, yelling, “In your face!” Keisha calls back, “Just you wait!”

Not white privilege. The comments are based on the game being played, rather than race.



8. Anyone who got a mark below a B on their math quiz gets a note from the teacher to come in for extra help before school.

Not white privilege. All students who might be struggling with a concept are encouraged to take advantage of extra help. The teacher is separating students based solely on their performance on the quiz.



10. Zara and Aaron are talking about an upcoming local election when an adult neighbour joins them. The neighbour tells Zara, “You shouldn’t worry your pretty little head about things like this.”

Not white privilege. This is sexism, which unfairly makes assumptions about abilities on the basis of one’s gender. In this case, Zara, who identifies as a girl, is treated unfairly.



YOU ASKED...

Q: There are lots of kids at my school who are white, but I know they are poor. They come to school wearing tattered second-hand clothes and live in bad neighbourhoods. How do they have white privilege?

— **Poor Is Not a Colour**

A: The people you've described do not have privilege based on their economic status (how much money they have), but they still have privilege in many other ways. They see people that look like them in positions of power and on TV. Their holidays are celebrated everywhere. They can generally walk through a mall without shopkeepers watching them closely. These are privileges and connections based entirely on their whiteness.



Q: During the school year, our principal makes announcements for everyone's holidays. It seems there's a different holiday every day! Isn't this enough to show everyone that we think their holidays are special?

— **Happy Holidays**

A: It's great that your school is trying to recognize everyone's important days, but we still live in a society where one group's holidays are recognized over others. Christmas, Easter, and Valentine's Day take up a lot of space on store shelves, on the covers of food magazines, and on TV specials. Schools, the government, and other institutions recognize many of these as statutory holidays, meaning that employers have to give workers these days off work. This is a form of white privilege because it gives advantage to one group's special days over others'.

Q: My best friend is Black and I'm white. They're Christian and I'm Muslim. Sometimes I take Friday afternoons off from school to attend prayers. I make sure to check with my teachers so that I can catch up on missed work. My Christian friends get to worship on weekends. I don't think I benefit from white privilege, do I?

— Getting Religion

A: While you might not benefit from all forms of white privilege, you likely benefit from others. The most notable is that people probably don't make assumptions about you because you are white, and they probably assume that you are Christian. You can use your white privilege to help teach people about how diverse communities can be.



Q: My family isn't white. We have been in this country for generations. Still, I get asked where I'm from. When I say, "Here," sometimes people ask again, "But where are you really from?" What's with that?

— Country of Origin

A: White privilege makes an assumption that people who are not white (including many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people) are not "from" North America. Some people think that, even if you have been here longer than many white families, you must be from "somewhere else." These people think that the other place somehow defines you and that to belong you must be white.

MYTHS

White privilege doesn't exist any more.

White privilege has never gone away and continues to exist. One of the reasons it is not as apparent is that some obvious racist actions have been replaced by hidden advantages that white people don't see.



All white people are the same.

White people can have different languages, practices, and traditions. But white privilege favours those from an English-speaking, Christian background and encourages other white people to adopt that culture.



The best person is always chosen for the job.

Sometimes historically left-out people are overlooked because a white employer might hire only people who look like them or share their perspective.

White people are in the minority.

Throughout North America, the majority of people are white. Even in situations where there are more people of colour, white culture and customs are dominant.

Black, Indigenous, and other racialized people should learn to sound, dress, and act white.

No one should have to hide who they are. And no matter how they speak or dress, racialized people can still be discriminated against based only on parts of their appearance they cannot change.



Racist individuals are the problem.

Racist individuals are only part of the problem. Another part is the larger system of rules and beliefs about how a whole group of people have privilege over others.

DID YOU KNOW?

- A 2018 survey showed that 62% of young adult book covers featured white characters.
- In 1969, the first Black Barbie doll was introduced. Her name was Christie.
- DC Comics introduced the first Indigenous superhero, Super-Chief, in 1961. Marvel's Black Panther first appeared in a Fantastic Four comic in 1966.