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Communication in English

Racism and white supremacy

Racism: prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.

White supremacy: is the racist belief that white people are superior to people of other races and therefore should be dominant over them.

These two words are key in our society today. It has been around since between 1525 and 1866. And started when [12.5 million people](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/massive-new-database-connect-billions-historic-records-tell-full-story-american-slavery-180973721/) were kidnapped from Africa and sent to the Americas through the [transatlantic slave trade](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/few-artifacts-transatlantic-slave-trade-exist-iron-blocks-tell-gut-wrenching-story-180959803/). Upon reaching the New World, some 3.9 million of the 10.7 million who survived the two-month journey were enslaved in the United States. Comprehending the sheer scale of this forced migration—and slavery’s following[spread across the country](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/maps-reveal-slavery-expanded-across-united-states-180951452/?preview) via[interregional trade](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/slavery-trail-of-tears-180956968/)—can be a daunting task, but as historian[Leslie Harris](https://www.history.northwestern.edu/people/faculty/core-faculty/leslie-m-harris.html) told[*Smithsonian*](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/massive-new-database-connect-billions-historic-records-tell-full-story-american-slavery-180973721/)’s Amy Crawford earlier this year, framing “these big concepts in terms of individual lives … can [help you] better understand what these things mean.”

Racial, economic and educational disparities are deeply rooted in U.S. institutions. Though the Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal,” American democracy has historically—and often[violently](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/artifacts-show-sometimes-violent-nature-american-democracy-180963914/)—excluded certain groups.

Instances of inequality range from the obvious to less overtly discriminatory policies and belief systems. Historical examples of the former include[poll taxes](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/recalling-era-when-color-your-skin-meant-you-paid-vote-180958469/) that effectively disenfranchised African American voters; the marginalization of[African American soldiers](https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/double-victory) who[fought in World War I](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/how-world-war-i-planted-seeds-civil-rights-movement-180974039/) and[World War II](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/why-african-american-soldiers-saw-world-war-ii-two-front-battle-180964616/) but were treated like second-class citizens at home;[black innovators](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/with-patents-or-without-black-inventors-reshaped-american-industry-180962201/) who were barred from filing patents for their inventions; white medical professionals’ exploitation of black women’s bodies, the government-mandated[segregation of American cities](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/how-federal-government-intentionally-racially-segregated-american-cities-180963494/); and[segregation in schools](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/youngest-little-rock-nine-speaks-about-holding-onto-history-180964732/).

When it comes down to the basics, racism is still very much active, although unconscious, it is hard for a person of color to be accepted into the American society and be seen as one of them. And it isn’t going to stop anytime soon. There are so many underlining impacts it has have over the years, the person we get married to, the friends we hang out with, the schools we go to and even down to our workplace. It all comes down to the years our ancestors have endured being enslaved under the white hand.