

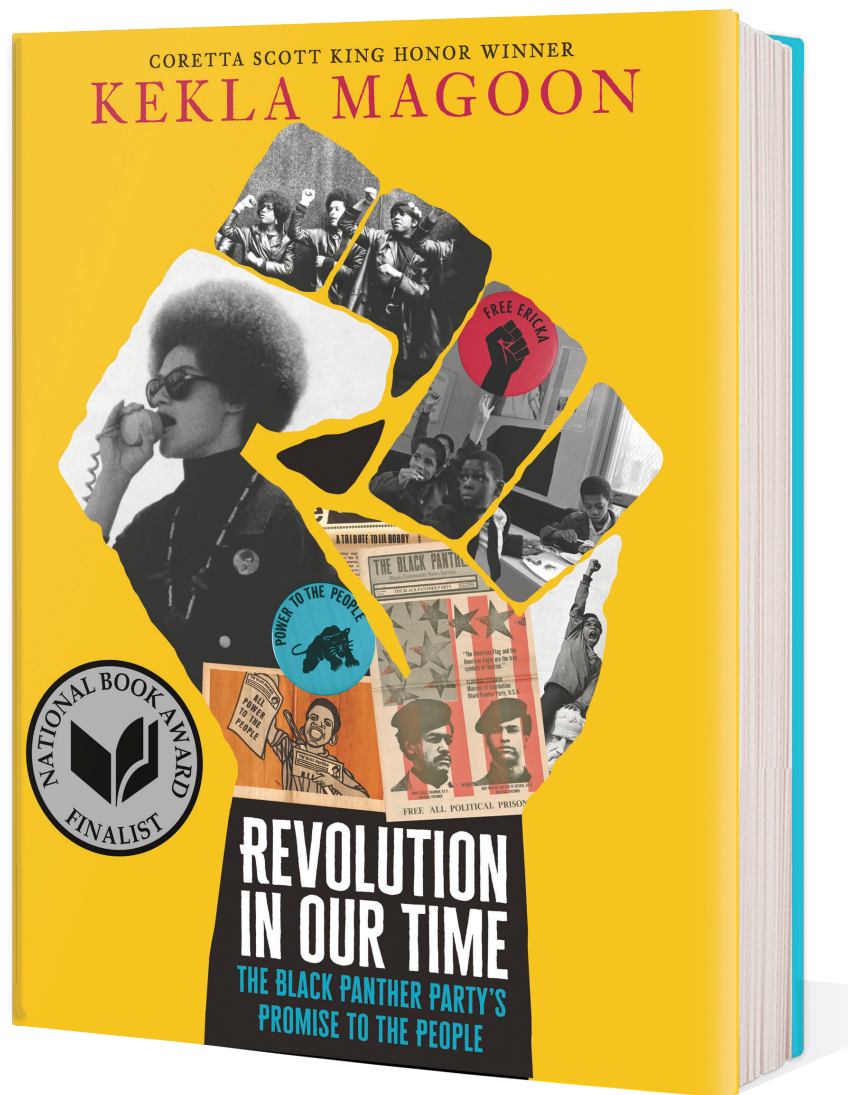
# REVOLUTION IN OUR TIME

## THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY'S PROMISE TO THE PEOPLE

KEKLA MAGOON

In this comprehensive, inspiring, and all-too-relevant history of the Black Panther Party, **KEKLA MAGOON** introduces readers to the Panthers' community activism, grounded in the concept of self-defense, which taught Black Americans how to protect and support themselves in a country that treated them like second-class citizens. For too long the Panthers' story has been a footnote to the civil rights movement rather than what it was: a revolutionary socialist movement that drew thousands of members—mostly women—and became the target of one of the most sustained repression efforts ever made by the U.S. government against its own citizens.

*Revolution in Our Time* puts the Panthers in the proper context of Black American history, from the first arrival of enslaved people to the Black Lives Matter movement of today. Kekla Magoon's eye-opening work invites a new generation of readers grappling with injustices in the United States to learn from the Panthers' history and courage, inspiring them to take their own place in the ongoing fight for justice.



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## TEACHER PREPARATION: EXCAVATING AND INTERROGATING

In *Revolution in Our Time: The Black Panther Party's Promise to the People*, Kekla Magoon writes: “When people talk about the Black Panthers, sometimes they speak in hushed tones, as if history itself could overhear. As if the Panthers are a secret no one should talk about. For many years, Americans have looked away from the Black Panthers’ legacy, and because people have looked away, many have forgotten who and what the Panthers really were” (page viii).

For many educators in the United States, it is likely that this history was silenced during their schooling. If the Black Panthers were discussed, it was done in ways that proliferated propaganda that has influenced beliefs about race and racism, and more specifically, about Black people. Therefore, this book doesn’t just inform students of the truth about the Black Panthers and racism; it also informs educators, the majority of whom (more than 80 percent) are White in the United States.

With such an overwhelmingly White teaching force, one way that conversations about race and racism are silenced in classrooms is by White teachers’ discomfort. This book is particularly informative for White educators who grew up not having substantive discussions about race and racism at home, in their K–12 schools, and in their teacher education programs, which often position such learning as optional, not required. Consider your own engagement with this book as a precursor to assigning it and beginning conversations with students about race and racism, especially if you have not participated in professional development or have not read and done extensive work to become racially literate. It is also important to recognize that one book is insufficient and to plan for continued reading and reflection.

As students read this book to learn about the Black Panther Party, they will also engage in a process of learning and unlearning about race and racism. It is essential for educators to engage in this process as well and recognize that it is a lifelong journey of excavating, as educator, author, and racial-literacy development expert Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz describes. To engage in excavating, educators must be willing to recognize and interrogate their own biases. This involves an ongoing process of examining one’s personal histories in order to develop and deepen one’s racial consciousness.

There is an ongoing dialogue among writers, educators, scholars, and linguists (and within many other communities) about whether to capitalize “Black” and “White” when referring to racial identity. Capitalization creates emphasis, but scholars disagree about where that emphasis is needed, and sometimes even about whether that emphasis is needed. In the book, the author chose to capitalize “Black” and keep “white” lowercase to emphasize the social, cultural, and political significance of Black identity. In this guide, the writer chose to capitalize both “Black” and “White” to emphasize both identities in a parallel fashion, thereby giving them equal significance and not othering “Blackness” while normalizing “Whiteness.”

## RECOGNIZING AND RESPONDING TO THE RACIAL IDENTITIES OF STUDENTS

Another reason that silences about race and racism occur in classrooms is that educators are concerned about how students may experience these discussions. A few common concerns among educators include *What if all of my students are Black and brown? What if all of my students are White? What if there are mostly White students and a few students of color?* Careful consideration of these questions matters, because the racial identities, lived experiences, and well-being of students matter.

Schools have often not been safe places for students of color. From omissions and distortions in curriculum to teaching practices that fail to recognize the humanity of Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color (BIPOC), students of color experience educational violence in myriad ways. To avoid this, it is essential for educators to anticipate the ways discussions they facilitate have the potential to cause further harm to BIPOC students through actions and inactions—



through their remarks and those of White peers as well as silences in response to racism. Such consideration should galvanize educators to think beyond intentions and focus instead on the potential impact of this work.

One important step to take prior to, as well as during, reading and discussing *Revolution in Our Time* is deep reflection on this question: *How will I create conditions in my classroom that help me to mitigate the retraumatization of BIPOC students during discussions about race and racism?* Educators can emphasize the importance of White students assuming a listening stance when in interracial dialogue with peers. Educators might engage White students in reflection and discussion of the following: *What does it mean to truly listen? Whose voices do I need to listen to? Whose voices and experiences have been and continue to be silenced?* Taking a listening stance during interracial dialogue can help White students to learn and unlearn about race and racism in ways that position them to be allies and then move beyond this to become accomplices working to disrupt racism. Assuming a listening stance does not mean to remain silent. The following two actions can also support educators in safeguarding the well-being of BIPOC students and creating a community of respect and care for all students.

## 1. ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS AND GUIDELINES

Because there has been a legacy of not discussing race and racism in K–12 schooling beyond superficial ways that are often limited to canned narratives, educators can anticipate that they, as well as their students, will benefit from putting supports in place for having challenging and courageous conversations about race. Establishing community agreements and guidelines is one powerful way to provide such supports as you and students discuss *Revolution in Our Time*. Here are several resources with options for putting these supports in place.

- From Learning for Justice: [“Let’s Talk! Discussing Race, Racism, and Other Difficult Topics with Students”](#)
- From Facing History and Ourselves: Tips for developing classroom [contracts and norms](#)
- From the Anti-Defamation League: [“Can We Talk? Tips for Respectful Conversations in Schools, Workplaces, and Communities”](#)

You might decide to co-construct classroom community agreements with your students, reminding them that a short and meaningful set of norms will be easier to remember and commit to than a long list of ideas. You might also consider the power and purpose of creating a professional learning community that reads a text like *Courageous Conversations About Race* by Glenn Singleton. A commitment of this nature can help an entire school have productive conversations about race.

## 2. CREATING AFFINITY GROUPS

Conversations about race and racism are inherently difficult and emotional. There are times when having interracial discussions is important and beneficial. And there are times when having conversations in an affinity group can make it possible for racialized groups to further their racial awareness and development. An affinity group is a safe space where all participants share a particular identity. Creating affinity groups is a powerful way to provide the kinds of spaces that help students thrive as they discuss people and their lived experiences and events shared in *Revolution in Our Time*. Learning for Justice’s [Toolkit for Making Space](#) provides further information on creating affinity groups and facilitating these spaces.



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

*Revolution in Our Time* provides a powerful learning experience for students and can be utilized in several ways. It can be read in a four- to six-week unit about the Black Panther Party. Educators can also thread chapters and sections from *Revolution in Our Time* to support units about chattel slavery, the Revolutionary War and the founding of America, the Civil War, the Reconstruction era, and the civil rights movement. *Revolution in Our Time* can also be used to help students learn about topics such as civic engagement, activism and social movements, solidarity, police brutality, and systemic racism.

## STANDARDS

In order to support skills-based assessment by educators in the United States, this guide takes into consideration two nationally recognized sets of skills-based standards: the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for grades 6–8, 9–10, and 11–12 and the [College, Career & Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards](#).

## OVERVIEW OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is organized according to sections of *Revolution in Our Time*. For each section (Preface, Spark, Kindling, Blaze, Embers, and Author's Note), opportunities are provided for students to consider and further their learning. **REFLECTION** prompts invite students to self-reflect in their reader's notebook. **DISCUSSION** questions encourage students to engage in dialogue with peers. **EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION** provide ways for students to extend and deepen their knowledge. For each section, these parts are presented in one consistent order for ease of use. However, this guide aims to provide educators and students with choice and flexibility, so there is no specific order recommended. With each section of *Revolution in Our Time*, the **REFLECTION**, **DISCUSSION**, and **EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION** prompts can be engaged in any order that works best, using all or some of the content provided based on the particular needs of students, the specific learning standards educators hope to address, and time available in classrooms. Finally, this guide concludes with a **CULMINATING WORK** section that includes activities and projects that can be undertaken by students independently or collaboratively to demonstrate their understanding of the Black Panther Party as well as relevant topics and issues.

## REFLECTION

Reflection prompts provide moments for students to process what they're reading and learning about. As students read *Revolution in Our Time*, they are not just learning about the Black Panther Party; they are learning about the history of race and racism in the United States. The reflection prompts are included to support students in the development of their racial consciousness as they notice patterns around race and racism in history as well as today and specifically in their own lives. Students should not be forced to share their responses with their teachers or peers. In fact, because students will be processing and studying their inner dialogue, which requires honesty as they write about their own truths, sharing these thoughts can be detrimental and cause harm. Provide students with time to be in dialogue with themselves as they process and respond to what they're reading.



## DISCUSSION

Discussion questions are invitations for students to talk with their peers and teachers about an important issue raised in the book. Students might engage in discussions with a partner or in small groups. There may also be times when a conversation involving the whole class is preferable. Be sure to review the community agreements established in your classroom prior to these discussions. Making these agreements accessible by posting them in an area of your physical or digital classroom can be a helpful reminder to students about productive ways to talk about race and racism.

## EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION

Exploration and application activities are opportunities for students to investigate events, topics, issues, organizations, and people they learn about as they read. By exploring digital resources such as interviews, videos, articles, podcasts, and websites, students can deepen their understandings about the past and apply their knowledge as they analyze the present. Students can engage in this work independently or collaboratively in or outside of school.

## CULMINATING WORK

If time permits, inviting students to independently or collaboratively engage in culminating work can be a powerful way to commemorate reading *Revolution in Our Time*. The end of this guide includes specific suggestions for ways students might engage in work that reflects their growth as a result of reading and learning about the Black Panther Party. Students can share this work with peers in their physical or digital classrooms.

## PREFACE

Invite students to think about what the word *revolution* means to them, to share their understandings about the role of young people in movements, and to study images associated with the Black Panther Party.

## REFLECTION

1. Which social movements today are you particularly interested in and/or actively participating in?
2. Is there a particular movement that you believe should exist in the world that perhaps you'd like to start? What kind of social change might you advocate for? Why?

## DISCUSSION

1. Talk about some of the various movements, past and present, that young people have been at the center of and what they have accomplished. What happens when people speak up about injustice and thousands follow?
2. The following words by Huey P. Newton appear before the table of contents: “The revolution has always been in the hands of the young.” What does the word *revolution* mean to you? Where do your ideas about this word come from?
3. Magoon writes, “The Panthers fought a revolution in their time, just as we are fighting one in ours” (page ix). What is the revolution being fought in our time?



4. Take a look at the images across the tops of pages viii and ix. What do they help you to notice and wonder about the Black Panther Party? As you read *Revolution in Our Time*, remain alert to what you notice and wonder. Which ideas are validated and which are disrupted as you learn the truth about the Black Panther Party?

## EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION

### PROPAGANDA

Propaganda can be defined as an organized and deliberate spreading of half-truths, false ideas, and lies to influence public opinion. Propaganda techniques are used by marketers to sell products, but also by speech writers, politicians, government officials, the police, and others.

Some of the most common types of propaganda techniques include bandwagon, card stacking, euphemisms, fear, glittering generalities, loaded terms, name calling and ad hominem, plain folks, testimonial, and transfer. Learn more about these techniques at the Propaganda Critic site: [What Is Propaganda Analysis?](#) Magoon writes that the Black Panthers “were called troublemakers, terrorists, and branded as anti-American, but the truth of their work belies these labels” (page ix). As you read *Revolution in Our Time*, jot down some of the propaganda techniques used to spread negative and false information about the Black Panther Party.

### Identifying Propaganda Techniques Used Against the Black Panther Party

<b>Propaganda Technique</b>	<b>Used by . . .</b> Name of person, organization, or institution	<b>Example</b> Text reference/evidence	<b>Analysis</b> Purpose of this tactic and the effect	<b>Citation</b> Chapter and page number



## SPARK: MAY 2, 1967

Invite students to consider how the events of May 2, 1967, at the California state capitol were the spark that put the Black Panther Party front and center on the national stage, the ways images of the Black Panthers were weaponized to evoke fear, and how race plays a central role in laws such as the Mulford Act and the Second Amendment.

### REFLECTION

1. Denzil Dowell was a young Black man killed by the police in 1967. What do you know about the longevity and magnitude of police brutality in the United States?

### DISCUSSION

1. “A picture is worth a thousand words” is a well-known adage that demonstrates the power of images and what they can convey. Look at the images captured of the Black Panther Party from May 2, 1967, at the California state capitol and discuss this paragraph:

“The powerful image of Black men with guns on the steps of the California legislature put the Panthers on the map. For most of white America, that image defined the Black Panther Party. But to freeze the Panthers in this moment is to do them a disservice—it is to overlook the fact that the Panthers went to Sacramento that day not to commit violence but to speak a difficult truth about racism directly to the power structure of the government. They went as law-abiding citizens and yet were treated as an inherent threat because of the color of their skin. Twenty-three Panthers were arrested that day, despite not having broken the law” (page 8).

As you read *Revolution in Our Time*, what do you notice about the way images of the Black Panthers were weaponized, and by whom, to provide a fractured and often false version of them? What happened when Black people exercised their right to bear arms? Why? Do you think this weaponization of images exists today?

2. Read about the American Patriot Rally [protest](#) on April 30, 2020, at the Michigan state capitol and look at images captured of the White armed protestors. What happened when White people exercised their right to bear arms? Why?
3. Magoon uses a powerful metaphor of an earthquake to remind readers that the Black Panthers did not appear overnight. What are some examples of the “deep unrest” (page 9) from which the Black Panther Party emerged? What are some of the societal conditions that Black people were navigating in the United States during this time? What are some of the societal conditions that Black people are navigating today?

### EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION

#### THE SECOND AMENDMENT

The [Second Amendment](#) of the United States Constitution, commonly known as the right to bear arms, was ratified in 1791. The National Rifle Association (NRA), a gun rights advocacy group, was established in 1871. For several decades, proponents of the Second Amendment and members of the NRA have vehemently argued against [gun restrictions](#) and have garnered political power to protect this stance. Yet this wasn’t always the case. The [Mulford Act of 1967](#) is legislation that made it illegal for citizens to carry guns in public in California. This bill was introduced “specifically



to prevent the Panthers from carrying the weapons they used to protect citizens from such police brutality” (page 4). Learn more about the Second Amendment, the NRA’s stance on gun restrictions, and the Mulford Act of 1967.

In what ways was the Mulford Act employed as gun control in order to impose barriers to social and political activism by Black people? What recourse can citizens take when laws are constructed specifically to oppress them?

## KINDLING: 1619–1965

Invite students to consider narratives that are perpetuated about the United States, what is typically omitted and why, policies and practices that intentionally impede racial justice, and ways Black women and young people have fought and continue to fight oppression.

### REFLECTION

1. When you think about the American Revolutionary War, what images and ideas come to mind? Where do they come from?
2. Protecting the institution of slavery was a central cause of the American Revolution as well as of the Civil War. In what ways are these truths a disruption to the images and ideas that are typically used to portray the United States of America? Who or what benefits from denial of these truths?
3. What do you believe are some things people need to unlearn about race, racism, and the history of the United States?

### DISCUSSION

1. Too often, books and teaching about the history of the United States downplay and diminish the truth about colonialism, imperialism, the genocide of Native Americans, and chattel slavery. What is the impact of silencing this history? What is the impact of knowing this history?
2. Magoon writes, “Thus, the founders of the new America enshrined in the most integral document of the land the notion that Black people were less valuable—indeed, less *human*—than white people” (page 17). In what ways was racism “enshrined” in the United States Constitution?
3. In your own words, discuss what *resistance* means. What are you learning about the various ways Black people responded with resistance to oppression during chattel slavery, the Reconstruction era, and the civil rights movement? In what ways do you notice such resistance to oppression by Black people today?
4. Consider connections between: the Fugitive Slave Act and the institution of policing; slavery and sharecropping; enslavement and segregation; enslavement and imprisonment. What do you notice about the way slavery in the United States has evolved over time into new systems that oppress Black people? What changes might result in society if every prospective police officer was required to learn the history of policing in the United States? What changes might result in society if everyone learned this history? Although the institution of slavery ended, what do you notice about the ways racist ideas of the past are carried into institutions and systems such as policing, education, voting, housing, employment, and laws?





5. Words matter. Discuss the longevity of Black people responding to police brutality by protesting in the United States and the language too often used to describe such protests. “‘What’s happening is rebellions, not riots,’ Stokely said. The people needed to be heard, and they had no other way to speak” (page 64). What difference does it make to use words such as *protest*, *rebellion*, and *uprising* rather than *riot*?
6. Understanding the issue of voter suppression today requires learning about the nation’s history of suppressing Black people from voting. Discuss the tactics of the past used to prevent Black people from voting, such as intimidation, tests, long lines, and loss of jobs. Discuss what you know about the use of these tactics today.
7. Discuss social, economic, and political conditions experienced by Black people in the United States that led to the founding of the Lowndes County Freedom Organization and what would become the Black Panther Party. Why is it important to know about the myriad ways Black people fought for their rights and are still doing so today?
8. What are you learning about young people and activism? In what ways have young people been at the center of revolutions?

## EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION

### BLACK WOMEN

Black women have always led the resistance. Learn about some Black women resisters from 1619 to 1965 who are often minimized or omitted from history books and teachings. What can be learned about freedom and humanity by listening to Black women?

[Queen Nzinga](#) (pages 13–15)

[Sojourner Truth](#) (page 19)

[Ida B. Wells–Barnett](#) (page 55)

[Fannie Lou Hamer](#)

[Claudette Colvin](#) (pages 40–43)

### THE 1619 PROJECT

The 1619 Project, created by *New York Times* journalist Nikole Hannah–Jones, spotlights the year 1619 when the first enslaved people arrived in what is now known as the United States. Listen to the introductory podcast and explore the [seventeen original literary works](#) from contemporary Black writers who illuminate the four hundred years of history since 1619. What can be learned about the lasting consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans when Black people are centered in the narrative about who the United States is as a nation?

### TREATIES BETWEEN INDIGENOUS NATIONS AND THE UNITED STATES

Teaching about treaties and territory agreements with Indigenous nations can provide a false reassuring narrative about the United States. In *An Indigenous People’s History of the United States For Young People* by Roxanne Dunbar–Ortiz and adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese, the authors write: “Historians Vine Deloria Jr. and Raymond J. Demallie note that traditionally when Indigenous nations entered into treaties, they considered peace to be more than an end to the fighting. Each side of the agreement had a moral duty to build and maintain a positive relationship with the others. On the other hand, Europeans viewed treaties as legal documents that focused on ending hostilities and as businesslike transactions where ‘the winner’ got something from ‘the loser’” (page 89).



Learn more about such treaties by exploring the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian online exhibit *Nation to Nation: Treaties Between the United States and American Indian Nations*. In what ways does listening to and learning from the voices of those who have been oppressed in the United States matter?

### WHITE RAGE

White rage has been a consistent response to Black achievement and efforts to bring about racial justice. In many examples of violent backlash in response to Black and civil rights progress, decades passed before perpetrators received any legal consequences for their actions. Learn more about some of these events. How do these examples demonstrate the barriers to racial justice? Can racial justice truly be achieved if the laws are written and enforced solely by one group of people?

[Black Wall Street](#) (page 36)

[Greensboro lunch counter protests](#) (pages 46–47)

[Medgar Evers](#) (page 52)

[Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing](#) (pages 51 and 53)

## BLAZE: 1966–1982

Invite students to consider the organizational methods of the Black Panther Party, the various ways they responded to racism in order to support the Black community, the United States government's concerted attacks against them, and the important role of solidarity.

### REFLECTION

1. What are you noticing about the ways Black people have had very different experiences than White people when navigating the institutions of the United States (policing, health care, education, housing, etc.) throughout the nation's history? What have you noticed about how this continues today?
2. What does *self-defense* mean and when is it necessary?
3. In what ways did racist views of Black people contribute to the formation of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense?

### DISCUSSION

1. Review and discuss the Ten-Point Platform of the Black Panther Party (pages 85–87). In what ways does it address systemic racism experienced by Black people in the United States?
2. The Black Panthers operated from a knowledge-is-power ethos. Discuss what the Black Panthers noticed about knowledge of Black history and their actions to educate the Black community.
3. Specific symbols associated with the Black Panther Party have created an image of them and what they represent. Discuss some of these symbols, such as panthers, berets, black clothes, guns, pigs, etc. How were these symbols weaponized in ways that evoked untruths about the Black Panthers? How were these symbols representative of the Black Panthers' deep and powerful ways of knowing and being in the world?
4. What does it mean to be self-sufficient? Why was self-sufficiency necessary and central to the Black Panther Party?



5. The Black Panthers' emphasis and efforts toward self-sufficiency and survival programs were in response to the government's refusal to meet the needs of Black citizens. Discuss specific programs that were examples of the Black Panthers' focus on economic power within the Black community (such as policing the police, the breakfast program, educating the community about Black history, and the pocket lawyer) and how they supported Black people around the country.
6. Anger and rage are commonly associated with destruction. In what ways did the Black Panther Party utilize anger as a righteous tool for creating positive social change?
7. The use of rhetoric by the Black Panther Party provided members of the Black community with language to name and lenses to analyze their lived experiences. Such rhetoric was not only for the purposes of Black people, but also to intentionally disturb White people—to make them uncomfortable with the conditions that Black people navigated daily. Review and discuss Black Panther Party rhetoric (pages 115–119). In what ways did this language capture the social, economic, and political landscape for Black Americans?
8. In what ways did United States government agencies such as the FBI work to silence the Black Panthers from speaking out about racism and injustice?
9. Discuss the government's use of propaganda to portray the Black Panthers as a group of bandits and criminals. What are examples of the ways the Black Panther Party was a highly organized, skilled organization?
10. *Intersectionality*, a term coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, spotlights the ways a person's social identities combine to create nuanced, different forms of discrimination and oppression. Discuss the ways intersectionality impacted Black women in the Black Panther Party and the civil rights movement. In what ways does intersectionality impact people today?
11. Magoon explains, "The FBI kept this program top secret because their agents frequently broke the law and violated the Panthers' constitutional rights while conducting this surveillance. U.S. citizens have the right to form political organizations and protest" (page 200). Today, people from across racial groups herald Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a hero. Yet during the 1960s, Dr. King, like the Black Panther Party, was seen as a threat. Discuss the government-sanctioned goals and tactics to destroy Black leaders and the Black Panther Party, specifically the FBI's counterintelligence program COINTELPRO. What is the role of government in the United States? In what ways was the FBI's COINTELPRO a contradiction to the nation's ideals of freedom and justice for all?
12. U.S. law is built upon the proposition that judges, juries, and law enforcement will treat all citizens equally and that facts and evidence are used to make unbiased and impartial decisions about people in a court of law. How are Bobby Seale's trial and Fred Hampton's murder examples of flaws in this proposition? Do these examples, as well as others that the Black Panther Party experienced, inform your understanding of the relationship between the police and Black people today?
13. The Black Panther Party was a movement that, like others, is not beyond critique. What were some of the internal factors that caused conflict within the party? What were the external forces that sparked some of the internal conflicts?



14. Magoon writes, “If lasting political change was going to happen in the country, with or without a violent revolution, it was essential to get Black people elected to positions of power” (pages 260–261). What do you notice about the racial makeup of those in positions of power in the nation’s institutions past and present? Consider the United States government, CEOs of major companies that you’re aware of, and other examples in your own life. In what ways does lack of representation create barriers to achieving racial justice?

## EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION

### UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FRAMEWORKS

Magoon writes, “The Panthers believed that a system of shared resources would be good for the Black community because it would help promote equality and justice” (page 90). The Black Panther Party was vehemently opposed to capitalism and the economic structures of the United States. Learn about three political and economic frameworks, [capitalism](#), [socialism](#), and [communism](#).

What are some similarities and differences? How do citizens seem to fare under each framework? In what ways can inequities exist within each?

### SOLIDARITY AND ALLIANCES

Explore examples of alliances and cross-racial solidarity between the Black Panther Party and other groups experiencing and fighting oppression. What does solidarity mean to you and how can it help to bring about a more just world?

[American Indian Movement](#)

[Rainbow Coalition](#)

[Students for a Democratic Society](#)

[Young Lords](#)

[Young Patriots](#)

### EMORY DOUGLAS

Learn about the ways Emory Douglas, the Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party, used art to inform and educate the Black community (see “[Emory Douglas: ‘I Was the Revolutionary Artist of the Black Panther Party’](#)”). How did Douglas use anger as a tool for liberation in the Black Panther Party newspaper? What do his ideas about activism and “artivism” entail?

### BLACK POWER AND RACIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISM IN SPORTS

Magoon explains, “The symbol of a raised tight fist stood for Black Power” (page 153). At a rally in 1966, Stokely Carmichael, the leader of SNCC, shouted the words “Black Power,” which would become a rallying cry for Black people fighting oppression. In 1968 Olympians [Tommie Smith and John Carlos](#) raised their fists in solidarity with the Black Power movement and faced severe consequences. There is a history of Black athletes using their platform to speak out against injustices. Learn more about Black athletes, past and present, and their activism. Why are sports a powerful arena for fighting injustice? Why do you think there are attempts to silence athletes from addressing injustice?

[Muhammad Ali](#)

[John Carlos](#)

[Colin Kaepernick](#)

[Jackie Robinson](#)



## EMBERS: 1982–PRESENT

Invite students to consider the responsibility of citizens in holding government accountable for living up to the nation’s ideals of freedom and justice for all and the essential role of young people as changemakers in society.

### REFLECTION

1. “In this country, it would seem, white Americans can do no wrong and deserve to be protected at all costs. If the price of their comfort is the lives and liberty of black Americans, this country is more than happy to pay. The Panthers’ stories, and all these that followed, illuminate a shocking disparity in how people of different races are treated” (page 296). Apathy and silence fuel oppression. Why is it important for White people whose primary experience has been comfort and freedom within the existing culture of the United States to know about the history of race and racism in the United States?
2. What do you believe it will take for the nation to truly live up to its ideals of freedom and justice for all?

### DISCUSSION

1. “Unfortunately, ‘racist progress has consistently followed racial progress,’ writes Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, a noted historian who studies race in America” (page 275). Discuss some of the racist policies passed by the United States government from 1980 to now. In what ways did they create barriers for racial progress and further oppress Black people? In what ways are events such as Barack Obama’s historic election, the White supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the insurrection at the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021, further examples of Dr. Kendi’s message?
2. The Black Lives Matter movement, founded by three Black women, is another example of the critical role of women in leading the revolution. It is also an example of the ways young people and their activism continue to be essential in social justice movements. What connections can you find between the Black Panther Party and the Black Lives Matter movements? What distinctions do you note?
3. A common thread across many social justice movements is collectivism. The Black Panther Party’s unyielding belief in collectivism enabled them to confront systemic barriers that plagued Black people and make astounding accomplishments given the constant attacks and harassment they experienced by the police and the United States government. What does it mean to work in community with one another? What can be learned from a collectivist ideology? In what ways is this at odds with an individualist ideology that is part of the American norm? What do you notice about how individualism contributes to social issues of the past and those today?
4. As a result of reading *Revolution in Our Time*, what have you learned, unlearned, and relearned about race and racism in the United States? What actionable steps will you take to further the revolution in our time?



## EXPLORATION AND APPLICATION

### BLACK PANTHERS TODAY

Read and listen to the perspectives of some of the surviving Black Panthers. What are their ideas about racism and activism today?

BOBBY SEALE, co-founder

[The Truth About the Party That Brought “Power to the People”](#)

[Bobby Seale on Black Panthers and Political Activism](#)

ELAINE BROWN, the first and only woman to lead the Black Panther Party

[Elaine Brown: A Black Panther’s Journey in Breaking New Ground](#)

[Elaine Brown on the 1970s & What’s Needed Today](#)

EMORY DOUGLAS, Minister of Culture

[Emory Douglas: The Art of the Black Panthers](#)

[Emory Douglas Collaborates with Black Lives Matter](#)

ERICKA HUGGINS, leader of the L.A. and New Haven chapters and director of the Oakland Community School

[Radical Commitments: The Revolutionary Vow of Ericka Huggins](#)

[World Trust Facilitator Ericka’s Video Intro](#)

JAMAL JOSEPH, youngest member of the “New York 21”

[“Panther Baby,” from Prisoner to Professor](#)

[Panther Baby—a Revolution of Knowledge and Equality | Jamal Joseph | TEDxFultonStreet](#)

### BLACK LIVES MATTER (BLM) MOVEMENT

ALICIA GARZA, co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, which first appeared as a hashtag on Twitter, says, “Hashtags do not start movements, people do.” Learn about the origins and history of the BLM movement. What have you noticed about the role of technology, specifically social media, in the BLM movement and other kinds of advocacy for equality and justice? How important do you believe social media is to young people who are interested in activism? What is important to remember about the role of people in movements?

[An Interview with the Founders of Black Lives Matter | Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi](#)

[Alicia Garza on the Origin of Black Lives Matter](#)

## AUTHOR’S NOTE

### REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

1. Magoon writes, “The truth is, so many of the movements that have shaped this country (and the world) have been led by young people” (page 310). Magoon recognizes that young people, right now, are leaders of the revolution. Imagine she is visiting your class or school. Respond to the questions she always asks of young people. “Who do you want to be *right now*? What can you do tomorrow to push yourself one tiny step closer to your goals? What can you do today to help make the world a better place, whatever that means to you?” (page 309)
2. Set your intentions about who you want to be and how you plan to show up in the world by sharing your responses with a peer. How might you work together to hold each other accountable for moving forward with your ideas for creating a more just world?



## CULMINATING WORK

Invite students to consider one of the following options to commemorate their experience reading and discussing *Revolution in Our Time*. Provide options for students to share their work with peers.

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Revolution in Our Time* provides readers with the comprehensive history of the Black Panther Party—history that has been both falsely presented and silenced for far too long. Because of such silencing, there is more to learn about the Black Panthers, about their activism and their lived experiences.

Interviews are critical primary sources that provide insights that might otherwise remain hidden and can support new understanding. This interview with Black Panther Party leader [Bobby Seale](#) is an example.

If you could interview one of the Black Panthers today, who would you choose and why? Review the KEY PEOPLE section (pages 318–323) as you consider the person you might choose. What do you most want to know? Prepare a set of interview questions that you would ask. What additional information and stories do you think might be unearthed?

### SYSTEMIC RACISM

To the Black Panther Party, knowledge was power. They knew the laws and they knew how racism functioned systemically to oppress Black people. Research and collect racial data on one of the institutions of the United States, such as health care, housing, education, policing, or prison. Create an infographic that demonstrates racial disparities. Like the Black Panthers did, be sure to name what creates such disparities within the specific system and what is needed to reduce them.

### INTERACTIVE TIME LINES

Creating a time line is a powerful way to organize and chronologically sequence important events across history. Reading time lines helps us to better understand key events by recognizing change, patterns, and cause-and-effect relationships of historical and social significance.

Review the TIME LINE in *Revolution in Our Time* (pages 324–325). Take note of its construction, the information it provides, and how the labels PROGRESS and BACKLASH make it possible to note patterns across the history of the Black Panther Party.

Use a digital platform to create an interactive time line of the Black Panther Party. Determine which dates and events you'd like to spotlight. For each date, link to a digital resource such as a photograph, podcast, video, interview, or article that provides additional information. For each date and event you select for your time line, ask yourself, *Why this date/event?* How might you construct your time line to make your purpose and intention clear to those who read it?

Alternatively, create a vertical time line. To construct an interactive vertical time line, select one year from the history of the Black Panther Party that intrigues you. Place that year on your time line and name the key event. Then, above and below that event, list key events that happened in the world that same year in chronological order. Link each event to a digital resource. Once you've finished creating your vertical time line, what can you notice about issues happening in the world that year? Are there any significant patterns or contrasts that can be observed? What understanding about people and issues does it provide?





## KEKLA MAGOON

Kekla Magoon's young adult novel *The Rock and the River*, which won the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award, was the first mainstream novel for young people to feature the Black Panther Party. She is the Margaret A. Edwards Award–winning author of more than a dozen books for young readers, including *Fire in the Streets* and *How It Went Down*. She is also the coauthor, with Ilyasah Shabazz, of *X: A Novel*, which was long-listed for the National Book Award and received an NAACP Image Award and a Coretta Scott King Honor. Kekla Magoon grew up in Indiana and now lives in Vermont, where she serves on the faculty at Vermont College of Fine Arts.



## DR. SONJA CHERRY-PAUL

This guide was prepared by Dr. Sonja Cherry-Paul, an educator and author and the co-founder of the Institute for Racial Equity in Literacy. She is the director of diversity and equity at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University. As a former middle school English teacher, she developed curriculum that centered the work of racial literacy in K-12 schools. She leads presentations at educational conferences and works with educators around the world providing professional development on anti-racist reading and writing instruction.

