SPRINGBOARDS FOR DISCUSSING CONTEMPORARY RACISM

Student Instructions: This page contains springboards for you to dive into a discussion of racism. Feel free to discuss the questions in any order or create springboards of your own. The key thing is not to answer all the questions, but to have a good discussion in which everyone participates fully.

1. Although old-style racism and the use of racial epithets have gradually diminished in many countries, subtler forms of racism have flourished. Is this change an improvement?

2. Is it racist to use the term "White" to describe European Americans?

3. Is it racist to use the term "non-White" to describe people of color?

4. Can people of color be racist?

5. Although many people are quick to detect and condemn instances of racial prejudice, White privilege often goes undetected. What explains this difference?

6. What is the difference between equal opportunity and affirmative action? Do the two policies contradict each other?

7. If affirmative action is to continue, should its main goal be to remedy past discrimination, correct current unfairness, promote diversity, or something else? (Note: Its implementation may vary by goal.)

8. Is it racist for athletic teams to use names such as the Indians, Braves, and Redskins? If not, would it be okay to use team names such as the Hispanics, Chinamen, or Blackskins?

9. If it is racist for athletic teams to use names such as the Indians, Braves, and Redskins, is it racist to watch their games?

10. Do you support or oppose the idea of racial profiling (for example, greater scrutiny of Arab passengers) in airport security?

11. If profiling on the basis of race is wrong, is it also wrong to profile on the basis of gender? For instance, is it wrong for a woman walking alone to take greater protective measures when encountering a male stranger than a female stranger?

12. In cases of adoption, should agencies try to match the race of children and parents, or should adoptions be carried out in a race-blind manner?

13. Is it wrong to have an all-Black student dormitory? What about an all-White dormitory? Does the answer depend upon minority-majority status?

14. What is the ideal degree of integration to have in society? Is the same ideal shared by people of all races?

15. Does the existence of Black, Latino, and Asian student groups combat racism, reinforce separatism, both, or neither?

[From UnderstandingPrejudice.org]