



STUDY GUIDE

HOW TO END WHITE PRIVILEGE

KEY TERMS:

woke
common sense

disingenuous
virtue

privilege
victim mentality

NOTE-TAKING COLUMN: Complete this section <u>during</u> the video. Include definitions and key terms.	CUE COLUMN: Complete this section <u>after</u> the video.
<p>Who does asking for forgiveness regarding 'white privilege' help?</p> <p>In her 1988 article, how many 'white privileges' did Peggy McIntosh list that she had?</p> <p>What is white privilege an attempt by the Left to do?</p>	<p>In what way does 'white privilege' exist?</p> <p>Why is the notion of 'white privilege' a sham?</p>

DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- At the beginning of the video, Mr. Tatum opens with, “‘Woke’ white people, I’d like to ask you a favor: Please stop asking for forgiveness for your ‘white privilege.’ You’re not fooling anybody. You’re not helping black people- or any other minority. And your public confessions don’t make you look virtuous. They make you look disingenuous, which is a really nice way of saying fake, phony, and fraudulent.” Who, specifically, do you think Mr. Tatum is addressing? Why do you think that some people believe in the notion of ‘white privilege?’ Explain. Why do you think that Mr. Tatum characterizes the people who take the notion of ‘white privilege’ seriously as disingenuous? Explain.
- Next, Mr. Tatum asks, “For starters, what is ‘white privilege’ anyway? Because you were born with white skin, you have all these advantages that I don’t have? Like what?” How do you think people who take the notion of ‘white privilege’ seriously would answer Mr. Tatum’s questions here? What are your answers to Mr. Tatum’s questions here? Explain.
- Later in the video, Mr. Tatum explains that, “Today, these so-called Progressives dominate our colleges and universities, imposing this absurd notion of ‘white privilege’ on their students. That’s too bad. Because it does nothing good for white students. And it does nothing good for black students.” Considering that it does much more harm than good, why do you think that Progressives impose their agenda onto students at universities, and why do you think that the universities allow such damage to occur? Explain. Do you agree that identity politics and victimhood mentality should be allowed to be so pervasive on college campuses- to the point that professors are indoctrinating students to their own personal politics through their curriculum and classes? Why or why not?
- After explaining about how creating a victim mentality is bad for blacks, Mr. Tatum goes on to point out that, “ ...I wouldn’t deny for a second that there are privileges in life. They’re all over the place. There’s two-parent family privilege (that’s huge), there’s being lucky to be born in America privilege, there’s good genes privilege. But white privilege? Doesn’t it depend on the person? Let’s take this for example. A black lawyer and his wife have a baby. And a meth addict, single white woman has a baby. Which kid has privilege? The white one? Because he’s white?” What do you think Mr. Tatum means when he asks, “Doesn’t it depend on the person?” Explain. What main point is Mr. Tatum making with this last set of questions? Do you agree with Mr. Tatum’s point here? Why or why not?
- At the end of the video, Mr. Tatum concludes that, “ ... white privilege is an attempt by the Left to divide Americans by race. It’s all theory and all nonsense. If you want to fall for it, go ahead. It’s a free country. But don’t try to sell it to me. I’m an American who deals with my fellow Americans one-on-one. Try it. It works.” Why do you think that the Left is so obsessed with perceived racial inequality? Explain. What exactly does Mr. Tatum mean by stating ‘I’m an American who deals with my fellow Americans- one on one?’ Explain.

EXTEND THE LEARNING:

CASE STUDY: White Privilege

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “What Does Teaching ‘White Privilege’ Actually Accomplish? Not What You Might Think (Or Hope),” then answer the questions that follow.

- The author of the article, Mr. Jilani, writes, “ ... there is a danger that, by talking about this inequality as an all-consuming phenomenon, we will end up creating a flattened and unfair image that portrays all whites in all situations and all contexts as benefiting from unearned advantages. Indeed, it’s possible that we will cause people to confuse a structural inequality that exists on the level of group average with the circumstances of every individual within a particular racial group.” Do you agree that this approach is confusing and the wrong approach? Why or why not? Mr. Jilani goes on to note that, “In 2017, whites in the United States had a suicide rate of 17.8 per 100,000; for Hispanics, that rate was 6.9; for African- Americans, it was 6.9. The only group with a higher suicide rate than whites was Native Americans, at 22.2. ...The group of which I am part, Asian-Americans, would be ‘privileged’ on this index, since our rate (6.6) is well below that of whites. But would it really be wise for me to tackle the social problem of suicide by zooming in on some idea of ‘Asian privilege?’” How would you answer Mr. Jilani’s question? Explain.
- Why do you think that Ms. Adkins attributed her success to ‘white privilege’ rather than to other factors such as hard work or luck? Explain. Mr. Jilani writes in the article, “If we extend the logic of privilege beyond the issue of race, it’s easy to see the flaws with this approach. We know, for instance, that 93 percent of people in U.S. federal prisons are men. In nearly every part of the criminal justice system, in fact, men on average have it worse than women do. But does that then mean we should be discussing ‘female privilege?’ Would it be beneficial to the men behind bars for women to proclaim awareness of their ‘privileged’ status?” How would you answer this last question? What is the final point that Mr. Jilani makes in the last paragraph of the article, and do you agree with it? Why or why not? Has reading this article or watching the video altered your perspective or view on the subject of ‘white privilege’ in any way? If no, why not? If yes, in what ways? Explain.
- Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Jilani points out that, “When we talk about racial inequality, it is important to understand that we’re often talking about structural or society-wide averages, not the status of all individuals at all times. It is true, for instance, that African Americans are disproportionately impacted by poverty. That means a higher percentage of African Americans live in poverty as compared to whites. But the largest number of individuals in the United States who live in poverty are white. We can’t, and we shouldn’t, assume anything about any individual’s life solely based on his or her race, or based on larger facts about racial inequality.” Do you agree with Mr. Jilani’s point here? Why or why not? Do you think that Mr. Jilani’s point here matches with Mr. Tatum’s view at the end of the video to ‘deal with others one-on-one’? Why or why not? Do you agree that Mr. Tatum’s view is much more aligned with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s notion of judging by the content of character instead of by color of skin than the view of the so-called social justice warriors on left? Why or why not?



QUIZ

HOW TO END WHITE PRIVILEGE

1. When asking for forgiveness regarding 'white privilege' it helps _____.
 - a. black people
 - b. Hispanic people
 - c. Asian people
 - d. none of the above

2. In her 1988 article, how many 'white privileges' did Peggy McIntosh list that she had?
 - a. 26
 - b. 36
 - c. 46
 - d. 56

3. Today, Progressives dominate our colleges and universities, imposing this absurd notion of white privilege on their students.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. What are some examples of privileges that actually exist in the United States?
 - a. the two-parent family privilege
 - b. the lucky-to-be-born-in-America privilege
 - c. the good genes privilege
 - d. all of the above

5. White privilege is an attempt by the Left to _____.
 - a. validate the moral superiority of whites
 - b. divide Americans by race
 - c. unify all ethnicities by nationality
 - d. balance conservative and Leftist values



QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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<https://quillette.com/2019/05/23/what-does-teaching-white-privilege-actually-accomplish-not-what-you-might-think-or-hope/>

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What Does Teaching ‘White Privilege’ Actually Accomplish? Not What You Might Think (Or Hope)

written by Zaid Jilani



I recently attended a Washington-D.C. event focused on community-building hosted by The Aspen Institute’s Weave project, which works to reduce social isolation and build bonds between Americans. During one portion of the event, various activists described how racism had impacted their lives and their communities. Following a number of such testimonials, a white woman from southeast Ohio named Sarah Adkins spoke about her own community work, which involves raising money to provide post-trauma support to individuals affected by tragedies.

Perhaps because several speakers had discussed racism and issues related to white privilege, Adkins spoke about her own self-perceived racial privilege. “I followed the perfect mold...I did all the things, I went to college, and I keep thinking of white privilege in my head so forgive me, that’s what’s in my head right now, very much white privilege,” she said, while reflecting on her middle class life in an affluent neighborhood.

But Adkins also went on to describe the reason she originally had become involved in community work—which is that her then-husband had killed both of her sons and then later took his own life. One can only imagine how much suffering this caused her. Yet she still viewed herself as privileged due to her race.

“I was wealthy, okay, I was a pharmacist, I made a lot of money, right? So after that happened, I really wanted to understand that for me there definitely was a lot of white privilege. I had money, I had health insurance, so people came in and cleaned up my house. I was able to pay for a funeral for my children,” she said.

I wondered how someone who’d lived through such an awful tragedy could consider themselves to be in any way “privileged.” Yes, she had the funding to clean up her home and bury her relatives. But nearly everybody has at least some advantages in life. It feels perverse for someone who has suffered so much to be confessing their perceived advantages.

When activists and academics invoke the phrase “white privilege,” they typically are speaking of advantages that whites, on average, have over members of other ethnic minority groups in our society. And there is no doubt that racial inequality is both real and persistent in the United States, where I live, and elsewhere. There is a sizable racial wealth gap, a life expectancy gap, and an incarceration gap. Many of America’s most pressing social problems disproportionately harm people from minority groups.

But there is a danger that, by talking about this inequality as an all-consuming phenomenon, we will end up creating a flattened and unfair image that portrays all whites in all situations and all contexts as benefiting from unearned advantages. Indeed, it’s possible that we will cause people to confuse a structural inequality that exists on the level of group average with the circumstances of every individual within a particular racial group.

In the case of Adkins’s tragic story, it’s not even clear that being white in any way constituted a form of privilege. Recent research has found a huge surge in white working-class suicides. In 2017, whites in the United States had a suicide rate of 17.8 per 100,000; for Hispanics, that rate was 6.9; for African-Americans, it was 6.9. The only group with a higher suicide rate than whites was Native Americans, at 22.2.

The phenomenon of suicide is not perfectly understood, but it is generally believed that loneliness and alienation are driving factors. Whites in America tend (on average) to be more culturally individualistic, while those from other groups tend (again, on average) to exhibit more collectivist social values. The group of which I am part, Asian-Americans, would be “privileged” on this index, since our rate (6.6) is well below that of whites. But would it really be wise for me to tackle the social problem of suicide by zooming in on some idea of “Asian privilege?”

In fact, research recently published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* suggests that such an approach wouldn’t just be unhelpful. It would actually be harmful.

I recently interviewed Erin Cooley, a psychology professor and lead researcher at Colgate University, about her research for *Greater Good* magazine. She studies prejudice and structural inequality and her research has illuminated the ways in which persistent racism continues to negatively impact the lives of racial minorities in America. A study she recently published, for instance, shows how participants were more likely to associate poverty with blacks as opposed to whites. Her team found that this association helps predict opposition toward policies that involve economic redistribution, since it is widely believed that these policies benefit blacks over whites.

Her team was curious about the impact of teaching people about white privilege. Would it make people more sympathetic toward poor blacks? As part of their research, Cooley and her colleagues offered study participants a reading on white privilege—based partly on the seminal work of Peggy McIntosh, who originally formulated the concept in the 1980s—and then described to them the plight of a hypothetical man, identified as either white or black, who is down on his luck.

What the researchers found is that among social liberals—i.e., participants who had indicated that they hold liberal beliefs about social issues—reading a text about white privilege did nothing to significantly increase their sympathy toward the plight of poor blacks. But, as Cooley told me, “it did significantly bump down their sympathy for a [hypothetical] poor white person.” (Among conservative participants, there was observed no significant change in attitudes at all.)

What accounts for this? One possibility is that social liberals are internalizing white-privilege lessons in a way that flattens the image of whites, portraying all of them as inherently privileged. So if a white person is poor, it must be his or her own fault. After all, they've had all sorts of advantages in life that others haven't.

When we talk about racial inequality, it is important to understand that we're often talking about structural or society-wide averages, not the status of all individuals at all times. It is true, for instance, that African Americans are disproportionately impacted by poverty. That means a higher percentage of African Americans live in poverty as compared to whites. But the largest number of *individuals* in the United States who live in poverty are white. We can't, and we shouldn't, assume anything about any individual's life solely based on his or her race, or based on larger facts about racial inequality.

Racism exists, of course, and its impact is disproportionately felt by society's minority populations. I have personally spent a decent chunk of my reporting career documenting this. But the fact that disparate treatment is inflicted on racial minorities doesn't prove the existence of an all-encompassing pattern of white privilege. "If you're white, chances are seeing a police officer fills you with one of two things: relief or gratitude," writes one advocate of a privilege-centric worldview. But around half of the people who are killed every year by U.S. police officers are white. True, police violence falls *disproportionately* on ethnic minorities, especially African Americans. But if you're white and you've been abused by a police officer, your individual experience may be just as painful as that of a black person who's suffered similar abuse.

If we extend the logic of privilege beyond the issue of race, it's easy to see the flaws with this approach. We know, for instance, that 93 percent of people in U.S. federal prisons are men. In nearly every part of the criminal justice system, in fact, men on average have it worse than women do. But does that then mean we should be discussing "female privilege"? Would it be beneficial to the men behind bars for women to proclaim awareness of their "privileged" status?

A typical conservative response to privilege discourse is to downplay the very real inequalities that exist. This isn't helpful. We can't escape talking about inequality in a diverse society. For instance, we shouldn't shy away from looking at high maternal mortality rates among black women and how it may be linked to inadequate cultural competence among medical staff. However, what I would suggest is that we change the *way* we talk about this inequality. Asking whites to publicly confess their white privilege—in a manner that often resembles a religious ritual more than anything else—may lead us to unfairly flatten the experience of whites while, ironically, actually shifting attention away from those who are underprivileged. The Cooley study shows that this isn't just a hypothetical concern; it's a reality that has been demonstrated through research.

One alternative to white-privilege discourse would be to focus on the causes and consequences of deprivation rather than on naming groups of people we believe to hold special advantages—and to stop referring to things that we should expect for all people as "privileges." It is not a privilege to have a decent and safe childbirth, or avoid harassment by the police, or to have enough to eat. All of those things should be something we *expect*. While we can and should aggressively address inequality, we should make sure the methods we employ serve to strengthen our sense of empathy rather than sap it.

Zaid Jilani, a journalist, is currently on fellowship, studying political and social polarization at UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. He is also the co-host of the podcast *Extremely Offline*, which brings together guests from competing political tribes for civil dialogue. Follow him on Twitter @ZaidJilani.

Featured image: Photo taken at Baltimore Women's March, 2018.