

Newburgh Free Academy's 2020 One Book Summer Read



The story of Pecola Breedlove has never been an easy one to hear.

When author Toni Morrison introduced 11-year-old Pecola to the world in her 1970 novel The Bluest Eye, many libraries banned the book.

Audiences have debated for years the difficult themes of Morrison's classic: The life-long damage of sexual abuse, particularly Pecola's rape by her father and subsequent pregnancy. How the dark-skinned girl prays for blue eyes because she believes that with them her life would be better. The Bluest Eye is not a comfortable read, but it is a beautiful, necessary read. And it is increasingly timely in a period when America's unreconciled legacy of racism is haunting the nation. Toni Morrison's novel enlightens readers about the challenges plaguing Blacks in America, what oppression looks and feels like, and what it creates, while evincing the commonalities among all people.

Communities around the world have taken to social media and the streets to protest the unlawful, unjust treatment that occurs to individuals based on race. The United States has a deep history of racism and oppression, and while some progress has been made, explicit and implicit racism still exist. Angela Davis said it best when she said, "In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be antiracist". Deconstructing implicit biases, preconceived notions about race, and working to educate yourself on relevant matters are steps that you can take towards being an active advocate against racial injustice.

Individuals around the world are ready to engage: in conversation, in protest, in advocacy, in revolution. When it comes to tackling the issue of racial equity, we need to be cognizant and informed of the fundamental issues related to it. Creating purposeful dialogue on race helps to be better equipped in fighting injustices.

Read Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye this summer and join the conversation in the fall. There are several creative options included in the choice board. Choice boards will be shared by your classroom teacher. Use your imagination and passion to express your ideas, questions or position. Several activities will be scheduled in the fall, at the three campuses, to showcase your work.