

Parent Guidebook

# Fighting Critical Race Theory in K-12 Schools

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## DEFINITION

Critical race theory is an academic discipline that holds that the United States is a nation founded on white supremacy and oppression, and that these forces are still at the root of our society. Critical race theorists believe that American institutions such as the U.S. Constitution and the legal system preach freedom and equality but are mere “camouflages” for naked racial domination. They believe that racism is a constant, universal condition that simply becomes more subtle, sophisticated, and insidious over the course of history. In simple terms, critical race theory reformulates the old Marxist dichotomy of oppressor and oppressed, replacing the class categories of bourgeoisie and proletariat with the identity categories of White and Black. But the basic conclusion is the same: in order to liberate man, society must be fundamentally transformed through moral, economic, and political revolution.

### Key terms

Whiteness, white privilege, white fragility, oppressor/oppressed, intersectionality, systemic racism, spirit murder, equity, antiracism, collective guilt, affinity groups

### Further Reading

Hillsdale *Imprimis*, “[Critical Race Theory: What It Is and How to Fight It](#)”

YouTube, “[Critical Race Theory](#)”

*City Journal*, “[Woke Education](#)”



## KEY CONCEPTS

**Race essentialism:** Critical race theory reduces individuals to the quasi-metaphysical categories of “blackness” and “whiteness” and then loads those categories with value connotations—positive traits are attributed to “blackness” and negative traits are attributed to “whiteness.” Although some critical race theorists formally reject race essentialism, functionally they often use these categories as malicious labels that erase individual identities.

**Collective guilt:** Critical race theory claims that individuals categorized as “white” are inherently responsible for injustice and oppression committed by white populations in the past. This concept is sometimes framed as “white guilt,” “white shame,” and “white complicity,” which are psychological manifestations of collective guilt.

**Opposition to equality under the law:** Critical race theorists explicitly reject the principle of equality under the law, including the Fourteenth Amendment and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They argue that legal equality, nondiscrimination, and colorblindness are mere “camouflages” used to uphold white supremacist structures.

**Opposition to meritocracy:** Critical race theorists oppose meritocracy, especially standardized testing and competitive admissions in the education system. They claim that meritocracy is a mechanism to uphold racist structures and is derived from “racism, nativism, and eugenics.”

**Active racial discrimination:** Critical race theorists believe that the state must actively discriminate against racial groups that are deemed “privileged,” meaning whites and sometimes Asians. Critical race theorists support policies such as racial quotas, race-based benefits, and race-based redistribution of wealth.

**Restriction of free speech:** Critical race theorists believe that the First Amendment serves to advance the interests of white supremacy and systemic racism under the guise of freedom of speech. They argue that the government should restrict freedom of speech that is “racist” or “hateful.”





**Abolition of whiteness:** Critical race theorists believe that society should work to “abolish the white race.” Although they often insist that this means dismantling cultural constructions associated with white identity, this language often adopts tropes associated with race eliminationism.

**Neo-segregation:** Critical race theorists endorse a new form of racial segregation—often called “racial affinity groups” or “racial caucuses”—with separate meetings, facilities, living quarters, and training programs for whites and racial minorities. The assumption is that whites must “do the work” to address their “internalized racial superiority,” and racial minorities must be protected from invasive “whiteness.”

**Anti-capitalism:** Critical race theorists have adopted the core Marxist position of anti-capitalism, arguing that America is an “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.” They argue that “whiteness, initially constructed as a form of racial identity, evolved into a form of property,” allowing whites to extend domination from slavery into the free-market society. The solution is to redistribute private property and dismantle the system of capitalism.

### Further Reading

Christopher F. Rufo, “[Critical Race Theory Briefing Book](#)”

New Discourses, “[Social Justice Encyclopedia](#)”

Center for Renewing America, “[Critical Race Theory Terms](#)”



## HOW TO GET ORGANIZED

**Get started.** Attend your local school board meetings. Ask questions, provide comments, and connect with people. Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join you at the meetings. Use this as an opportunity to connect with parents who share your values.

**Get to know your school board.** Connect with school board members personally. It is much easier to persuade someone with whom you have a relationship. Find out how long they've served on the school board. Ask why they ran in the first place? You can tailor your arguments to their needs, motivations, and concerns.

**Identify a specific goal.** Channel the energy from fellow parents toward a specific goal. What exactly do you want? Think of this as your mission statement. It should be short, specific, and easy to understand. For example, you might want to force the resignation of an uncooperative superintendent, persuade the school board to ban critical race theory, or lobby for a curriculum transparency resolution.

**Build a leadership team.** It takes a team of dedicated parents to achieve your goals. Identify your most committed allies, and assign them roles. If your teammates have personal or professional experience in organizing, project management, or team-building, they will be great assets to your cause.

**Join the grassroots network of parent groups.** Parents Defending Education, Moms for Liberty, No Left Turn in Education, and Save Our Schools are national organizations that provide resources and coordination for local parent groups. Contact them to see if there are chapters in your area; if not, start one. There is strength in numbers, and these organizations can help guide your local group.

**Gather evidence, and build your case.** First, talk to your kids about what they're learning in school. Second, you can submit a public records request to get curricular, budget, and training materials from your local school or district. Judicial Watch put together a useful presentation explaining the process here, here, and here.

**Make the issue as public as possible.** Send an email to all the administrators and parents in your school. Attach evidence of CRT practices. Start a brushfire of angry parents. That will make it easier to identify your friends and force the administration to respond to the controversy. Parents at a private high school in Houston, Texas, used this strategy and succeeded in getting CRT banned from their school.

**Choose a capable spokesperson.** Choose someone who is sympathetic, professional, and comfortable speaking in public. Watch four good examples of powerful school board speeches [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). These speakers use evidence to support their arguments, share personal stories about how divisive ideologies have impacted their families, and communicate with respectful passion.

**Make strong arguments.** Have evidence to support every claim you make. Do not give them an easy win by making an accusation you cannot defend. If there are books, lesson plans, or internal documents promoting critical race theory concepts, pull the most objectionable quotes, read them aloud, and ask the school board members if they agree. Parents in Westchester County, New York, used this technique and forced the district to cancel a contract with a “diversity, equity, and inclusion” consultant who had once written that she wanted her newborn daughter to “acknowledge and understand her impact as someone who walks into rooms in the skin of a colonizer. An enslaver. A racist.”

**Understand your opponents, and never lose your cool.** There will be left-wing school board members, administrators, and teachers who support critical race theory. They prefer to operate in the dark, without public knowledge or transparency, because they “know best” and don’t want parents to interfere. When you expose them, they might respond with ugly, personal attacks. You must remain calm, focused, and respectful—always keep the moral high ground, ignore the attacks as much as possible, and focus on executing your goal. Do not respond to their insults and slurs; stay on the offense and force them to defend their ideas.

**Run for the school board.** If your school board members will not listen to parents, consider running for the school board yourself or recruiting another parent to engage in the process. The [1776 Project PAC](#) has worked with candidates across the country who have successfully won elections fighting critical race theory.

## WINNING THE LANGUAGE WAR

Critical race theorists have constructed a series of powerful linguistic tools. To successfully fight against critical race theory, we must adopt language that is trenchant and persuasive, and resonates with the public. Here are some powerful words and phrases to include in your communications.

### Phrases to use when defining critical race theory

- "Race-based Marxism"
- "State-sanctioned racism"
- "Woke racism"
- "Racial engineering"
- "Critical race theory divides Americans into oppressor and oppressed based on their skin color."
- "Critical race theory says the solution to past discrimination is present discrimination. I reject this. Racism is always wrong."
- "I oppose racism, whether it comes from the Klan or from critical race theory."
- "Critical race theory teaches that individualism, rationality, and hard work are racist. That is an insult to hard-working American families of all racial backgrounds."
- "Critical race theory rejects the idea of equal protection under the law. I believe everyone has the right to equal treatment, no matter where they come from."

### Phrases to use when discussing critical race theory in schools

- "Race reeducation programs"
- "Political predators" (reference to activist teachers)
- "Neo-racist theories have no place in public education."
- "Critical race theory teaches children that they are defined by their race, not as individuals."
- "Critical race theory teaches children to hate each other and hate their country."
- "Critical race theorists have the right to express their beliefs as individuals; they do not have the right to use taxpayer money to indoctrinate children."





- “Critical race theory is not a free speech issue; it’s a compelled speech issue. Public schools do not have the right to violate a child’s conscience.”
- “We must prioritize excellence, which inspires people from all racial backgrounds to achieve their potential.”
- “Our goal is diversity without division.”

### **Phrases for describing anti-CRT legislation and school board resolutions**

- “Neo-racist theories have no place in our public institutions.”
- “Public institutions must reflect the values of the public—not fringe racial theories that seek to divide Americans into oppressor and oppressed.”
- “This bill does not prevent schools from teaching about racism, slavery, and segregation. It prohibits schools from indoctrinating students into fringe racial theories that claim one race is superior to another or that individuals should be treated differently on the basis of race.”
- “This is not a free speech issue; it’s a compelled speech issue. The government does not have the right to force individuals to believe in race essentialism, collective guilt, or racial superiority theory.”
- “Free speech was designed to protect the individual against the government, not to empower the government to force individuals to believe in fringe racial theories.”
- “This legislation is about limited government—public institutions can no longer promote racist theories using taxpayer dollars.”



## COUNTER- ARGUMENTS AND RESPONSES

Critical race theory supporters have attempted to dismiss parents with three primary counterarguments: that critical race theory isn't taught in K-12 schools, that opponents can't define critical race theory, and that critical race theory is just "teaching history." Here are the responses to rebut those claims.

### **Counterargument: Critical race theory isn't taught in K-12 schools.**

**Response:** Critical race theory began in the late 1980s in law schools but over the decades has become prominent in other academic disciplines and the K-12 education system. There are thousands of pages of academic literature and a number of textbooks on "critical race theory in education," instructing primary and secondary school teachers how to adopt critical race theory principles into the classroom. CRT cofounder Kimberlé recently boasted that "critical race theory originated in law schools" but was adopted by "K-12 teachers"—"and that's a good thing." In the words of Richard Delgado, another CRT cofounder, "critical race theory is in some way livelier in education right now than it is in law." While most K-12 schools do not explicitly label their materials as "critical race theory," any school that is teaching its core principles—such as whiteness, systemic racism, white privilege, and intersectionality—is, by definition, *practicing* critical race theory in the classroom.

### **Counterargument: Opponents can't define critical race theory.**

**Response:** This is an attempt to embarrass parents who are not versed in obscure academic jargon. The solution is to have a simple definition of critical race theory at the ready: "Critical race theory teaches that the United States is a fundamentally racist nation and divides Americans into 'oppressor' and 'oppressed' based on their skin color." After giving this short definition, the best argument is to pivot toward specific examples from your school district and explain how the divisive teachings have affected your children and family. You do not need a PhD to understand critical race theory; you simply need to show the specific harm it is doing to your local institutions. Most parents have an intuitive understanding that teaching children that they are "oppressors" or "oppressed" is morally wrong. There is no need to use academic jargon to justify this simple truth.

## Counterargument: Critical race theory is just teaching history.

**Response:** Critical race theory is a political ideology, not a historical discipline. It argues that America is a permanently and irredeemably racist nation—and that “all white people are racist” because they benefit from “white privilege.” The ideology of critical race theory assigns collective guilt to racial groups and promotes the noxious narrative that individuals are inherently oppressive or oppressed based on their race. We support teaching a full, honest look at American history—including the evils of slavery, racism, and segregation—but within the context of America’s highest ideals and our steady progress toward realizing them. Critical race theory is an ideology of racial pessimism, which is toxic to children of all racial groups. Teaching honest history is important; teaching a left-wing political ideology is wrong.

### Further Reading

Center for Renewing America, [“Critical Race Theory Claims and Responses”](#)



