



## **CENTER FOR 1776**

*Critical Race Theory is Not What the American People Want*



# CRITICAL RACE THEORY IS NOT WHAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT

*Our Nation is more polarized than ever before. Today, American patriotism and the values that founded the greatest political experiment of all time are under attack.*

## WHAT IS CRITICAL RACE THEORY

**Critical Race Theory (CRT):** The intellectual origins of CRT go back to the critical legal studies movement of the 1960s and 1970s that was a byproduct of Marxist critical theory. CRT, organized in 1989, is defined in many ways. A common definition is as follows: “Critical race theorists hold that the law and legal institutions in the United States are inherently racist insofar as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between whites and non-whites, especially African Americans ([Britannica, n.d.](#)).” **CRT explicitly rejects the ideals of meritocracy and a color-blind society.**

School districts across the country have adopted the following CRT definition: “The Critical Race Theory movement considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. **Unlike traditional civil rights**, which embrace incrementalism and step-by-step progress, **critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism and principles of constitutional law** ([Delgado, Stefancic, 2001](#)).”

## AMERICA TODAY

- American pride reached a 2-decade low in 2020, with only 63% of adults reporting to feel “extremely proud” or “very proud” to be American ([Brenan, 2020](#)).
- Based on the origins of CRT, politicians and CRT advocates have divided Americans into “oppressors” and “oppressed” categories and continue to perpetuate the notion that racism is inextricably embedded in our country’s laws and social constructs.
- Top political leaders instill shame in Americans by stating, “our country was founded on racism” ([Piro, 2019](#)).
- Data from a [recent survey](#) indicates that 80% of Americans oppose using classrooms to promote political activism to students.
  - 70% said it is **not important** or not at all important for schools to “teach students that their race is the most important thing about them.”
  - Only 25% said it was somewhat or very important for schools to “teach students that their race is the most important thing about them.”
  - 69% opposed schools teaching that America was founded on racism and is structurally racist.

- Just 20% believe we should recognize that America was founded on racism and start over with something new ([Rasmussen, 2021](#)).
- At least 70% of every measured demographic group see freedom, equality, and self-governance as accurately describing America's founding ideals ([Rasmussen, 2021](#)).

## EXAMPLES OF CRT IN OUR K-12 SCHOOLS:

- An elementary [school in Philadelphia](#) forced **fifth-grade students to simulate a black power rally**, and the 10 and 11-year-old students marched on a stage with signs that said "Jail Trump" and "Black Power." The entirety of the Philadelphia Public School System has adopted a new "Antiracism Declaration," and the local teachers union **put out a video denouncing the United States as a "colony built on White supremacy and capitalism."**
- Evanston/Skokie School District 65 in Illinois is teaching K-8 students that "Racism is a white person's problem and we are all caught up in it," "**White people have a very, very serious problem** and they should start thinking about what they should do about it," and that white students should "**sit in [their] discomfort**" ([Southeastern Legal Foundation, 2021](#)).
- North Carolina's largest school district launched a campaign against "whiteness in educational spaces" and **instructed teachers to ignore parents'** concerns about their equity programs ([Rufo, 2021](#)).
- In Cupertino, California, an elementary **school required third graders to analyze their racial identities and rank themselves** according to their "power and privilege" ([Rufo, 2021](#)).
- The lesson plans of public schools in Buffalo, New York, suggest that when students are in kindergarten, **teachers ask students to compare their skin color and watch a video that illustrates dead black kids speaking to them** about the dangers of being killed by "racist police and state-sanctioned violence" ([Rufo, 2021](#)).
- [Oregon Department of Education](#) has adopted CRT in mathematics, saying that White supremacy is reinforced by the belief that teachers are teachers and students are students and that **valuing independent work is White Supremacy culture**.
- The principal at Eastside Community School in Manhattan, New York, encouraged parents to become "**White Traitor[s]**" or "**White Abolitionist[s]**" actively focused on "**dismantling whiteness**" ([New York Post, 2021](#)).

## STATE ACTIONS CURBING CRT

- 28 States have introduced legislation to block CRT and keep divisive concepts out of schools ([Rufo, n.d.](#)).
- **Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas have all taken significant action or PASSED legislation to ban CRT and other divisive concepts in the state.**
- Attorneys General from 20 states have also petitioned the Department of Education not to adopt these divisive concepts as American History and Civics Education priorities.
- The Montana State Attorney General wrote a letter declaring CRT-based practices illegal in the state ([Rufo, 2021d](#)).

## IDENTIFYING CRT

It is likely that the materials you see will not outright say “Critical Race Theory,” so it is important to scan the materials for keywords or phrases that imply these teachings.

The [Texas Public Policy Foundation](#) has developed a very helpful list of keywords to look for and an explanation of why these are “buzzwords” for politically motivated content. See list below.

**Equity:** This has replaced “equality” for individuals on the Left. Instead of ensuring that every American has an equal opportunity to succeed, equity demands equality of outcomes.

**Implicit/unconscious/internalized bias:** This is the relentless search to find racism in every aspect of American life. If it is not immediately evident, look harder.

**Social Justice/Restorative Justice:** This is the belief that society must be torn down and remade in order to root out racism fully.

**Systemic racism:** According to CRT, racism is the original sin of America, and it persists everywhere to this day. Every institution is designed, they say, “to maintain the dominance of white people in society.”

**Microaggressions:** These are “subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal and/or visual) directed toward people of color, often automatically or unconsciously.”

**Antiracism:** This is CRT’s fictitious name—the practical outworking of its central ideas.

**White privilege:** According to this doctrine, White people derive immense benefits from their race. According to one theorist (and Wisconsin politician), “America needs to be honest about how race has driven every decision from education to homeownership, and everything in between.”

**White fragility:** This makes CRT non-falsifiable. Any objection to any tenet of CRT is said to be White fragility.

**Identity:** Everything is about what you are, not who you are.

**Ally/Allyship:** According to Harvard University, an ally is “Someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their privilege (based on gender, class, race, sexual identity, etc.) and work in solidarity with oppressed groups in the struggle for justice.” Critical race theorists demand nothing less of the rest of us.

**Social construct:** Race is made-up; it is fiction used by oppressors to control the oppressed. Oh, and also, race is real and immutable. It is the one thing you cannot change about yourself, and it is all that matters (see identity).