

# Building Block Two

Provides a brief history of the development of systemic racism in the United States, noting the history of our nation and how race and racism are central to its formation.

**Building a Firm Foundation:** This block is divided into six historical periods or events that were instrumental in the development and sustainability of systemic racism in the U.S.

**Point One:** The notion of race and racism was developed to justify the transatlantic slave trade and slavery in the New World. Prior to the slave trade, no firmly-formulated ideology of race, racism and racial differences existed.

**Point Two:** Since the beginning of the development of our nation, we have had a problem with race, which continues today.

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This theorem applies to race in our society: Although race isn't real, the consequences are real because we treat people differently based on their racial background.

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*Your individual actions and behaviors really do matter. You can make a difference in ending systemic racism and inspire others to do the same.*



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**Point Three:** The treatment of African Americans in the years following the Civil War.

During Reconstruction (1865-1880), many newly-freed slaves migrated across the U.S. from the South seeking better opportunities in jobs, housing, and education for their children. They moved West to Colorado, Oklahoma and Kansas. They were called “exodusters.”

**Point Three:** The treatment of African Americans in the years following the Civil War.

The continued mass migration of whites into the West meant that African Americans tended to be forced out of areas they settled in or forced into segregated areas in cities.

**Point Four:** The treatment of Asian Americans in the West during and after the building of the transcontinental railroad.

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During the building of the Transcontinental Railroad tens of thousands of Asian men (mostly Chinese workers) worked on the western end of the construction of the railroad. Some settled along the way in small towns.

**Point Four:** The treatment of Asian Americans during and after the building of the transcontinental railroad.

They, too ran into white resistance as white homestead settlers flooded into the West. Asians were forced out and herded into designated areas by a series of exclusionary and violent attacks. This is ethnic cleansing.

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2. 1887 General Allotment Act/Dawes Act measured the bloodlines of Native Americans to determine land ownership and reception of government benefits.

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