

# What is american perspective?

Business



Dear America, I am an African American 16 year old growing up as a minority in suburbia and I have something to say – from my experience – about the reading curriculum of my school. Before I state my principle issue, I will come out now to say that I am grateful for what I have and that I am very patriotic – but patriotism does not mean glorifying every aspect of America. I am proud to call myself an African-American, to admit that I come from and grew up in America, but it seems that America is not proud of us. For a country that has had centuries of systematically implemented racism, there is too much denial and willingness to forget about it only 60 years later. Especially since you, America, never appropriately fulfilled your promises or compensated us after signing for emancipation and one-hundred years later signing for desegregation, among other things.

Yes, it was a huge step forward for us to have our rights written on paper for the entire country to see, but that clearly was not enough. If it were that easy – just to sign a piece of paper and have an entire country comply – I wouldn't be writing this letter today, January 19th, 2015, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. I'm not writing this to list examples of racism in our society today (although I could, and it would last for pages). I'm writing this because you, America, need to stop denying our history, and accept the fact that this country has a long way to go before racism is over. I don't even think racism will ever be over, but that doesn't mean we can't try to end it.

So how does any of this relate back to my school's reading curriculum? I'm sick of reading stories from the perspective of rich white people. I'm sick of seeing only one-dimensional stereotypical characters in the novels we read to represent an entire race. I'm sick of people saying Huck Finn and To Kill a

Mockingbird are representative of my race. Yes, they address racism – but from a white perspective. I understand that the House of Mirth addresses sexism – but only for white women. Our curriculum doesn't touch the harsh realities black men and women faced in the centuries of systematic racism in America, and to be quite frank, it pisses me off when people claim it does.

IT DOESN'T, but it needs to. Our history and our experiences are overlooked by society when they need to be addressed – now more than ever. We tell kids to learn how to walk in other peoples' shoes, but then we don't give them opportunities to. Reading books from diverse perspectives will give all of us a chance to walk in everyone's shoes. I never realized until this year that what we see in the media and what we read in books has the strongest influence on the extent we go to try to understand another person's perspective. My voice cannot speak for my entire race, nor can any one voice, but the voices of our past and our present, collected, can speak out with us if we'd let them.

Sincerely, 16-year old African American P. S This isn't just about my race. We need the perspective of every minority in America to be represented in our education.