

Supplementing Social Studies

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The Republican party has used the concept of “wokeness” to weaponize our ignorance and fear. Colloquially, the word “woke” means informed, educated and conscious of social injustice and racial inequality. Ron DeSantis who leads an aggressive crusade against ‘wokeness’, has a similar understanding of the word “it would be the belief there are systemic injustices in American society and the need to address them.” Meanwhile, Donald Trump more simply claims being woke means “you’re a loser.” However, the attempt to suppress learning about the role of racism in the United States means we all lose.

For years, the stories and contributions of African-Americans have been overlooked. Generations of social studies curriculums had told a reductive, incomplete, and even uplifting, history of slaves in America. The reality is, no emancipation, court decision, or act passed can undo the institutional racism that has kept Black Americans from obtaining the same access to the wealth, resources and opportunities that white Americans have.

Most Americans can tell you about the *Mayflower’s* arrival in 1620, but what about the *White Lion*? The [ship arrived](#) in the colonies one year earlier, carrying the first of millions enslaved Africans. Black History Month affords us the opportunity to dig deeper, listen to diverse perspectives, and understand our complete history. Black history and culture needs to be represented in proper context in our schools and society every month of the year. The denial of one groups past is a threat to all Americans. By limiting and censoring social studies curriculum, we are failing ourselves and future generations.

We need to stop listening to anti-woke propaganda and start embracing knowledge and growth. Supplementing, not replacing, courses at every level of public education is the only path forward. Ignorance; the lack of knowledge, education, or awareness, is more dangerous than any banned book or critical race curriculum. We should not fear “wokeness” when the far greater risk is staying asleep.

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