

A Review of the 1619 Project Curriculum

Lucas E. Morel, PhD

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Study of slavery’s impact on economic life is critical to understanding how slavery affected the economic development and character of American capitalism.

However, 1619 is a political project riddled with factual errors and its theories on capitalism should not be conflated as an accurate historical account.

Only complete and accurate histories belong in classroom curricula, and thus, the 1619 Project must not be taught as history in our schools.

The *New York Times Magazine* published its “1619 Project” in August 2019 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the landing of the first Africans in the English colony of Virginia. The project is a collection of essays and artwork that argue that the legacy of American slavery can be seen today in areas as disparate as traffic patterns in Atlanta, sugar consumption, health care, incarceration, the racial wealth gap, American capitalism, and reactionary politics.

The curator of the entire project is Nikole Hannah-Jones, a staff writer and investigative reporter for the *New York Times Magazine* and author of the lead essay for the 1619 Project. Her essay garnered a Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 2020 (along with many other awards), and she is the previous recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, Peabody Award, George Polk Award, and other awards for journalism.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/bg3570>

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The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting (which has no connection to the Pulitzer Prizes) produced reading guides for all 18 essays of the 1619 Project designed to help students read a text with particular questions in mind. Each guide contains an excerpt or two from the essay, key terms, and two to three questions about the essay.

What Has Been Its Impact?

The magazine issue was so popular that the *Times* sold out its initial print run and then raised funds to publish an additional 200,000 copies for free distribution to schools and community organizations.¹ The Pulitzer Center has not released official numbers regarding school districts that have adopted their 1619 Project curriculum, but a May 2020 update noted that 4,500 classrooms have used the materials, with five school systems—Buffalo, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Washington, DC; Wilmington, Delaware; and Winston-Salem, North Carolina—implementing it “at broad scale.”²

Hannah-Jones is now collaborating with Oprah Winfrey and Lionsgate on film and television projects and has contracted with One World, a division of Penguin Random House, to publish an amplified book version of all the magazine essays plus books of essays, fiction, and poetry on the project theme.³ Random House Children’s Books will also produce 1619 Project books for young readers, and Random House’s Ten Speed Imprint will produce a graphic novel.⁴ Its provocative thesis and manner of argumentation has drawn both fans and critics, which has made it the grand cultural phenomenon of the ensuing year.

What Is Controversial About It?

Hannah-Jones’s 7,400-word lead essay, titled “The Idea of America,” was the seminal contribution of the 1619 Project. She declared an audacious thesis by beginning her essay with an alternative two-sentence title that takes up an entire page: “Our Democracy’s Founding Ideals Were False When They Were Written. Black Americans Have Fought to Make Them True.”⁵

The main thread of her article is her puzzlement over her father’s patriotism. A black American who fought in the U.S. Army but experienced racial harassment and discrimination, he insisted on flying an American flag proudly in front of his home. She eventually recognized that her father’s steadfast devotion to the United States, despite the racial bigotry he experienced, owed to his recognition of how much his country was the product of

black American blood, sweat, toil, and tears—his appreciation of the many ways his black American ancestors helped shape the language, literature, politics, and economics of his homeland. And so Hannah-Jones comes to appreciate her father’s patriotism because it flows from his awareness that America’s redeeming qualities were in part the product of a people forged in the crucible of American slavery and segregation.

Hannah-Jones made two basic arguments: The first is that black Americans have been the only consistent contributors to American progress culturally, economically, and politically. Their influence was so central to the nation’s development that, she claims, “black Americans, as much as those men cast in alabaster in the nation’s capital, are this nation’s true ‘founding fathers.’”⁶ She considers not “all men are created equal” but racial slavery as the true foundation of America. Soon after the publication of the 1619 Project, Hannah-Jones was asked for clarification about the connection between the events of 1776 and 1619. In an August 21, 2019, tweet she has since deleted, she wrote: “I argue that 1619 is our true founding. Also, look at the banner pic in my profile.”⁷ That Twitter banner has the date “July 4, 1776,” crossed out, and underneath, not crossed out, is the date “August 20, 1619.” This is not subtle messaging; in fact, it is now a brand found on t-shirts and tote bags.

Hannah-Jones’s second argument is that the enslavement of black people still has palpable repercussions that linger to this day in many facets of American life.

Hannah-Jones has chosen to downplay the “history” in her project and emphasize that her essay is a work of “journalism.”⁸ It is also telling that her Pulitzer Prize was awarded not under the History category but the Commentary category.

Given the barrage of criticism she has received from well-reputed scholars of the American Revolution and the Civil War,⁹ the *New York Times* quietly revised its online description of the 1619 Project to remove the original reference to the project theme as “understanding 1619 as our true founding.”¹⁰

The project’s contribution to the national discussion of the legacy of slavery and segregation in American social and political life has been one fraught with controversy over its mistakes, half-truths, overstatements, and heavy-handed editorializing. For example, Leslie M. Harris, a Northwestern University history professor who was asked to fact-check the lead essay, discovered later that Hannah-Jones—over Harris’s objection—retained the incorrect claim “that the patriots fought the American Revolution in large part to preserve slavery in North America.”¹¹

Hannah-Jones has also injected herself into the controversy over the past summer's riots, toppling of statues, and vandalism. Various protestors had written 1619 on their signs and toppled statues even of great abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass. One commentator dubbed them "the 1619 Riots."¹² Hannah-Jones replied, "It would be an honor. Thank you."¹³ She did not mind getting credit for the mayhem of street demonstrations that led to the indiscriminate tearing down of statues, not to mention the destruction of businesses and civil order that makes life in the United States the envy of the world. This reckless support of the mobs that have grown increasingly brazen in their public disruptions is unbecoming of someone who seeks to use history as a way to help all Americans understand their past better.

What Is Wrong with the Project?

A Misguided Approach to History. The method Hannah-Jones adopts dooms the project as an inaccurate depiction of American history. She approaches history as if it were a zero-sum game, where highlighting black American contributions required subtracting white American contributions, especially the most iconic ones, such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.¹⁴

She has called her project a "reframing" of the past, an attempt to change how Americans remember their history. She has also said that "there is no such thing as objective history,"¹⁵ as if there was no actual record of what happened and as if what matters is not truth but who is in control.

Erroneous Conclusions. On July 20, 2020, Hannah-Jones tweeted, "We were quite literally founded on slavery. All 13 colonies practiced it."¹⁶ The mere existence of slavery on American soil, which she traces back to 1619, constitutes a founding in her mind. It is a fairly straightforward historical logic: Despite the Founders declaring on July 4, 1776, that "all men are created equal" and the related self-evident truths about the natural rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," their failure to abolish slavery on that same day proves that their fundamental intent was to protect slavery.

Hannah-Jones does not take into account that the Declaration of Independence was approved while American colonists were *at war* with Great Britain fighting for their independence—a war that would not formally conclude until 1783. In other words, she does not seem to appreciate that the power to free American slaves was not delegated to the Second Continental Congress. More importantly, the Founders' political independence was not guaranteed, and therefore attempting to free themselves and their slaves

at the same time would not increase their chances for success but could very well undermine both objectives. As Lincoln once observed about the Founding period:

We had slavery among us, we could not get our constitution unless we permitted them to remain in slavery, we could not secure the good we did secure if we grasped for more, and having by necessity submitted to that much, it does not destroy the principle that is the charter of our liberties. Let that charter stand as our standard.¹⁷

These historical complications are just a few of the many that Hannah-Jones takes for granted in order to produce a story of American progress that had almost nothing to do with the good intentions of white Americans.

Sins of Omission. As bad as Hannah-Jones's sins of commission are, what are worse are her sins of omission. They express a reductionist story of American history that leaves out so many important and relevant facts of the nation's political development that it barely warrants being called history.

There is no mention of Vermont's anti-slavery constitution (1793) or the Mum Betts (also known as Elizabeth Freeman) and Quock Walker court cases in Massachusetts of 1781–1783, where enslaved black people not only had the legal right to sue but also won their suits on the basis of a plain reading of the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution, the product of an all-white assembly of men. This step toward greater alignment of political practice with American principle, a step taken by the lowest class of persons in the eyes of the law, exemplifies precisely the kind of action Hannah-Jones wants to make more prominent.

Hannah-Jones gives no indication that Jefferson, Washington, Madison, and other Founders consistently maintained that all people, including black people, possessed natural rights.¹⁸ She never quotes Jefferson's affirmation of the justice of black liberation, which he juxtaposed with the fear of a race war by the white majority in slaveholding states.¹⁹ The concern for self-preservation overrode the acknowledgment of what Jefferson called the "sacred rights" of black people.²⁰

A Real Pro-Slavery Constitution. If Hannah-Jones wanted to show readers what a nation really founded on slavery looked like, she could have pointed to the Confederate Constitution and secession ordinances and declaration of causes issued by slaveholding states. The Confederate Constitution denied its Congress the power to pass a "law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves." It also provided that in any territory

acquired by the Confederacy, “the institution of negro slavery, as it now exists in the Confederate States, shall be recognized and protected by Congress and by the territorial government,” adding that “the inhabitants of the several Confederate States and Territories shall have the right to take to such territory any slaves lawfully held by them in any of the States or Territories of the Confederate States.”²¹

The secessionists were frank about the main reason they were seceding. Mississippi declared, “Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery.” Georgia echoed this priority in its complaints against the Republican Party: “The prohibition of slavery in the Territories, hostility to it everywhere, the equality of the black and white races, disregard of all constitutional guarantees in its favor, were boldly proclaimed by its leaders and applauded by its followers.”²²

Reading Hannah-Jones’s essay would give you no way of telling the difference between the Confederate and U.S. constitutions. The argument of her essay leads one to conclude that she would see the difference as only a matter of degree and not of kind. In this, she would disagree not only with Lincoln but also Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King Jr., both of whom are suspiciously absent from her essay.

Detrimental Civic Impact

Hannah-Jones takes for granted the efforts of white Americans of good will, Americans who understood that the country was not founded on slavery but on freedom. Their contribution to the increasing protection of the civil and political rights of black Americans can be seen in the landmark Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments; the unanimous school desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954); the Civil Rights Act (1964); and the Voting Rights Act (1965). Without significant white majorities, none of these pivotal events could have occurred. An honest accounting of the nation’s past would tell the story of both the failure of white Americans to live up to their Constitution and the many triumphs of “black and white together” that composed the American civil rights struggle.

The lead essay also undermines trust among American citizens of different races by painting a one-sided story of American progress. Hannah-Jones’s approach is untrue to the actual history because it leaves out so much of the history, undermines a due affection for the United States precisely by making the country unlovable, and subverts the trust among citizens of different races in its Manichean portrayal of American

progress as simply a record of heroic black virtue triumphing over persistent white vice. The civic impact of this kind of “history” can only be detrimental to the trust that is needed across the color line in America that enables racial and ethnic diversity to strengthen and not weaken our national unity.

Diversity is not automatically a strength but must be cultivated in a way consistent with the common good. Otherwise, a society’s differences may lead to factions or crudely self-interested thought and action that will have pernicious effects on the nation’s politics. As important as free institutions of government are, unless the people maintain a free way of thinking and acting toward each other, which requires trust and friendship at a basic level, their constitution and laws will inevitably serve the interest only of ruling majorities and not facilitate the common good.

To include the contribution of white Americans of good will is not an indulgence but a necessary part of the American story. Being honest about the multiracial American story that is the long civil rights movement of American history not only is true to the facts but also promotes the social-civic health of the body politic. What better way to engender good will, trust, and friendship among citizens of diverse races than teaching American children a truly comprehensive, truly inclusive history of their country’s political birth and development?

Moreover, by making black Americans the only heroes of her story as they contested against white oppressors, Hannah-Jones gives little reason for racial minorities to trust white Americans to do right by their Constitution, laws, and courts. This can only lead to greater polarization of our civic life as our nation’s youth grow up learning that the only thing loveable about their country are the black people whom Hannah-Jones claims, for the most part, “fought back alone.”

“The Negro in History”

To her credit, Hannah-Jones ably informs us of many important contributions that blacks have made to America’s political and cultural prosperity. However, she presents her *cri de coeur* under the guise of history for those she believes have drunk the Kool-Aid of America’s mythology about freedom and equality for all. While her debt to W. E. B. Du Bois, Carter G. Woodson, and especially Ralph Ellison is evident in her account of how black people were essential to American progress, she excludes significant facts that would ruin her disingenuous argument about the American Founders and their greatest defender, Abraham Lincoln.²³

Carter Woodson, the creator of “Negro History Week”—what is now known as African American History Month—defined “the meaning of Negro History Week” as “not so much a Negro History Week as it is a History Week. We should emphasize not *Negro* History, but the Negro *in* history.” This reflects a laudable concern that black contributions to American prosperity be noted, not ignored. Du Bois commented on the role of black people in America in his book of essays, *The Souls of Black Folk*:

Your country? How came it yours? Before the Pilgrims landed we were here....
Actively we have woven ourselves with the very warp and woof of this nation....
Our song, our toil, our cheer, and warning have been given to this nation in
blood-brotherhood. Are not these gifts worth the giving?²⁴

In the words of Ralph Ellison, “A people must define itself, and minorities have the responsibility of having their ideals and images recognized as part of the composite image which is that of the still-forming American people.”²⁵

Black American history—or, rather, blacks *in* American history—is also important as it shows how black Americans forced white Americans to take their ideals seriously. In a 1970 *Time* magazine article, Ellison observed that “today it is the black American who puts pressure upon the nation to live up to its ideals. It is he who gives creative tension to our struggle for justice.”²⁶ A chief way that blacks have shaped American history is their political activism on behalf of the ideals of the regime. Ellison thought America “could not survive being deprived their presence because, by the irony implicit in the dynamics of American democracy, they symbolize both its most stringent testing and the possibility of its greatest human freedom.”²⁷ Aware of the failures of the early American republic to secure the rights of all Americans right away, Ellison still called the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights “sacred documents,” which gives more credit to the Founders than Hannah-Jones does in her essay.

Like Carter Woodson, Hannah-Jones believes black Americans need other black Americans to look up to in America’s past. But unlike Woodson, she does not interpret the contributions of black Americans in the context of the racially diverse population of the United States, and how people of good will across the color line helped align American practice with American profession. She failed to heed Woodson’s exhortation that black contributions to American progress on a number of fronts—economic, cultural, and political—accompanied the contributions of white Americans, and therefore her 1619 essay is a missed opportunity, given the popularity and cultural-political impact it subsequently made.

Bouie Is No Better

In addition to Hannah-Jones's essay, 17 other essays of the 1619 Project argue for a connection between American slavery and modern-day practices and institutions. One titled "Undemocratic Democracy," by *New York Times* columnist Jamelle Bouie, deserves special mention. Bouie's partisanship is both blatant and subtle as he paints today's Republican Party as a direct descendant of America's racist past. That is quite the feat, given that the godfather of the "positive good" theory of American slavery, John C. Calhoun, was a member of the *Democratic* Party. Like Hannah-Jones's essay, Bouie's actual essay omits the brief title listed in the table of contents and substitutes a more provocative one-sentence title that also takes up an entire page: "American democracy has never shed an undemocratic assumption present at its founding: that some people are inherently entitled to more power than others."²⁸

Bouie attempts to trace the "reactionary extremism" of today's Republican Party back to "the defense of human bondage" articulated by Calhoun in the 1830s.²⁹ Remarkably, Bouie manages to explain reactionary politics in the South, from secession over Abraham Lincoln becoming President to "solid blocs of Southern lawmakers" and "reactionary white leaders" resisting federal regulation of their region up until the 1965 Voting Rights Act, all without mentioning it was the Democratic Party in control of those southern states.³⁰ Bouie thinks that Republicans today are somehow the heirs of an institution that owes its defense and longevity in American history almost entirely to the historical Democratic Party.

He argues that "a homegrown ideology of reaction in the United States, inextricably tied to our system of slavery," has outlived some but not all of its racist origins and concludes that today's Republican opposition to Democratic policies "are clearly downstream of a style of extreme political combat that came to fruition in the defense of human bondage."³¹

The reading guide for Bouie's essay presents a provocative statement from the essay followed by a loaded question designed to reaffirm the author's own partisan opinion—but with a slight change that masks the one-sided nature of the essay. See if you can spot the change:

According to the author, how do 19th century U.S. political movements aimed at maintaining the right to enslave people manifest in contemporary political parties?³²

If you did not read the essay, you would infer from this question that reactionary politics deriving from defenses of slavery are found in both major parties today (note the plural *parties*). However, as the earlier analysis demonstrates, Bouie identifies only *one* contemporary political party as the heir of 19th-century racist politics—namely, the Republican Party.

By omitting the reactionary politics of the historical Democratic Party—for example, the “Massive Resistance” to school desegregation in the 1950s³³—the only evidence presented in the essay implicates the Republican Party.

Given that the essay claims that extreme partisanship is the problem, and one he claims can be traced back to an early defense of racial slavery, it is ironic that the author displays his own partisanship to make his case.

This explicitly partisan essay has no place in a history or social studies curriculum unless it is identified as an editorial and presented with an essay that offers an opposing argument. It is so incredibly one-sided that to assign it for classroom instruction is not education but rather indoctrination. What student would admit to his classmates that his parents, or he himself, identifies as a Republican without fear of being branded a racist?

The 1619 Project in Education

As mentioned, the 1619 Project is gaining a foothold in the American public education system. At best, the project could be used in an assignment that contrasts Hannah-Jones’s argument with a rebuttal. However, middle and high school teachers will likely not take the time to find and assign opinions and accounts of American history and politics that contradict her portrayal of the past.

In some cases, her essay will be assigned as a way to engage students of color in “their past” by teaching them that “black Americans, as much as those men cast in alabaster in the nation’s capital, are this nation’s true ‘founding fathers.’” To build self-esteem is a worthy objective, but to do so on such faulty premises does not bode well for the long-term self-confidence of students who buy her thesis without serious vetting against reliable sources of our history.

The reading guides produced by the Pulitzer Center are themselves infected with bias. The guide for Hannah-Jones’s lead essay asks students to find where the author gives “examples of racial oppression...and examples of black resistance.”³⁴ To reinforce the argument that America equals oppression and black Americans equal resistance and liberation, the guide then asks students:

- “How have U.S. laws, policies, and practices oppressed black Americans since the year 1619?”³⁵
- “How have black Americans fought back against oppression and worked to build a better society for all?”³⁶

Of course, a reasonable question for a reasonable history of American progress in securing rights for all Americans could just as well be phrased as follows:

- “How have U.S. laws, policies, and practices *liberated* black Americans since the year 1619?”

Moreover, a second question that would better inform students as to how America’s history-long civil rights movement actually occurred could be phrased as follows:

- “How have *white* Americans fought against oppression and worked to build a better society for all?”

Common Core Standards and the 1619 Project. Common Core standards have come under much criticism because of a concern for federal imposition of educational standards in an area traditionally governed by state and local regulations. Leaving those criticisms aside for purposes of this *Backgrounders*, yet another reason to disqualify the lead essay by Hannah-Jones is that the Common Core standards that the Pulitzer Center associates with that essay test students’ ability to read and follow an argument, not their comprehension of actual historical figures and events.³⁷

The two Common Core standards that the center identifies are under the category of “Reading: Informational Text” for grades 11–12 and 9–10—not English Language Arts Standards for “History/Social Studies.” Even though the writings suggested for exploration are historical and political in nature, the standard to be met is not accuracy of interpreting those writings but simply whether students can follow the argument presented by the historian—or, in case of 1619, the commentary of Hannah-Jones.

Here are the two Common Core standards suggested for aligning student assignments:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.9

Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

The second standard makes the Common Core objective clear, which we italicize for emphasis:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine *a central idea* of a text and *analyze its development* over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by *specific details*; provide an objective *summary* of the text.

Students are asked to provide the main idea, the development of the argument, use of details, and a summary of the essay. It does not matter if the argument is fallacious, or if the details are not always correct or lack proper context, or if significant historical details are omitted. The benefit to students is not the history they would learn but specific skills in reading and understanding texts. The 1619 Project could just as well be taught in an English class, given that the content matters less than the way it formulates its thesis and presents its evidence. Simply put, even the Pulitzer Center does not recommend applying the Common Core standards for history but for reading.

Conclusion

According to the 1619 Project's lead essay, there is no tension, no debate, no struggle by the white Framers of the 1787 constitution in their efforts "to form a more perfect union." In fact, the historical record does not show that the Founders were uniformly dedicated to preserving slavery. To leave out this significant element of the Founding era is to miss an incredibly important aspect of American history—namely, that America is a nation born of debate and has developed through argument and, for the most part, peaceful resolution of its political conflicts. If there is any "framing" of history, and "narrative arc" that should be taught in K–12 schools, it is this broader account of the nation's Founding and history. It is at once truer to

the facts and a more engaging account to teach youth. The resulting civic education will ultimately be more constructive as they learn about the noble ideals and leading actors of the nation's history alongside the ways they fell short of the ideals of the nation's true Founding, the Spirit of '76.

The Pulitzer Center exists in part to bring journalism into middle and high schools as a way to help students grow in their understanding as citizens and to promote civic engagement. On a good day, actual reporting of important political events and social concerns would constitute relevant material for high school juniors and seniors to read, discuss, and formulate opinions, especially if compelled to argue both sides of an issue. However, the national news and broadcast media is dominated by reporters and journalists who are liberal or left-wing. This means the material produced for students to consider would be difficult to avoid political bias. Can it be done? Sure, but if the 1619 Project is any indication, both the essays and corresponding study guides tell a story that is so one-sided as to disqualify the effort as the impartial presentation of news and unlikely to tell both sides of the story. In the case of Hannah-Jones's essay, she has yet to engage her critics in any substantive way in the year since the publication of the project.

In the end, parents need to ask themselves: Why are newspaper editorials such as the essay by Hannah-Jones being presented as part of history and social studies lessons in middle and high school? If the history books currently in use do a poor job of conveying the subject matter, supplementing weak textbooks with editorials on American history are not the proper remedy.

Lucas E. Morel, PhD, is the John K. Boardman, Jr. Professor of Politics at Washington & Lee University. He is the author, most recently, of *Lincoln and the American Founding* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2020).

Endnotes

1. "The 1619 Project Details the Legacy of Slavery in America," *PBS NewsHour Weekend*, August 18, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/the-1619-project-details-the-legacy-of-slavery-in-america> (accessed November 17, 2020). The *Times* no longer sells copies of the print edition, but a PDF and online edition are readily available at https://pulitzercenter.org/sites/default/files/full_issue_of_the_1619_project.pdf (accessed November 18, 2020).
2. Jeff Barrus, "Hannah-Jones Wins Pulitzer Prize for 1619 Project," May 4, 2020, Pulitzer Center, <https://pulitzercenter.org/blog/-hannah-jones-wins-pulitzer-prize-1619-project> (accessed November 17, 2020), and Janice K. Jackson, "The 1619 Project and Chicago Public Schools," September 17, 2019, <https://blog.cps.edu/2019/09/17/the-1619-project-and-chicago-public-schools/> (accessed November 18, 2020). See also Naomi Schafer Riley, "'The 1619 Project' Enters American Classrooms," *Education Next*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Fall 2020), <https://www.educationnext.org/1619-project-enters-american-classrooms-adding-new-sizzle-slavery-significant-cost/> (accessed November 18, 2020). The Pulitzer Center reported this fall that in "the past school year, over 500 schools received copies of the issue dedicated to the project from the Pulitzer Center and *The Times*, and over 4,000 educators from all 50 states have used one or more resources in our 1619 Project curriculum." See Pauline Werner, "Educators Share Resources and Insights from The 1619 Project in the Classroom," October 13, 2020, Pulitzer Center, <https://pulitzercenter.org/blog/educators-share-resources-and-insights-1619-project-classroom> (accessed December 8, 2020).
3. Dave McNary, "Oprah Winfrey, Lionsgate to Bring New York Times' '1619 Project' to Film and TV," *Variety*, July 8, 2020, <https://variety.com/2020/film/news/new-york-times-1619-project-oprah-winfrey-lionsgate-film-tv-1234700720/> (accessed November 17, 2020).
4. New York Times Company, "Random House to Publish Multi-Book Series Based on The New York Times's 'The 1619 Project,'" November 20, 2019, <https://www.nytc.com/press/random-house-to-publish-multi-book-series-based-on-the-new-york-times-the-1619-project/> (accessed November 17, 2020).
5. Nikole Hannah-Jones, "The Idea of America," *New York Times Magazine*, August 14, 2019, p. 14.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
7. Tweet by Hannah-Jones (@nhannahjones) dated August 21, 2019 (6:42 pm), in response to tweet from David Jenkins (@jenkinsdav) of the same date. Screenshot image in possession of Lucas E. Morel. She also said, "One does not create a project in the New York Times that says we are going to reframe American history, that our true founding is 1619 and not 1776, that black people are the perfectors of democracy and that we are as much the founders fathers as the white men who you worship in our history books...and not expect you are going to get a lot of damn pushback." Jennifer Chambers, "1619 Project Reframing History of Slavery Draws Crowd to Ann Arbor," *Detroit News*, January 28, 2020, <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/education/2020/01/28/1619-history-slavery-ann-arbor-university-michigan-new-york-times/4588817002/> (accessed November 17, 2020).
8. "Creator of '1619 Project' on Trump's 'Patriotic Education,'" *All Things Considered*, September 18, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/18/914519531/creator-of-1619-project-on-trumps-patriotic-education> (accessed November 17, 2020).
9. There have been scores of refutations, critiques, and rebuttals to the 1619 Project. Here are just a few noteworthy examples: "The 1619 Project and the Falsification of History: An Analysis of the New York Times' Reply to Five Historians," World Socialist Website, December 28, 2019, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/12/28/nytr-d28.html> (accessed November 17, 2020); "The 1619 Project Exposed: A Special Edition of the American Mind Podcast," <https://americanmind.org/audio/the-1619-project-exposed-a-special-edition-of-the-american-mind-podcast/> (accessed November 17, 2020); and Phillip W. Magness, *The 1619 Project: A Critique* (Great Barrington, MA: American Institute for Economic Research, 2020).
10. Phillip W. Magness, "Down the 1619 Project's Memory Hole," *Quillette*, September 19, 2020, <https://quillette.com/2020/09/19/down-the-1619-projects-memory-hole/> (accessed November 17, 2020).
11. Leslie M. Harris, "I Helped Fact-Check the 1619 Project. The Times Ignored Me," *Politico Magazine*, March 6, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/03/06/1619-project-new-york-times-mistake-122248> (accessed November 17, 2020). Harris did not reject the lead essay completely, as indicated by the subtitle of her published complaint: "The paper's series on slavery made avoidable mistakes. But the attacks from its critics are much more dangerous."
12. Charles Kesler, "Call Them the 1619 Riots," *New York Post*, June 19, 2020, <https://nypost.com/2020/06/19/call-them-the-1619-riots/> (accessed November 17, 2020).
13. Tweet by Hannah-Jones (@nhannahjones) dated June 20, 2020. Screenshot image in possession of Lucas E. Morel. The tweet was subsequently deleted without explanation.
14. For a detailed rebuttal to the lead essay of the 1619 Project, see Lucas Morel, "America Was Not Founded on White Supremacy," *The American Mind*, October 17, 2019, <https://americanmind.org/essays/america-wasnt-founded-on-white-supremacy/> (accessed November 17, 2020).
15. Tweet by Hannah-Jones (@nhannahjones) dated November 21, 2019. Screenshot image in possession of Lucas E. Morel.
16. Tweet by Hannah-Jones (@nhannahjones) dated July 20, 2020, <https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1285406200708894720.html> (accessed November 17, 2020).
17. Abraham Lincoln, "Speech at Chicago, Illinois," July 10, 1858, in Roy P. Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. 2, p. 501 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953).
18. See, for example, Thomas G. West, *The Political Theory of the American Founding: Natural Rights, Public Policy, and the Moral Conditions of Freedom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

19. He said of American slavery, “We have the wolf by the ear, and we can neither hold him, nor safely let him go. Justice is in one scale, and self-preservation in the other.” *Founders Online*, “From Thomas Jefferson to John Holmes, 22 April 1820,” National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1234> (accessed November 17, 2020).
20. Jefferson’s original draft of the Declaration included a paragraph condemning King George III for preventing the American colonies from banning the importation of slaves: “He has waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither.” Hannah-Jones mentions this but omits Jefferson’s description of the African as possessing “sacred rights of life and liberty.” Jefferson’s “original Rough draught” of the Declaration of Independence can be found in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 1: 1760-1776* (Princeton University Press, 1950), p. 426, <https://jeffersonpapers.princeton.edu/selected-documents/jefferson%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%99Original-rough-draught%E2%80%9D-declaration-independence> (accessed November 17, 2020).
21. Constitution of the Confederate States of America, Art. I, Sec. 9, cl. 4, and Art. IV, Sec. 3, cl. 3: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/19conf/19conf.html> (accessed November 17, 2020).
22. For the Mississippi and Georgia Declarations of Causes, see American Battlefield Trust, “The Declaration of Causes of Seceding States,” <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/declaration-causes-seceding-states> (accessed November 17, 2020). See also Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001).
23. Borrowing from Hannah-Jones’s focus on a single year as a lens through which to see America as racist at its foundation, William H. Freivogel, a journalism professor at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, devoted an entire issue of *Gateway Journalism Review* to the year 1857 to explore “the history of racial injustice in St. Louis, Missouri, and Illinois.” In his “1857 Project,” Freivogel not only doubles down on the notion of America as a racist country but also portrays Lincoln as “no emancipator” during his 1858 debates with Stephen A. Douglas. See William H. Freivogel’s lead essay, “The 1857 Project: Extracting the Poison of Racism from America’s Soul,” *Gateway Journalism Review*, Vol. 49, No. 356 (2020), pp. 4–8, esp. p. 7, and Kayla Chamness and William H. Freivogel, “Lincoln Douglas Debates Marred by Overt Racism of Both,” *Gateway Journalism Review*, Vol. 49, No. 356 (2020), pp. 36–49, https://pulitzercenter.org/sites/default/files/the_1857_project_full_pdf.pdf (accessed November 17, 2020).
24. W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Sorrow Songs,” *The Souls of Black Folk*, in Nathan Huggins, ed., *W.E.B. Du Bois: Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1986), p. 545.
25. Ralph Ellison, “Twentieth-Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity,” 1946, in John F. Callahan, ed., *The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison* (New York: Random House, 1995), p. 99.
26. Ralph Ellison, “What America Would Be Like Without Blacks?,” *Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison* (April 6, 1970), pp. 587 and 588.
27. *Ibid.*
28. Janelle Bouie, “Undemocratic Democracy,” *New York Times Magazine* (August 14, 2019), p. 50.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 52 and 55.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 52 and 53.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
32. “Reading Guide for *The 1619 Project Essays*,” Pulitzer Center, p. 6. https://pulitzercenter.org/sites/default/files/reading_guide_for_the_1619_project_essays.pdf (accessed November 17, 2020).
33. Virginia Museum of History and Culture, “Massive Resistance,” <https://www.virginiahistory.org/collections-and-resources/virginia-history-explorer/civil-rights-movement-virginia/massive> (accessed November 17, 2020).
34. “Reading ‘The Idea of America’ by Nikole Hannah-Jones,” Pulitzer Center, p. 1, https://www.pulitzercenter.org/sites/default/files/pdf_for_lesson_1st_graphic_organizer.pdf (accessed November 17, 2020).
35. “Reading Guide for *The 1619 Project Essays*,” p. 1.
36. *Ibid.*
37. Pulitzer Center, “Lesson Plan: Exploring ‘The Idea of America’ by Hannah-Jones,” May 29, 2020, <https://pulitzercenter.org/builder/lesson/lesson-plan-exploring-idea-america-nikole-hannah-jones-26503> (accessed November 17, 2020).