

WE SPEAK FOR OURSELVES

BY D. WATKINS

ONE BOOK BALTIMORE 2020
DISCUSSION GUIDE



Introduction: A Seat at the Table

Summary: D. Watkins discusses his experience not feeling like he is part of the “black elite.” He explores how many of the famous people that are asked to speak about the black experience, don’t even understand the black experience. He creates the idea that there are two vastly different black narratives in America and the “black elite” create challenges for the non-black elite.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Elite- a group of black people who have found economic success and often times speak on behalf of all black people. They however are disconnected from the struggles many people in the black community experience on a daily basis. • Fearful Black Nerd- a black person who becomes successful by distancing themselves from the community they grew up in, and then uses their success to oppress other black people. • Black Lives Matter- a grassroots organization with an initial primary focus on ending police brutality and creating police reform. Has since grown to incorporate other initiatives that push for equity. • Protest Movement- the push by a variety of organizations to change or improve the structures and systems of America that were designed mainly for white people. Has led to protests around the entire world against these systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever felt out of place before? Where were you? Why did you feel out of place? • Often times people speak on behalf of other people, for example the student body president might talk to the school principal on behalf of the rest of the students. Is there anyone you would trust (famous or not famous) to speak on behalf of you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever had someone speak on behalf of you that you didn’t actually agree with?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the “black elite?” Why does D. Watkins feel out of place at their event? • Tia and D. have different opinions of the people at the event. What are their different perspectives? Do you think you would be more like Tia or D.? • D. is surprised by the “Danny Glover look-alike” being a commentator on race and poverty. Why is he surprised? • D. Watkins asks the questions: “These projects are cool, but what happens once we finish reading all the books on race in America? Why do you think he asks this question? What do you think the answer to this question is?” • When talking about the black elite D. Watkins says, “many of these narratives don’t tie into a big part of the black experience in this country, which is wrong on an extremely propound level.” Why does D. Watkins think this is a problem? Do you think it’s a problem?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toni Morrison: Classism in the Community https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0Q1iW_Hhfc • An Interview with the Founders of Black Lives Matter https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbicAmaXYtM&t=1s • Implicit Bias and Black Commentators on CNN https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5hjfpBa-e0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins says “In my neighborhood of East Baltimore, the devil knocked every day...Every road was paved with roses and thorns. You could have great experiences with amazing people, but you could also get your head cracked along the way, and that’s how it is.” Do you have a similar experience to D. Watkins? What are some of the “roses” and “thorns” you have encountered? • D. Watkins says, “the protest movement is not a universal black experience, especially when you are just trying to survive the day-to-day.” What does he mean by this? Do you think everyone can take part in the “protest movement” who wants to?

Chapter 1: Where I Come From

Summary: D. Watkins shares stories of his life growing up and what led him to go into a life of crime, then go to college, before finding ways to work with his community. D. talks about how hard it is for people to leave the streets based on their own lived experiences and the influences in their lives.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping Mechanisms- Strategies someone uses to deal with the trauma and stress they face in life. These strategies can both be positive things like meditation or therapy, or they can be negative things like alcoholism or ignoring it. • Down Da Hill/Down Bottom/DDH- This is an area of East Baltimore located East of Johns Hopkins Hospital and North of Patterson Park, with a predominately black population, and is seen as an under-resourced community. • Street Hustler Mentality- The mindset that the only way to find success in certain communities is through engaging in hustling. Successful street hustlers are seen as role models for many kids growing up in these communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you believe you have to “make it out” of Baltimore in order to find success? • Do you want to live and work in Baltimore when you get older or move out? • Who is the biggest role model in your life right now? What makes them a role model for you?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins credits his success on a lot of luck. Do you think you need luck in order to find success in Baltimore? Why or why not? • What are the different experiences of Hurk, Wop, Nay? How did those experiences impact D.? • D. talks about how Tay had coaches and teachers that made him not want to play basketball or go to school. Have you ever had a negative experience like Tay? How would you respond if you did have a negative experience like this? • D. says, “You couldn’t mentor teens like us.” What does he mean by this? Do you agree that there are some kids who “can’t be mentored?” • D. talks about how he is just a “regular guy” do you think he is or is he selling himself short?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins Interview on The Breakfast Club https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dnZsB4RMfIY&t=235s • Hummingbirds in the Trenches featuring Kondwani Fidel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FSUK6QSOw9U&t=28s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the chapter D. talks about how hard it was for people to change their behavior, even when they know it is dangerous for their own personal well-being. Why do you think it is so hard? What could make it easier? • Why does D. Watkins think it is so important for people to speak for themselves? How can you speak for yourself?

Chapter 2: Just Pass the Mic

Summary: D. Watkins reflects on watching the media coverage following the race rally and counter protest in Charlottesville. He reflects on how many of the black TV pundits did not seem to reflect the thoughts and feelings of many people in black America. He advocates for people not speaking about things they don't understand.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race Rally- A rally where the primary message is about “white power.” D. Watkins is referring specifically to a rally that took place in Charlottesville that was meant to unify people from around the country that support white supremacy. It also connected to this group of white people wanting to keep up a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. • Modern-Day Lynching- This is a term that connects to modern incidents of police killing unarmed black men and women. It also connects to other unarmed black men and women being murdered by white supremacists that aren't directly connected to law enforcement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are experiences you have had that made you cry or get emotional? • Have you ever thought someone cried when they shouldn't have? What did they cry over? Why didn't you think they should've cried?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was D. Watkins upset by the black TV pundits crying over the situation in Charlottesville? Do you think this criticism from D. Watkins is fair? Why or why not? • D. Watkins says, “We confront racism every day, on the job if we get hired, definitely from the cops, and from the annoying clerks who follow us from the front to the back of the store, just to make sure we aren't stealing.” What experiences with racism have you seen or had? • D. Watkins says that his community is the “subject of protests” but that they aren't actually heard from about the challenges they face. Why do you think this is? • What are things that D. Watkins says are worth crying over? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlottesville One Year After White Supremacist Rally https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=si4e2X0Nh8A • Charlottesville: Race and Terror https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlrcB1sAN8I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins wants a group of black TV pundits to “pass the mic.” What does he mean by this? Why is it so important for him to do this? Do you agree with him? Why or why not? • What are topics that you would want to be able to speak for yourself on? • Do you feel like people are speaking on behalf of you when they shouldn't?

Chapter 3: The Hurdles

Summary: D. Watkins outlines the different challenges he sees black Americans face in this country. He specifically talks about seven hurdles that he sees as being present for black Americans who are growing up in under-resourced communities. He dives in deeply to the idea of a “black tax” where black people have to work harder to find the same level of success as white people.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hurdles (as outlined by D. Watkins): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Schools- they are poorly funded and have been for generations. ○ Cops- receive a massive amount of funding but many local departments have histories of racism and abusive. ○ Food Deserts- large areas of communities that don’t have access to fresh food. ○ Poor Housing- under-funded housing units. ○ Drug Trade- the drug world is often filled with guns, jail, and death. ○ Poverty- having to rely on loans and other means for enough money to survive. ○ Black Taxes- the idea that black people have to work ten times as hard as white people to get the same things. • Uncle Toms- a slang term for black people who are seen by other black people as helping white people hold up racist structures and systems. • Black Codes- a set of laws passed in many southern states after the American Civil War to limit the freedoms of black people. These would go on to become Jim Crow laws. 	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your biggest dream for when you get older? What is your biggest challenge or “hurdle” you have towards accomplishing that dream? • What are some of the challenges you think people in Baltimore face towards finding success?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students Talk about Baltimore City School Conditions https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IlxciAnzCIY&t=7s • Parent on State of Baltimore City Schools https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4P3wCQXPj8 • The Food Deserts of Memphis https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6ZpkhPciaU • Inside the West Baltimore Food Desert https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxX_QH_Hy2A&t=32s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins says, “Experiencing success in America as a black person from a poor neighborhood is like running through rush-hour traffic in New York and not being hit by a car.” Do you agree with this comparison? Why or why not? • What do you think are ways to overcome these hurdles D. Watkins talks about? • What are hurdles you think you need or want more knowledge about?

Chapter 4: The Tradition of Failure

Summary: This chapter focuses on the challenge scholars face in Baltimore City Public Schools and in other school districts with similar demographics to Baltimore. D. explores the history of racism in the school system for hundreds of years and what has led to many of the current problems in the school system.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstruction Era- the time period following the American Civil War when the south was going through the process of “rebuilding” itself. This was seen as an era when advancements could’ve been made for black America but didn’t. • Brown v. Board of Education- a ruling by the Supreme Court in 1954 that found the segregation of schools in the United States of unconstitutional. • White Flight- the process of white families leaving major cities across America and moving into suburban areas. It took a major tax base out of the city which led to underfunding. • The Tradition of Failure- D. Watkins identifies the history of failing black scholars across this country for hundreds of years has led to challenges for scholars that are nearly impossible to overcome. 	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has your experience been like in Baltimore City Public Schools? What are some of the strengths you have seen? What are some of the challenges? • If you were in charge of Baltimore City schools what would you do first? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins talks about the history of education in America. What are some of the historical facts that stand out to you the most? What are some of the challenges created because of this history? • Why does D. Watkins call the education system in America the “tradition of failure?” Do you agree with D. Watkins? • D. Watkins says there hasn’t been a lot of reform and improvements in the education system Why do you think there hasn’t been much progress? What is holding it back? • What are the challenges the poor conditions of Baltimore City Schools have created for some scholars? How are some scholars still able to find success?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freezing Classrooms in Baltimore City Schools https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRFtDxb1g78&t=191s • “School Dayz” by Nia June https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7Xs6EEasqw&t=12s • How Black Students are Hurt by Modern Day Segregation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=od3s3lZWbWM&t=235s • Revisionist History: Brown v. Board of Education https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkIAU3kXKT8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even with all of the challenges in Baltimore City Public Schools some scholars still find success, how do you think they find success? • What challenges do you face in your own school? How can you overcome these challenges? • What do you think our education should look like? What are major changes you would want to make to school? Think about things like what you learn, the times you go to school, your classes, your schedule, etc.

Chapter 5: Too Poor for Pop Culture

Summary: D. Watkins reflects on the experience of his first article going viral. He discusses the day that the article dropped and how some members in his community were aware of it going viral and other members of his community had no idea. He also discusses the challenges he faced before the article went viral and how his life changed and didn't change after it went viral.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop Culture- news and entertainment that is made popular through mainstream American media outlets. It includes certain music, movies, personalities, news stories, etc. The information is mainly made popular through specific forms of social media. • Adjunct Professor- a professor who teaches on a limited contract at a certain university. This meant that D. Watkins might not have the regular amount of classes as other professors and also meant his job wasn't always protected and guaranteed. • Salon Magazine- an online magazine publication that hires both permanent writers as well as freelance writers. • City Paper- a Baltimore-based newspaper that focused on local events, artists, and news. The newspaper has since shutdown. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you stay up to date on what's going on in the world around you? Do you ever feel like there are things going on in the world that you don't know about? • Do you trust the things you read on social media? Why or why not? • Has anyone ever lied on you? How did it feel? How did you respond?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins argued in his original article called "Too Poor for Pop Culture" that access to information is class based. What did he mean by this? Do you agree with his argument? Why or why not? • What are the challenges that Mumbles is facing? Why does he say he wants to get out of Baltimore? • How was D. Watkins life impacted by his article going viral? How did things change for him? How did they stay the same? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you think the first time D. Watkins didn't hear his article mentioned was when he was in his community? • What was D. Watkins experience like with a reporter from the City Paper? How would you have responded to the reporter if you were in D. Watkins situation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What did D. Watkins do when he found out who the reporter's "source" was? What would you have done in his D.'s situation?
Additional Resources/Notes	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original Version of "Too Poor for Pop Culture" https://www.salon.com/2014/02/05/too_poor_for_pop_culture/ • D. Watkins Defines Winning and Losing in Baltimore https://bmoreart.com/2015/05/author-d-watkins-defines-winning-and-losing-in-baltimore.html • D. Watkins Forges a New Identity https://hub.jhu.edu/magazine/2014/fall/d-watkins-baltimore-writer/ • D. Watkins Conversations from The Beast Side https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7fEzXdU8fuk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think your life might change if you had something go viral? What things would stay the same? • D. Watkins end the chapter by saying "me not telling my story easily gives them the space to kill me." What does he mean by this? Do you agree with D.? • What do you think allowed D. Watkins to find success despite all the challenges he was up against? • After reading the chapter, do you think there are some people who are "too poor for pop culture" or do you think everyone has access to pop culture?

Chapter 6: No Retirement for the Hustlers

Summary: This chapter focuses on the challenges people face once they get out of prison. D. Watkins specifically focuses on people who have been in prison for drug charges and have then gotten out and tried to find a job. D. Watkins talks about how the system is broken because it is very easy to get arrested and end up in prison, and once you are in the system it is almost impossible to get out of prison.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trap House- a location where illegal drugs are bought, sold, packaged, and stored. The term “trap” comes from the idea that the drug game leads to either you ending up dead or in jail. • Hustler- more broadly this term refers to someone who has to work hard in order to make money, and typically does not get a base salary but instead has to work for all of the money they get. In this context, D. Watkins is referring specifically to people involved in the drug game in Baltimore. • Re-Entering Society- a term used to describe the experience of a person who served time in prison for a crime but has since been released and needs to access things like find a job and housing. • Ban the Box Campaign- a push to states and job application remove a section of the job application that asks applicants if they have previously been convicted of a crime. The push to ban this was meant to try and have more people who got out of prison be able to access jobs. • Mass Incarceration- the systemic way millions of people of color have been arrested for typically minor crimes, including drug charge, creating major societal challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think it is easy or challenging to get a job in Baltimore? Why do you think that? • Have you ever gotten in trouble at school or at home and your parent or teacher kept bringing it up? How did you feel? • What are some consequences you have gotten from a teacher or parent when you made a mistake? Did you feel like the consequence was appropriate for the mistake you made? Why or why not? • What role does the criminal justice system play in Baltimore?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins starts the chapter off with a question: “Why do we condemn people who are in and out of prison, but never address the system that prohibits ex-offenders from successfully reentering society?” How would you respond to this question? • What challenges did Fat Man face when he left prison? Why was it so hard to stay out of the drug game? • What does D. Watkins mean when he says “there is no retirement for the hustlers? Why is this an additional challenge people face?” • D. Watkins says, “I really wish people knew that drug dealing isn’t that glamorous.” What does he mean by this? Why does he think this is important to tell people? • The Ban the Box campaign looks to have people not have to disclose that they have been charged with a crime before applying for a job. Do you think this is a good idea or do you think people should have to tell someone if they have been committed of a crime on their job application? What are the benefits and downfalls of it?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Formerly Incarcerated Re-Enter Society https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NczRZLkdtag • Mass Incarceration Visualized https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u51_pzax4M0 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think more supports should be given for people who get out of prison? If so, what supports? If not, why not? • Do you believe people who have been released from prison should have any additional punishments that stick with them after they leave prison? Like making it harder to get jobs, housing, food stamps, vote, etc. Why or why not?

Chapter 7: An American Tradition

Summary: D. Watkins discusses the corruption within the Baltimore City Police Department. He specifically focuses on the Gun Trace Task Force, and how their level of corruption is commentary on the corruption within the department as a whole.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualifications for becoming a Baltimore City police officer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age of at least 21 years and 9 months at the time of application ○ US Citizen ○ Earned a High School Diploma or GED ○ Have a Valid Driver’s License ○ Have no Felony Convictions ○ Meet Prior Drug-Use Standards ○ Complete Police Academy • Gun Trace Task Force- a group of police officers in Baltimore City who were granted special privileges to try and reduce crime and the amount of illegal guns on the streets of Baltimore. This group has been convicted of extensive crimes for their abuse of power. 	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins says that cops in poor neighborhoods and cops in rich neighborhoods are incredibly different. What are some of the differences? Do you agree that there are differences? Why do you think these differences exist? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does D. Watkins describe his encounter with the police in a wealthy Philadelphia neighborhood versus the police he has encountered in East Baltimore? • Review the qualifications for becoming a Baltimore City police officer that D. Watkins lists. What are your thoughts around these qualifications? Does anything stand out to you? Do you think there need to be more or less qualifications? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why does D. think it is a problem to identify all cops as “heroes?” Do you agree or disagree? Why? • What are examples of some of the crimes the GTTF committed? What impact did the GTTF have on Baltimore City? Why do you think this case has been underreported by the media?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baltimore’s Most Hated Cop and Me by D. Watkins https://www.huffpost.com/highline/article/daniel-hersl-baltimore-police/ • How a Corrupt Baltimore Police Task Force Tainted Thousands of Cases https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yifMIN5NK4U • A Gang Within: A Baltimore Police Scandal https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycUIqsRDKWA • Young Moose Warned Us https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/kzpw7n/young-moose-warned-us-about-baltimore-police-corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you were put in charge of changing and improving the Baltimore City Police Department, what changes would you make? How would these changes improve the police department? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you believe there is any way the police department could be changed and improved? • Recent protests have called to “defund the police” do you believe the police should be defunded? Why or why not? https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/06/us/what-is-defund-police-trnd/index.html • Have you or people you know had experiences with the police like D. Watkins explained in the chapter? What have those experiences been like? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What has shaped your opinion of the police the most?

Chapter 8: How Our Trust is Undone

Summary: D. Watkins explores the lack of trust the black community has in the criminal justice system when it comes to both police officers as well as the court system. He specifically uses two examples to highlight this lack of trust: Lt. Greg Abbott in Georgia telling a white woman that she won't be killed because she isn't black, and the cases against Donald Trump's associates compared to the cases against D.' friends.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police State- when a specific community is under constant supervision and pressure from a local police department. The department typically has a lot of financial support from the city and are seen as trying to “control” the population. • State v. Federal Prosecution- If a crime is suspected to be committed only in a specific state and violate the laws of that state then local authorities will take the person through the criminal justice system. If a crime is suspected to have been committed on federal property or across multiple states then the “Feds” get involved and will take the person through the criminal justice system. • The Mueller Investigation- An investigation was carried out by prosecutor Robert Mueller in order to identify the extent to which Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election and the role which the Trump campaign supported or didn't support these efforts of interference. It included a specific look at the role Donald Trump may have played in the process and the start of the investigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel that the Baltimore City police department treats people differently depending on what race they are? Explain. • Do you believe the court system in Baltimore City treats people differently depending on what race they are? Explain. • What are things you believe rich people can do that people without money can't do?
	During Reading Questions
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Additional Resources</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lt. Greg Abbott of Georgia https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kN1hDxtStc • Long List of Trump Associates Who Have Been Charged or Imprisoned https://www.forbes.com/sites/jemimamcevoy/2020/08/20/ban-non-joins-long-list-of-trump-associates-who-have-been-charged-or-imprisoned/#3262aae95ea4 	Post-Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins starts with the statement: “If you are poor and black in America, you live in a police state.” What does he mean by this? Do you believe this is true? Why or why not? • What are your reactions to hear the story of Lt. Greg Abbott telling a white woman that police only kill black people? • How does D. compare the accusations against Donald Trump and his team to that of a man running a dope strip? Why did D. use this comparison? • D. Watkins discusses how Donald Trump is an example of how race and power impact how the justice system works for or against you. What are the differences D. talks about? How do you think Trump would be treated if he were black and doing the same behaviors?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins friend who is serving time in prison says, “it must feel good to be rich and white.” Why does he say this? What are the differences he sees in how people are treated based on race and socio-economic status? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How have you experienced people being treated differently based on either race or based on money? ○ What are the “special rights” that people like Trump has access to but people like D. don't have access to? • Do you trust the criminal justice system? Why or why not? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you believe people are given appropriate consequences based on their behavior? 	

Chapter 9: The Baltimore Uprising

Summary: D. Watkins explores the uprising that occurred following the death of Freddie Gray. He talks about his role in the uprising and the challenges he faced with the narrative that was being created. He also looks at how black lives don't matter in America.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freddie Gray- a young man from West Baltimore who severely harmed while in police custody. The injuries he suffered while in custody led to his death. A video of him being arrested went viral and protests erupted across the city and around the nation in response to his murder. The police officers involved were charged but they were found not guilty and the charges were all dropped. Black Narrative- the way that white people and mainstream America understand the experience of black people, especially black people who live in under-resourced communities. This narrative is created by the voices that are brought into the media or elevated on social media. D. talks about wanting to shape the narrative more. Dehumanization- when you don't see another person as human either because of your own mindsets/biases, or because of structures and systems in popular culture and the media. In this specific context D. is talking about how black people aren't seen as humans, especially by police officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you remember the death of Freddie Gray and what happened in the city afterwards? What are your memories of these events? Do you remember how you felt at the time? What initial words or thoughts come to mind when you hear the phrase "black lives matter?" OR What does "black lives matter" mean to you?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was D. Watkins doing when he heard about the death of Freddie Gray? How did he respond, react and feel? D. talks about how some of the people who took to the streets after the murder of Freddie Gray did so peacefully, while others did so violently. Why do you think both forms of protesting happened? Do you agree with both forms of protest? Why or why not? What happened to D. during his interview with CNN? What frustrated D. about the comments that were made about him and his writing? How would you have reacted? How did community members like Rello react to D being on CNN? What are examples D. gives for why black lives don't matter in America? Do you agree with him? Why or why not? What additional examples might you give? D. Watkins says, "it's hard for us to focus on global terrorists when domestic terrorists pin badges to their blue uniforms...and patrol our neighborhoods every day with a license to kill." What does D. mean by this? Do you agree with him?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baltimore and the Death of Freddie Gray https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7wGp1RAXOg "In Baltimore, We're All Freddie Gray" https://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/29/opinion/in-baltimore-were-all-freddie-gray.html D. Watkins on CNN with Erin Burnett https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0utKcudwBo Don Lemon and D. Watkins Tour Baltimore https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCVsSxS0BWA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you believe things have changed since the Baltimore uprising? Why or why not? Do you think there is a right way and a wrong way to protest? What would you say is the "right way?" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are ways you have protested before? What are ways you would want to protest but just haven't yet? Are there things you wouldn't do as a form of protest? If you think about your specific school or community would you say that black lives matter in that community or not?

Chapter 10: I'm Sick of Woke

Summary: D. Watkins explores the concept of being “woke.” He critiques woke culture and discusses reasons why he chooses to not protest as his form of being involved in community work. He also discusses issues he has with a single black voice or black narrative being used, he instead wants to promote the idea of diversity of black thought.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woke- to be aware of the issues and challenges that specifically plague Black America including racism, failing schools, food deserts, police brutality, etc. • Get Active- an alternative to the idea of “get woke” which supports the idea of not just building content knowledge around topics, but instead doing positive work in your community. • One Black Voice- the idea that all black people think the same way about every topic, and thus the media only needs to rely on a single black person to represent all black people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any popular trends that you don't like? Why don't you like them? • What do you think it means to be “woke?” Do you consider yourself “woke?” Why or why not? • Do you think people have to go to protests in order to be activists? Why or why not?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does D. Watkins explain “woke” people? Do you think his description is accurate? Why or why not? Based on this description, how do you think D. Watkins feels about the term “woke?” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why does D. Watkins say protests aren't for him? Are protests for you? • How does Donald Stevenson explain protesting? Do you agree or disagree with his understanding of it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why does he call for the term “woke” to be replaced with the term “get active?” Do you think this change should be made? • Why does D. Watkins not like the idea of there being “one black voice?”
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why D. Watkins is Sick of Woke Culture https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADdRnn-raTk • Barack Obama Takes on Woke Culture https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaHLd8de6nM • What Does it Mean to Be Woke? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwlTMhD-HQY • Donald Stevenson TedTalk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-bM-KAA_3k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins talks about how there are many faces to activism and everyone has their own role to play. What do you think your role in activism is? • D. Watkins calls on people to go “beyond the black box” at the end of the chapter. What does this mean to you? Why do you think it is so important to go beyond the black box? How can you go beyond the black box? • After reading the chapter has your opinion around what it means to be woke changed? Why or why not? Do you like the idea of being woke?

Chapter 11: Are You a Real One?

Summary: D. Watkins explores what it means to be a “real one” and identifies specific behaviors he sees from people who act fake and the negative impact this has on the black community.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentrification- in this specific context, gentrification is the process of getting rid of an under-resourced community by infusing it with traditionally white middle class structures, systems, and interests. It involves increasing rent to push out people with lower socio-economic means. • Being a Real One- D. Watkins discusses how being a real one connects to being authentic and accessible to your community in a way that allows you to engage with people and they can be comfortable in their own skin. • White Validation- the desire for some people of color to be accepted and liked by traditional white society. This often results in those people of color distancing themselves from other members of their community. • Code Switching- when a black person abandons their vernacular in order to try and “fit in” within traditional white society. It is often times treated as a way to try and survive and find success in a racist society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever met someone that you felt was being fake or phony? Why did you think this? How did you feel about the person? • Have you ever felt like you had to be someone you weren’t? Have you ever felt like you had to act differently in different situations in a way that made you uncomfortable?
	During Reading Questions
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracy Morgan and Gentrification in Brooklyn https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjHsd1E4Y7I • A Walk through Gentrified Brooklyn https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTAKcQYs5IE • What is Code-Switching https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNbdn0yuUw8 • President Obama and the People Town Hall https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNZvIgA0DIc • Erica Garner on The New Yorker https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-vE7-Hr7tY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are “real ones” that you have had the opportunity to interact, know, or learn about? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have you ever met or interacted with people you felt were “fake ones” or putting on a fake identity? • If you could ask President Obama one question, what would you ask him? Why would you want to ask him? • D. Watkins is very critical of a lot of different black people that he thinks are acting fake. Do you agree with him being this critical or do you think he needs to not be as critical? Why?

Chapter 12: Intellectually Curious or Racist?

Summary: This chapter explores D. Watkins experience with different types of white people including racist white people and those that he calls just “intellectually curious.” He also explores the importance of bringing different people together with different perspectives, to highlight this he talks about his experience at a book festival in “Trump country.”

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microaggression- a brief or commonplace exchange that expresses a negative prejudice towards an individual or group. People being surprised that D. Watkins was a professor showcased microaggressions. • Intellectually Curious- a white person who asks questions and even occasionally makes unintentionally racist comments, but is open to listening and learning. • Racist People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I’m Not Racist” Racist- people who interact with black people in public places but do not want to engage in conversations about race. ○ “I Don’t Know That I’m Racist” Racist- People who don’t openly claim to be racist or support white power, but all of their behaviors suggest that they see black people as dangerous or less than. ○ “Proud Racists”- people who openly support the KKK or confederacy and opening believe in white power. 	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever interacted with people who are racist? What was that experience like? How did you handle it? • Do you believe you can love something and criticize it? Or do you believe those things can’t go together? Why? • What does “being patriotic” mean to you? • When you hear the term “Make America Great Again” what words, thoughts, or feelings come to mind?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Things to Know about Racism https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eTWZ80z9EE • Racial Microaggressions: Comments that Sting https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_85JVcniE_M • Ben Carson Compares Slavery to Immigration https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SALVLgCHf94 • The Duality of Thomas Jefferson https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bzZnqXvRSLE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins asks how we can bring different people together, especially people who disagree about politics. How do you think we can bring people together? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do you think it is important to bring people together or do you think you would rather just avoid people you don’t agree with? • D. ends with the question: “How can we ever get these groups together if my side is always dying?” Why does he choose to end with this question? Why is this question important to the message connected to the rest of the chapter?

Chapter 13: Be the Person You Needed Growing Up

Summary: This chapter explores D. Watkins passion for expanding literacy in his community and making “reading cool” for kids. He talks about challenges of adult literacy and how people can help in certain communities.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiterate- When a person is not able to read. It was illegal for people who were enslaved to learn how to read as a way of trying to keep control over them. Today 36 million American adults are not able to read. • Culturally Responsive Curriculums- These curriculums are those that are designed specifically to help promote and uplift a scholars’ identity and community. For D. a lot of this is done by writing books and articles that scholars from Baltimore (and places like Baltimore) can connect to and engage with. • Obligation- an act or course of action that a person is morally or legally bound to. It is the feeling that you “have” to do something. For D. he sees his obligation as promoting literacy and getting kids to think reading is cool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you help people? How have people helped you? • Have you ever had or do you currently have a mentor? Who was /is your mentor? How have they helped you? • What do you think of reading? Do you think it is boring, exciting, interesting, etc.?
	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins says, “It baffles me that you can earn enrollment in one of the top schools in the country but still not know how to help.” Why does this confuse him? Why do you think it is so hard for people to know how to help other people? • D. says people are always showing up to the party late because they only do the work AFTER black people are murdered. What are things that need to be done BEFORE this happens? • How does D. use his writing to help young people in his community? • D. talks about his experience with reading both growing up and as he got older. How did his experience with reading change? Has your opinion of reading changed over time? • What role does illiteracy play in America and in black communities? Why does D. Watkins call in “criminal” how many people can’t read? • How did D. Watkins respond to his book being left out of the curriculum? Why do you think it has been so hard for him to get his book in the curriculum? Do you think his books should be required reading for kids?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dexter Manley’s Story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frZZ32cTqQs • Why 36 Million Americans Can’ Read https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6N8EYkepuqQ • D. Watkins on Reading https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=widNdBfTaZU&t=6s • Jason Reynolds on Why Reading is Important https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATeoup5a-XU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Watkins believes his work is to “make reading cool.” How can he make reading cool? Do you think reading is cool? If not, why not? If so, how is it cool? • The title of the chapter is “be the person you needed growing up.” What does this mean to you? Why is this so important? Who is the person you feel like you needed/need as you grow up? • D. focuses his work on promoting literacy in the community, he is passionate about it and calls it his “obligation.”. What are you passionate about? How can you use that passion to help other people now and as you get older?

Chapter 14: There Are No Shortcuts to Change

Summary: D. Watkins focuses on the importance of community specific activism that looks at long term changes and not just attempted quick fixes. He calls out “activists” who only do some protesting but then go home and don’t engage with the actual community they claim to be protesting for. He also provides a clear checklist for activists to follow.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Activism- When a person is involved in specific programs that are designed to directly impact people within their community. They often times do not rely on large non-profit organizations, and instead focus their work around trying to provide a long-term solution for members of their community. A lot of this work is done around building knowledge or a certain skill. • Baltimore Ceasefire- An organization that focuses on ending violence within Baltimore by calling for extended periods where there are no shootings or killings. The organization relies on grassroots activism that spreads awareness by going around communities and then putting on different community events as alternatives to negative behaviors. • Free Sweat Baltimore- An organization created by Antonio Cobia that focuses on promoting positive health and wellness in Baltimore communities. Cobia goes around and provides free personal training for people all around Baltimore. 	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does activism mean to you? What are topics or issues that you are or want to be “active” about? • Do you feel like your ideas and opinions are respected and listened to? Why or why not?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erricka Bridgeford and the Power to Stop Violence https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3ImfsP469A • Baltimore Ceasefire https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPmYw2A51Sk • Black Activism is Changing Your Community for the Better https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mEu2sJwscQ • This is What Activism Looks Like https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/section/artsentertainment/fall-arts-this-is-what-activism-looks-like/ • Aaron Maybin and the Necessity of True Activism https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x0GuiBQlGFc&t=250s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does D. not agree with Donnie’s approach to protesting and stopping the youth jail? Do you agree with Donnie or D.? • D. Watkins says, “activism isn’t a hobby.” What does he mean by this? Do you feel like some people treat it as a hobby? Why is it a problem to treat it as a hobby? • D. says the only way to identify and deal with the issues is to get into the streets. What does he mean by this? Why is it important to “be in the streets” when it comes to doing community activism? • What are ways Erricka Bridgeford and Antonio Cobia doing positive community work? How do they represent positive activists? • D. argues that you don’t have to have a lot of money or being famous to make a positive difference. Why does he believe this? Do you agree with him? Who are people you have seen make a positive difference that aren’t famous or rich?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Making a Difference Checklist. What parts stand out to you? Do you agree with this checklist? Is there anything you would add or take away? • What does D. Watkins mean by the title of the chapter, “there are no shortcuts to change?” Do you agree with his understanding of how to make positive change? • What is a way that you want to make a positive change in your community?

Chapter 15: Don't Make It Out, Make It Better

Summary: In this chapter D. Watkins talks about the importance of staying in your community and working within it to make it better. He uses a conversation with a person who wants to “make it out of the hood” to show the difference in mindsets.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma- a deeply distressing or disturbing experience. D. Watkins is specifically talking about trauma that is associated with things such as police brutality and poverty that many black Americans face. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intergenerational Trauma- trauma that is passed down from one generation to the next. It is present when a traumatic event impacts how a family understands, copes with and heals from trauma. ○ Racial Trauma- Trauma that is the result of racism, racist biases, or seeing/experiencing racist acts such as police brutality. ○ Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome- refers to the multi-generational trauma experienced by black people that leads to undiagnosed and untreated post-traumatic stress disorder. 	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are things that make you want to stay in Baltimore as you get older? What are things that make you want to leave Baltimore as you get older? • Have you ever been told that you need to make it out of Baltimore? How did you feel when you heard it? How did you respond?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Death Note by Kondnwai Fidel https://medium.com/@KondwaniFidel/how-a-young-boy-has-been-decaying-in-baltimore-since-age-10-a-death-note-98573c2e05cf • Understanding Racial Trauma https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIyp8AZV1vs • Stop the Cycle of Intergenerational Trauma https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=doJHrab9cII • Chicago Activists are Fighting for Schools https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-ir2wEYA5I • Bridging Education and Activism https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuSIE7XaK8s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does D. mean by the title of the chapter “don't make it out, make it better?” Do you agree with this idea? Why or why not? • What are ways you want to make Baltimore better? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are things you can do right now to make Baltimore better? ○ What are things you can do in high school to make Baltimore better? ○ What are things you can do in college to make Baltimore better? ○ What are things you can do in your career to make Baltimore better? • Who are people you feel like are doing positive things in your community? How are they doing the positive work?

Afterword: A Seat at the Table

Summary: This closing section explores the messages that D. has learned during his time doing this work. He talks about the importance of doing local and community work and to focus on the small wins that come from this work. D. also talks about the feeling of him not belonging and how he constantly feels like he should be doing work.

Key Terms	Pre-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat at a Table- This is a metaphor for being put in a position where you can make some decisions. The “table” typically refers to being in a position of power, it could be within a business, school, political arena, or some other space that allows you to make important decisions that impact others. D. talks about how important it is to remember the people you are supposed to represent when you get to that table. • Fake Activists- people who claim they are doing positive work in communities but aren’t. They might focus on building up social media followers but don’t actually have positive impacts within the communities they say they are working for or represent. 	During Reading Questions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever felt like you don’t fit in? Where were you? How did it feel? • In Nas’ lyrics that open up the chapter, he talks about feeling like he doesn’t fit in. What does he mean when he says this? How does this connect to D.’s experience? • D. Watkins talks about his experience at a party with Asia and with Tonya. How was his experience at both parties? Why did he choose to leave both of them early? Why do you think he feels like he doesn’t fit in? • What does it mean to have “a seat at the table?” What does D. say about having a seat at the table? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there certain “tables” you want a seat at? • What does D. say are good ways to be a leader in a community? What are options other than just protesting that he explains are good ways to support a community? • D. talks about an experience he had trying to help a kid but who ended up not following through with the help and then the boy was murdered. Why does D. include this story? Why is it important to not give up or discouraged when it comes to helping people?
Additional Resources	Post-Reading Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wes Moore and Fighting Poverty https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBPUMIKFJlg • Nipsey Hussle and Escaping Survival Mode https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdM78pAopT0 • Entrepreneur by Pharrell Williams https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTOoY5MIkvM • LeBron James Changed the Game of Athletes and Social Activism https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Las-s3Gh6XQ • LeBron James iPromise School https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n28W6CqUdBE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has D. Watkins learned during his time doing this work? What can you learn from D. Watkins about how to do this work successfully? • What are you motivated or encouraged to do based on what D. talked about?