



# What is Race? / Is Race for Real?

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 **Race is a modern idea.** Ancient societies did not divide people according to physical differences, but according to religion, status, class and even language.
- 2 **Race has no genetic basis.** Not one characteristic, trait or gene distinguishes all members of one so-called race from all members of another so-called race.
- 3 **Slavery predates race.** Throughout history, societies have enslaved others, often as a result of conquest or war, but not because of physical characteristics or a belief in natural inferiority. In America, a unique set of circumstances led to the enslavement of peoples who looked similar.
- 4 **Race and freedom were born together.** When the United States was founded, equality was a radical new idea. But our early economy was based largely on slavery. The concept of race helped explain why some people could be denied the rights and freedoms that others took for granted.
- 5 **Race justified social inequalities as natural.** As the race concept evolved, it justified the extermination of Native Americans, the exclusion of Asian immigrants and the taking of Mexican lands. Racial practices were institutionalized within government, laws and society.
- 6 **Human subspecies don't exist.** Unlike many animals, modern humans have not been isolated enough to evolve into separate subspecies or races. Despite surface differences, we are among the most similar of all species.
- 7 **Skin color is only skin deep.** Most traits are inherited independent of one another. The genes for skin color have nothing to do with genes for hair texture, eye shape, blood type, musical talent or athletic ability.
- 8 **Most variation is within, not between "races."** Of the small amount of total human genetic variation, 85% exists within any local population, be they Italians, Kurds, Koreans or Cherokees. Two random Koreans are likely to be as genetically different as a Korean and an Italian.
- 9 **Race is not biological but racism is still real.** Race is still a powerful social idea that gives people different access to opportunities and resources. Our government and society have created advantages of being white. This affects everyone, whether we are aware of it or not.
- 10 **Colorblindness will not end racism.** Pretending race doesn't exist is not the same as creating equality. Racism is more than stereotypes and individual prejudice. To combat racism, we need to identify and remedy social policies that advantage some groups at the expense of others.

SOURCE: PBS, "What is Race? / Is Race for Real?", [https://www.pbs.org/race/001\\_WhatIsRace/001\\_00-home.htm](https://www.pbs.org/race/001_WhatIsRace/001_00-home.htm).