

What you need to know:

Divisive Race Ideology

What is divisive race ideology?

This is a broad term PDE Action uses to describe “critical race theory” and other ideologies that seek to divide people based on immutable characteristics like race. Divisive race ideology asks people to see one another through a racial lens, not as individuals with unique personalities and character traits. It presumes that one can understand another’s beliefs and life experience *because* of his or her identity. Often, divisive race ideology teaches that one can be assigned “oppressor” or “victim” status based on his or her race or sex.

What’s the issue?

It’s good to learn about all of American history—including the times we failed to live up to our founding principles. It’s also important for students to learn different perspectives and narratives about American history. Unfortunately, divisive race ideology goes far beyond that—often teaching children to view themselves and one another primarily through a racial lens. It is immoral to teach children to assess their own or others’ identities and assign one another into “oppressor” or “victim” categories based on race.

When they say...	You can say...
America is a systemically (or systematically) racist country. Racism is part of every American institution. We must be antiracist.	The American Constitution has done more to advance freedom and liberty across the globe than any other document in the history of the world. We have not always lived up to our principles, and we must learn the truth about the evils of slavery and segregation. But to say we are fundamentally racist is to ignore the decades upon decades of progress our country has made to become a more perfect union.
Can you even define critical race theory? That’s only a term used in law school.	Critical race theory (CRT) is an academic term for a set of beliefs about race in America. It claims that all of American life and all economic, political, and social issues and history are race-based. CRT and other forms of divisive race ideology posit as fact that people are oppressors or victims based on their race.
If you are not antiracist, then you are a racist.	I reject the concept of antiracism because it is rooted in judging people because of their skin color—and that is the definition of racism.
Do you deny that racism still exists?	Racism and prejudice do still exist. That’s why we should teach students not to judge one another based on their race, which is exactly what divisive race ideology does.
This isn’t being taught in schools. And if it is, that’s a good thing.	Our sister organization, Parents Defending Education, has uncovered dozens of cases of divisive race ideology in schools: A Colorado superintendent said he was “drained from privileged white people” during a professional development call in January 2024. A Massachusetts school district’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department provided staff with readings on “Whiteness.” Chappaqua Central School District in New York offered race-based affinity groups to children and conducted an audit that pushed the district to implement race-based hiring practices. Separating or judging people base on race is never a good thing.

For more information, check out Parents Defending Education’s [map](#).