



Monthly Featured Book

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Monthly Featured Book: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter™: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in ADL Education's programs. For educators, adult family members and other caregivers of children, reading the books listed on this site with your children and incorporating them into instruction are excellent ways to talk about these important concepts at home and in the classroom.

Indigo & Ida

Heather Murphy Capps (Author).

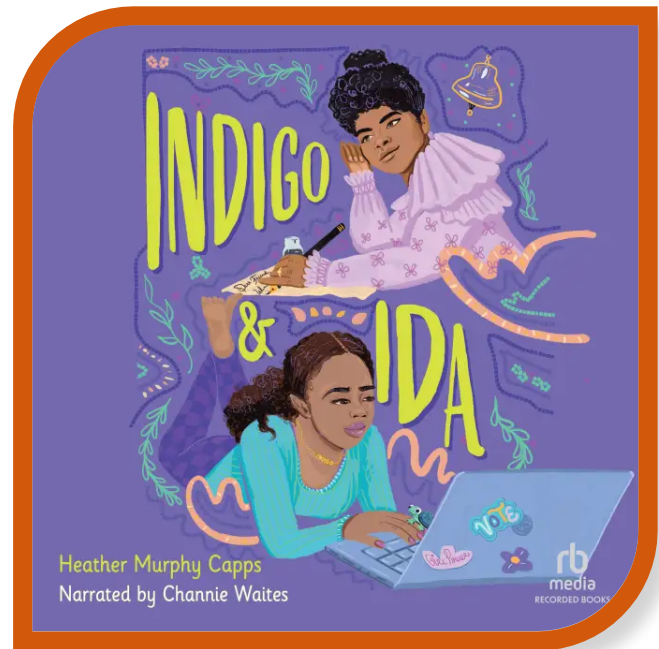
When eighth grader and aspiring journalist Indigo breaks an important story, exposing an unfair school policy, she's suddenly popular for the first time. The friends who've recently drifted away from her want to hang out again. Then Indigo notices that the school's disciplinary policies seem to be enforced especially harshly with students of color, like her. She wants to keep investigating, but her friends insist she's imagining things. Meanwhile, Indigo stumbles upon a book by Black journalist and activist Ida B. Wells—with private letters written by Ida tucked inside. As she reads about Ida's lifelong battle against racism, Indigo realizes she must choose between keeping quiet and fighting for justice.

ISBN: 978-1728467689

Publisher: Carolrhoda Books

Year Published: 2023

Age Range: 10-13



Book Themes

Activism, Civil Rights, Friendship, Journalism, Friendship, History, Race and Racism, Social Justice

Key Words

Discuss and define these words with students prior to reading the book and remind them of the meanings as they come up in the book. See ADL' [Education Glossary Terms](#).

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|------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| ■ boycott | ■ dignity | ■ gender identity | ■ journalist | ■ represent |
| ■ censorship | ■ discrimination | ■ gravitas | ■ karma | ■ reputation |
| ■ chaos | ■ disobedience | ■ humiliating | ■ lynching | ■ swastikas |
| ■ civil rights | ■ disreputable | ■ influencer | ■ nonbinary | ■ traitor |
| ■ constitutional right | ■ divisive | ■ Inhumane | ■ outrage | ■ troublemaker |
| ■ defacement | ■ ethically | ■ injustice | ■ protest | ■ vandalism |
| ■ devastated | ■ exhilarated | ■ intense | ■ ransacked | ■ vigilance |
| ■ desperate | ■ fumed | ■ investigative reporter | ■ Reconstruction | ■ women's suffrage |

Discussion Questions

If the students read the book in small groups or as a whole class, ask discussion questions throughout their reading in order to check comprehension and engage them on a deeper level. Some of these questions can also be used as writing prompts. When students have finished the book, choose from these questions to guide a group discussion.

- What happens in the story?
- What did you think about Indigo when the book began, and how did your thoughts and feelings about her change while reading the book?
- Why does Indigo want to get sent to detention? What do you think about her reasons for doing so?
- What does Indigo see when she is in detention? How does she follow up to learn more about her theory that only Black and brown students have been getting sent to detention?
- Indigo decides to read *Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells* as her detention “assignment.” Do you know who Ida B. Wells is? If so, what did you already know about Ida B. Wells before reading the book? What did you learn about her from reading the letters that Indigo finds in the book? What more do you want to learn about Ida Wells?
- When you read Ida’s letter about what happened in the Curve at the grocery store (page 90), what thoughts and feelings came to mind? How does Ida’s story impact Indigo?
- In what ways are both Indigo and Ida “investigative journalists?” What topics are the focus for their journalism?
- How does Indigo use video and social media as an investigative journalist and in her efforts to tell the truth about school policies she thinks are unfair?
- How is social media used and portrayed throughout the book? In what ways is social media helpful to the characters? In what ways is social media harmful?
- Why do you think Indigo decides to run for Class President?
- How are Indigo and Manning’s campaign strategies different from each? What do their campaign strategies reveal about their personalities?
- What are some of the school policies that Indigo decides to address in her candidacy? What other school policies are addressed in the book?
- What is a school policy you care about and one you think need changing?
- What do you think the friendship between Indigo, Abbie and Manning is like before the book’s events? How does their relationship change throughout the book? What do you think will happen next in their friendships with each other?
- When Abbie asks Indigo, “Don’t you ever just want to be ‘normal’ for once?” what is Indigo’s reaction? What do you think is “normal” to Abbie? What does that question mean to you?
- Several people in the book tell Indigo she’s too “intense” and some call her “militant.” What do you think about this? How does Indigo feel about being called intense and how do her feelings change throughout the book?

- When Nia and Indigo have a conversation about the difference between alpacas (friendlier, need people around) and llamas (fine with being alone), how was that helpful or insightful to Indigo? Did the analogy of alpacas and llamas make you wonder if you were more of an alpaca or llama? Please explain.
- When the school boycott happens, what is Indigo's reaction? What was your reaction?
- How was the storyline of "Captain Minnesota" (Weldon's grandfather) and how he was treated at the hospital connected to Indigo's discovery about detention and what kids are punished and not punished? Why do you think the author decided to put Weldon's grandfather's storyline in the book? What did you learn from those two stories?
- In the book, how are friendships explored? What is a friendship from the book you admire? What is a friendship you have concerns about? To what extent do the friendships resonate or remind you of your friendships?
- Can friends have conflict and keep being friends? In what ways is conflict helpful in a friendship and in what ways is it hurtful? Please explain with an example from the book or one from your life you'd like to share.
- In what ways are Indigo and Ida similar and how are they different?
- How are issues of race and racism addressed in the book? What are some examples of racial bias and discrimination in the book?
- How did you feel when the book ends?
- What do you think is the most important message of the book?
- If the book continued, what do you think would happen next?

Extension Activities

Below are activities for students that can extend learning from the book.

1. Reader's Response Writing Activities

Diary Entries of a Character: Have students select one of the main characters of the book: Indigo, Abbie, Manning, Weldon, Trinity, Elijah, Indigo's dad, Indigo's mom, Elijah, Nia, Mr. Belkin. Then have students write a collection of diary entries for their chosen character, writing 5–8 diary entries that the character might have kept before, during or after the book's events. Remind students that the character's thoughts and feelings are very important in a diary as well as their reaction to day-to-day events and other activities that take place throughout the book. Invite students to focus on their character's perspective. *How do they observe the events of the story? What assumptions do they make about other characters they interact with? What thoughts might they have that they wouldn't want to share with others, but share in their diary? What are their wishes and hopes? What are their fears?* You may choose to have students engage in prewriting discussions with a partner about their character in order to get their ideas out. After students have completed the diary entries, have them share their writing with the class and consider creating an online collection of all the diary entries.

Text to Self: Reflections on Social Media: Social media plays a major role in the book. Ask students: *How does Indigo use social media to communicate her opinions and message? How does social media both help and hurt Indigo? How do other young people express themselves through social media?* Elicit examples from students about the role and power of social media explored in the book. Then, have students engage in self-reflection about social media in their lives and share their thoughts in an essay that you either assign for homework or in-class writing time. You can use these prompts to help students reflect: *Do you use social media and if so, how? If you don't use*

social media, why don't you use it? How has social media been helpful or useful in your life? How has social media been hurtful or harmful in your life? How have you seen social media used to engage people on issues of injustice? How has social media influenced you, or not? Have students share their completed essays with each other.

School Policy You Care About: Ask students: *What school policies does Indigo focus on as part of her journalism and class presidential campaign?* Elicit that in the book, Indigo first focuses on school detention and how students aren't allowed to use the bathroom while in detention. She also notices that all the students in detention are Black and brown students. Indigo also makes her case for why she believes students should be allowed to have cell phones in schools and urges the school to change their current policy. Ask students: *What school policy do you like and appreciate in our school? What school policy do you disagree with or believe should change? What are your reasons? What is your evidence? What would you say in a social media post or video about the issue to try to influence or persuade others?* You can then engage students in a writing assignment where they write a social media or video post about the school policy they wish to change, their reasons for the change and what they hope to see as a new policy.

2. Journalism and Making a Difference

Ask students: *What is journalism?* Come to a definition of journalism as: writing, creating or editing of content for newspapers, magazines, television, radio and online news. Ask: *In what ways is journalism a key theme of the book?* Elicit and explain that Indigo, the main character in the book, is a student journalist who investigates important issues and stories and then shares those stories with others in her school and community. In addition, we learn through her letters that Ida B. Wells (see Activity #3 below) was a journalist in the late 1800s and early 1900s, writing about Jim Crow laws, lynching and other issues of race and racism. Share an excerpt from page 276 of the book, when Indigo is making a video and talks about what journalism means to her. She says,

"And another thing a good journalist does is keep shining a light on the truth. That's what I learned from Ida B. Wells, who was an amazing, brave journalist back in the nineteenth century. Ida refused to stop talking about hard things, no matter how many people were against her and no matter how dangerous things got."

Ask students: *Do you read or watch school, community or national news? Have you ever read a story where a journalist "shined a light on the truth," or talked/wrote about "hard things?" What was it about and what were your thoughts and feelings about it?* Have students imagine that they are going to write an article for their school or community newspaper. Engage them in a process where they create a list of topics and issues they would write about and if time permits, write the titles or headlines for these stories.

3. Who was Ida B. Wells?

Ask students: *Who was Ida B. Wells? Did you know about her before reading the book? What did you learn about Ida B. Wells by reading the book?* Record their thoughts on the board/smart board. Together, watch the short video, [Ida B. Wells: Journalist and Anti-Lynching Activist](#). Then ask what else they learned about Ida B. Wells from the video and add to the notes on the board/smart board. Then, share some or all of the following facts and information about her:

- Ida Bell Wells was born in Holly Springs, Mississippi on July 16, 1862; she was born into slavery during the Civil War.
- When she was 14 years old, both of Wells' parents and her infant brother died during the yellow fever epidemic. She went to work and kept the rest of the family together with the help of her grandmother.

- She began teaching at the age of 14 and continued to teach after moving to Memphis, Tennessee.
- In 1887, the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled against Ida B. Wells in a lawsuit she had brought against the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad for having been forcibly removed from her seat after she refused to give it up for one in a “colored only” car.
- In 1892, after three friends of hers were lynched by a mob, Wells began an editorial campaign against lynching. She continued her anti-lynching crusade, first as a staff writer for the *New York Age* and then as a lecturer and organizer of anti-lynching societies.
- Wells was a strong supporter of women securing the right to vote. She marched in the 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., when many of the organizers resisted Black women’s participation. After Black women were told they could only march in segregated sections, the NAACP organized letter and telegram protests.
- Wells was one of the co-founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- In 2020, Wells was awarded a posthumous (awarded after death) Pulitzer Prize in recognition of her “outstanding and courageous” reporting about lynching.

After sharing and recording all of this information, ask students: *What else do you want to know about Ida B. Wells? What are you curious about her? What questions do you still have about Ida B. Wells?* Invite students to take one of their questions and pursue a research project over the next days or weeks (time permitting) where they explore one or more of their questions. When completed, have students share what they learned in one of the following ways (or invite their ideas): make a mock museum exhibit about her; create a timeline or infographic about her life; draw a portrait of her with a short bio; write a children’s book about her; write and perform a short skit, song or poem; compare and contrast Ida B. Wells’ and Indigo’s lives; do a mock audio interview with Ida B. Wells; or write a letter about something that happened to her (or a current-day social justice issue) in the same form as the letters from Ida that Indigo found in the book. When completed, have students share their projects.

ADL Resources

The following are curriculum and other educational resources on race and racism, women’s history, social media and the civil rights movement.

Curriculum Resources

7 Ideas for Teaching Women’s History Month <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/7-ideas-teaching-womens-history-month>

10 Ideas for Teaching Black History Month <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/10-ideas-teaching-black-history-month>

Lonnie Chavis of ‘This Is Us’ Writes about Racism <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/lonnie-chavis-us-writes-about-racism>

Tweens, Digital Spaces and Cyberbullying <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/tweens-digital-spaces-and-cyberbullying>

What is the School-to-Prison Pipeline? <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/what-school-prison-pipeline>

Women’s Suffrage, Racism and Intersectionality <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/womens-suffrage-racism-and-intersectionality>

Websites

10 Ways Youth Can Engage in Activism <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-activism>

Civil Rights Movement <https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/civil-rights-movement>

Teaching Women's History in March and Beyond <https://www.adl.org/resources/blog/teaching-womens-history-march-and-beyond>

Women's History Month Resources <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/womens-history-month-resources>

Children's Books

Books about Social Justice <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1583>

Books about Gender and Sexism <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1577>