

# Let's Talk About Race

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*The Long Shadow* by Phyllis Wheeler:  
Discussion Questions for Teachers and Families

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1. Name at least three things Richie could do at the end of the story that he couldn't do at the beginning.
2. Name one thing Morris could do at the end of the story that he couldn't do at the beginning.
3. How does Richie react to Morris when he first meets him?
4. How does Morris react to Richie when he first meets him?
5. What's your guess: has Richie had a friend before who is black?
6. We all tend to be wary of strangers. Name a racial or ethnic group in your life who are strangers to you. How can you reach out and get to know someone in that group?
7. What might making a friend do to change your feelings about the group? Can you talk about a case where this has happened in your life or a friend's?
8. There are many reasons why kids might struggle in school, including learning disabilities and issues at home. Some classmates might want to avoid these people, or even call them names and be mean to them. What is a better response you could have to someone in your class who different in some way? What's a good way to stop a bully?
9. In a scene in the book in 1923, ordinary people were acting in an evil manner. Why do you think they did that? Do you think people are basically good, or bad?
10. Why do you think it could be a good idea for Americans to publicly remember that incidents like lynchings happened, maybe even in your community? What are other instances in world history where brutality was accepted by a society as normal? Do you think Americans, Germans, and others in the present day should remember, discuss, and commemorate these tragedies?
11. Do you think bad effects continue down to the present time? What evidence do you see?
12. Aunt Trudy did some bad parenting. When she realized she was wrong, she could a) apologize, or b) act as if she was never wrong. At the end of the book, which did she do? Which do you do when you have hurt someone? Why is apologizing difficult?

13. There's a good way and a bad way to apologize. What are some features of a good way to apologize? What's a bad way to apologize?
14. Richie had a choice about how he would respond to her apology. Would he accept it, or would he reject it and stay angry? Which was the easier way? Which did he do?
15. Why was that difficult for him? Which would you have done?
16. What's YOUR opinion about who or what Ned is?
17. Write or tell three concrete ways to love your neighbor, someone different from you.

Answers, next page

## For further study:

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For students:

Locate this book in your library:

*The Talk: Conversations about Race, Love & Truth*, ed. by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Hudson Willis, pub. 2020 by Crown Books for Young Readers

Read at least eight of the chapters, each a talk with minority children about what to be wary of in everyday life.

1. Did the content of any of the talks surprise you? If so, what?
2. Has your family had a similar cautionary talk with you? If so, what was in it?
3. Do you wish your family would have such a talk with you? What do you think they should say?

For teachers and parents:

1. Wendy Speake, homeschool podcaster, interviewed speaker and author Susan Seay, who is African American, on the subject of teaching racial reconciliation in the family setting. You may want to check it out:

<https://homeschooling.mom/homeschool-solutions-show/hs-240-talking-with-our-children-about-racism-susan-seay>

2. If you are a white person who wants to plunge into this topic deeply on a personal level, you can check out this guide for your own journaling:

*Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*, by Layla F. Saad, pub. 2020 by Sourcebooks

# Answers

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Some suggested answers to Discussion Questions about *The Long Shadow*:

1. (Shoot rabbits, forage, get away from tracking dogs, rescue someone besides himself, not run away when tempted to at the hospital, tell Aunt Trudy how she had hurt him.)
2. (Relax and be at home.)
3. (He is afraid.)
4. (He is afraid.)
5. (No.)
8. (Befriend them.) (If the kids in the class stand up for the victim, the bully will likely back off.)
10. (Nazi Germany, enslavement of Africans, etc.)
12. (Apologize.)
13. (Say you're sorry and make changes to fix what you did wrong, planning to never do it again.) (Say you're sorry and do nothing.)
14. (Staying angry.) (Accepted it.)
15. (He'd been hurt by her words.)
16. (No right answer.)