

Discussion Questions for *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas

1. THUG LIFE: Tupac Shakur says this means *The Hate U Give Little Infants F***s Everybody*.
 - a. Why do you think Angie Thomas used part of this saying for the title of her book?
 - b. Do you agree with Tupac?

2. Chapter 2, page 20

“When I was twelve, my parents had two talks with me.”

“One was the usual birds and bees.”

“The other talk was about what to do if a cop stopped me.”

I have heard several times during the past couple of years that this second talk topic is a common one for African American parents to have with their children. Let’s talk about how you feel about the need for some parents to have this type of talk with their kids. Have your parents ever had to talk to you about something like this?

And Khalil doesn’t do everything perfectly, which leads to his murder. Have you ever been with your parents in the car when they have been stopped by the police? Were your parents afraid? What do you think is the outcome when you are afraid of the people who are supposed to protect you?

3. Starr had two best friends growing up. Natasha was murdered by gang violence, and Khalil was murdered by a police officer. Let’s talk about Thomas’s purpose for doing this. Let’s also talk about what it must be like to be growing up in a community where you are being squeezed from both sides like the people in this community are being squeezed.
4. Harry Potter and Gangs!! What do you think?
5. Speaking of looking at things from two sides, Thomas does this with several situations.
 - a. White boyfriend who works at understanding even when Starr’s father is not happy about her boyfriend’s ethnicity
 - b. Uncle Carlos and Officer 115
 - c. Living in Garden Heights and going to a predominantly white private school
 - d. The King Lords and the regular families living Garden Heights

It is a very interesting exploration of stereotypes. Why do you think Thomas does this?

Page 256: “He was more than any bad decision he made.” This is a theme through the book, to look at more than just a single person or an event when developing a picture. Is it possible that Thomas’s purpose for trying to provide a foil for each stereotype is to get readers to think more broadly about people and situations?

6. Page 168 to 171: There is a really great discussion explaining racism and institutional racism. Let's read the definitions and discuss how these are portrayed in the book.

"Institutional racism is a pattern of social institutions — such as governmental organizations, schools, banks, and courts of law — giving negative treatment to a group of people based on their race. Institutional racism leads to inequality; sociologists use the concept to explain why some people face unequal treatment or occupy unequal statuses. One historic example of institutional racism is the barring of African-American students from attending certain public schools, which limited the students' educational opportunities and helped prevent them from achieving a status equal to that of others. Institutional racism need not involve intentional racial discrimination. For example, individual judges might intend to impose similar sentences for similar crimes; yet if Caucasian people tend to receive lighter punishments, plausibly institutional racism occurs." <http://www.chegg.com/homework-help/definitions/institutional-racism-49>

Racism is the practice of discriminating against people based on their race, national or ethnic background.

7. Page 252: "That's the problem. We let people say stuff, and they say it so much that it becomes okay to them and normal for us. What's the point of having a voice if you're gonna be silent in the moment you shouldn't be."

Starr feels conflicted about speaking out and finding her voice. How easy is this to do? Have you ever been afraid to speak out but did it anyway or stayed quiet when you shouldn't have? Do you think it is a common problem to speak out? If yes, why do people hesitate to do this?

8. Page 329: "Garden Heights has dope boys on corners, but downtown people in business suits wait for crossing lights to change." Both groups doing what they have to do to earn money.

There is a similar comparison between the kids at Williamson and what is normal for them and the kids in Garden Heights and what is normal for them, as well as with Uncle Carlos's neighborhood and Garden Heights. How easy is it to understand someone in a situation you have never experienced?

9. We know that what happened to Khalil is something that is happening now and has happened in the past. Do you think it will change in your lifetime? What do you think it will take to make it change?