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Defusing the History Wars: Finding Common Ground in Teaching America's National Story

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ABOUT MORE IN COMMON

The report was conducted by More in Common, an international initiative aimed at building societies and communities that are stronger, more united and more resilient to the increasing threats of polarization and social division. We work in partnership with a wide range of civil society groups, as well as philanthropy, business, faith, education, media and government in order to connect people across lines of division.

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Contents

Foreword	5
Executive summary	8
Methodology	16
Chapter 1 – Points of Divergence	20
Chapter 2 – Points of Convergence	28
Chapter 3 – Context of Polarization	35
Recommendations	42
Conclusion	45
Appendix	47

Foreword

This report explores polarization in the national conversation over how U.S. history should be taught to future generations.

“I think it's very important that students learn history, **both the positives and the negatives**, because this is where they live. And **they have to understand where we came from** as a country so that we **don't repeat some of the same problems** over and over again.”

—*Jake, 35-44 white man, Republican, Georgia*

“We shouldn't be ashamed to be American because **we learn from the mistakes by writing laws to change the messed-up things that were once legal**, from lynching, or segregation. We changed the laws, so we should be proud. So, we should admit our mistakes but...**be proud that America fixed and changed the laws.**”

—*Andy, 35-44 Black man, Democrat, New York*

Debates over Critical Race Theory. Combative school board meetings that have led to arrests. Bills that aim to impose limits on classroom conversations about racism, history and sexual identity. *The New York Times'* [1619 Project](#), which posits a vision of America born from slavery, and the [1776 Project](#), a conservative history and political initiative developed in response.

Today, America is embroiled in a culture war over whether we should see our national history as a source of pride or a source of shame. There's no question the debate has abundant heat—but is there actually a fire?

Much of the conflict and resulting confusion seems to revolve around competing definitions of Critical Race Theory. Technically an academic construct that explores how race shapes public policy, it has today become a triggering shorthand for contentious conflicts around the teaching of racial identity and how historical oppression relates to present day inequality.

The term dominates media coverage, but there's little consensus about how pervasive it actually is in classrooms and communities. A 2021 survey of more than 1,000 teachers by the Association of American Educators, a nonpartisan professional group, found the overwhelming majority of teachers (96%) said their school did not require teaching Critical Race Theory. As one ninth grade English teacher in Arizona told NBC: “We don't get it. This objection is being pushed upon us, and it's not even happening in our classes. I don't understand it.”¹

At the same time, a 2022 study of 18-20 year-old Americans by the Manhattan Institute, a free market think tank that has launched an initiative against Critical Race Theory, found that over 80 percent reported being taught in school at least

¹ McCausland, P. *Teaching critical race theory isn't happening in classrooms, teachers say in survey*. NBC News, 2021. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/teaching-critical-race-theory-isn-t-happening-classrooms-teachers-say-n1272945>

one concept that deals with systemic racism and other themes that the Manhattan Institute argues emanate from Critical Race Theory.² Surveys by *The Economist* and YouGov, an international polling company, have also found that many Americans are unsure as to whether Critical Race Theory is being taught in schools in their communities.³

These competing findings indicate the need for further study—as well as for caution in making sweeping claims about how American history is taught. What is clear is that pervasive polarization and distrust have helped fuel a national conflict over how history should be taught. Against this backdrop, we often see the extreme as the mainstream, and find nefarious motives where they may not actually exist.

We at More in Common have dubbed these the ‘history wars’—and through an extensive and in-depth exploration of American public opinion, we discovered they are often being fought between imaginary enemies. Rife with misrepresentations and falsehoods, these history wars are fueled by conflict entrepreneurs—political and media actors who stoke polarization by finding examples of ideologies outside the mainstream and portraying them as representative of a mass movement.

We fully believe there are serious and substantive debates to be had about the relationship between America’s past injustices and our present. Instead, today Americans too often feel locked in fights over whether Abraham Lincoln was a great leader or whether it is acceptable for history books to highlight the evils of slavery—issues our study found Americans overwhelmingly agree on.

To better understand this conflict and chart a course towards resolving it, we conducted a year-long research project. Starting in 2021, we carried out a series of national surveys, interviews and focus groups, asking Americans their views of American history and national identity and what they understood to be the views of their fellow Americans.

Our findings challenge the assumption that Americans diverge widely over how to teach our history. We found that for the vast majority of Americans, the differences in how we perceive and want our national story taught are far narrower than a few high-profile polemics might suggest. We feel divided over how to teach history, in significant measure because we feel divided, period.

Too often, these history wars are based on misunderstandings. One of our most notable findings is that both Democrats and Republicans alike grossly overestimate whether members of the opposing party hold extreme views. We call this a ‘Perception Gap’ — the gap between what we imagine an opposing group believes and what that group actually believes.⁴

Some Republicans and Democrats do hold competing ideological views, but only a small minority. Many Republicans may believe most Democrats want to teach American history as a history of shame, guilt and a repudiation of our founding figures—but we found that is not the case. Many Democrats may believe most Republicans want to teach American history in a way that glosses over the injustices of slavery and racism—but we found that is also inaccurate.

² Goldberg, Zach and Kaufmann, Eric. Yes, Critical Race Theory Is Being Taught in Schools. *City Journal*, 2022. <https://www.city-journal.org/yes-critical-race-theory-is-being-taught-in-schools>.

³ Economist. “Critical race theory” is being weaponised. What’s the fuss about?, July 14, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/interactive/united-states/2022/07/14/critical-race-theory-is-being-weaponised-whats-the-fuss-about>.

⁴ Yudkin, Daniel and others. Perception Gap: How False Impressions are Pulling Americans Apart. More in Common, 2019, <https://perceptiongap.us/>.

To better understand these divergences, we drew on the work of our groundbreaking 2018 study, *Hidden Tribes*, in which we used advanced polling and statistical methods to reveal seven groups of Americans, which we called Progressive Activists, Traditional Liberals, Passive Liberals, Politically Disengaged, Moderates, Traditional Conservatives and Devoted Conservatives.⁵

This methodology transcends traditional demographic surveys that rely on political affiliation, race, and other demographics and allows us to provide deeper insights about how our values and core beliefs differ across society.

Many of our findings give reasons for hope. We found that a majority of Americans across political affiliations agree on fundamental ideas about our national history and how it should be taught.

When we focus only on the loudest voices, we fail to hear the most common perspectives. We found that Americans across political parties, ages, genders, races and income levels share common ground about teaching about prior injustices, as well as about teaching the contributions of everyone from George Washington to Rosa Parks.

We found that Americans of all political orientations want their children to learn a history that celebrates our strengths and also examines our failures. Americans overwhelmingly agree that the experiences of minority groups are an important part of that history. And they agree that if students are better informed about America's past there's a better chance of not repeating past failures.

In a moment of political division and weakened trust in the institutions of education, government and the media, we have a clear opportunity to disrupt the polarization fueling the history wars.

To do this requires seeing each other more accurately and honestly. Understanding these perception gaps can help us bridge them.

Social media makes that task harder since its business model and algorithms rely on pushing extreme content to the top of our feeds. Imagined enemies can quickly become real ones. But that is not a foregone conclusion. It is not inevitable that conflict entrepreneurs who profit from fomenting divisions succeed in turning these history wars into forever wars. The results of the 2022 Midterm elections indicate Americans may be losing their appetite for culture warriors.

Fighting polarization will require national debates across partisan divides. Institutional leaders need to make sure divergent points of view are genuinely seen and heard—while at the same time emphasizing the common ground we already share.

Our report identifies ways Americans can disrupt this cycle of polarization and drive more constructive dialogue about how we teach our common history. Defusing these tensions is an opportunity to write a new chapter in the remarkable story of America.

⁵ Hawkins, Stephen and others. *Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape. More in Common*, 2018, <https://hiddentribes.us/>

Executive Summary

This report shows that Republicans and Democrats share common ground about how to teach our national story but hold inaccurate ideas about what the other side believes about teaching U.S. history.

These ‘perception gaps’ fuel distrust and are exacerbated by ‘conflict entrepreneurs’ – political and media actors who benefit from and actively stoke polarization.

This report also suggests ways leaders and institutions can disrupt these cycles of misunderstanding to engage in constructive dialogue, reducing polarization.

Our research found that there are both misperceptions and genuine disagreements at play in today’s ‘history wars’. There are many points of false divergence, where Americans see conflict even though there is actually commonality. These derive from what we call ‘**perception gaps**’ – the differences between what Americans believe their political opponents think and what they *actually* think— about how to teach the nation’s history.

False Divergence

Many Republicans believe most Democrats want to teach a history defined by shameful oppression and white guilt. Many Democrats believe most Republicans want to focus on the white majority and overlook slavery and racism. But we found that both impressions are wrong. These perception gaps between how each party perceives the other present a dangerous level of overstatement.

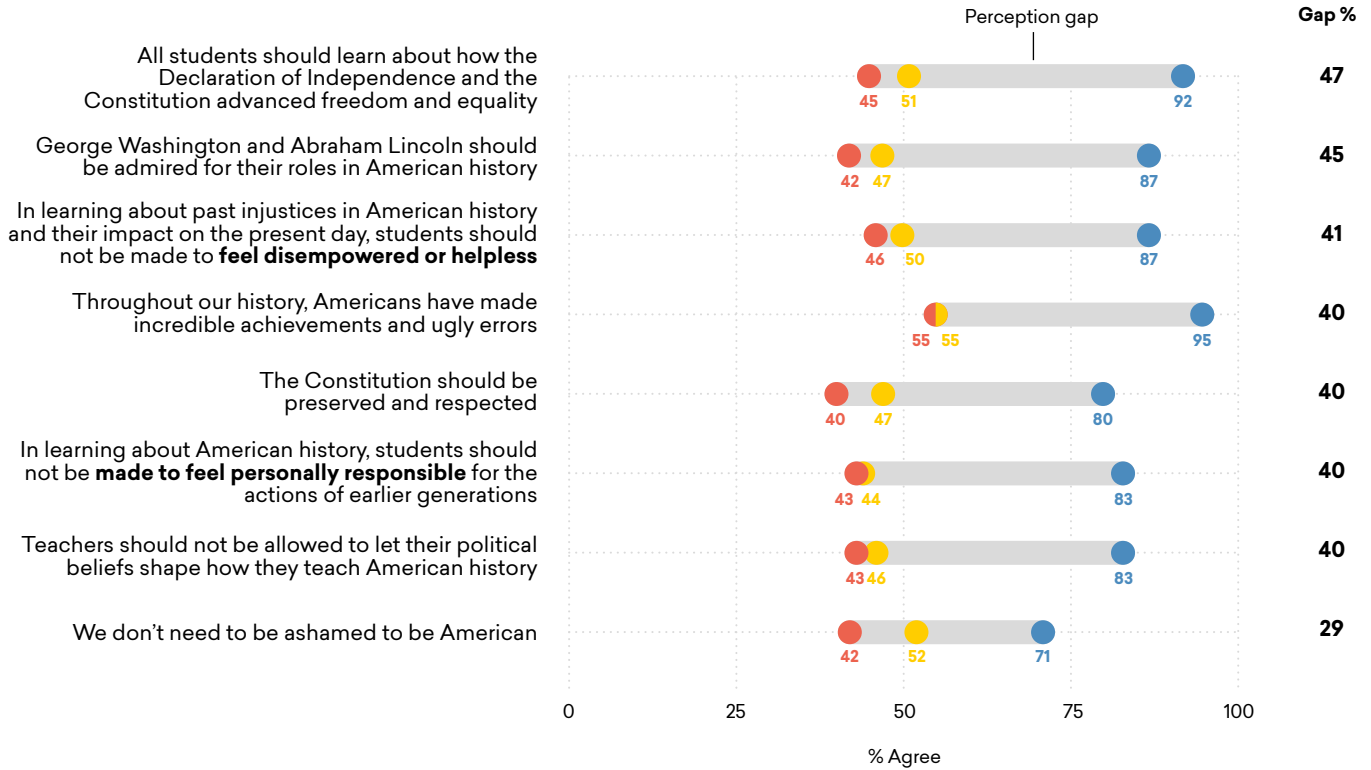
Republicans have large perception gaps when it comes to understanding how Democrats feel about teaching the stories of success and exceptionalism in American history and about the extent to which students should feel guilty or disempowered by the actions of earlier Americans.

For example, more than twice as many Democrats agree that all students should learn about how the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution advanced freedom and equality than Republicans estimate Democrats to think (92 percent versus 45 percent). Similarly, about twice as many Democrats believe students should not be made to feel guilty or personally responsible for the errors of prior generations than Republicans estimate (83 percent versus 43 percent) Democrats to think. While Republicans think that only a fraction of Democrats hold these views on American history, the reality is that these beliefs are held by the overwhelming majority.

Figure 0.1

Republicans Underestimate Democrats' Commitment to Celebrating American Achievements and Overall Story of Progress

- Democrats' Actual views
- Independents' Estimates of Democrats' Views
- Republicans' Estimates of Democrats' Views



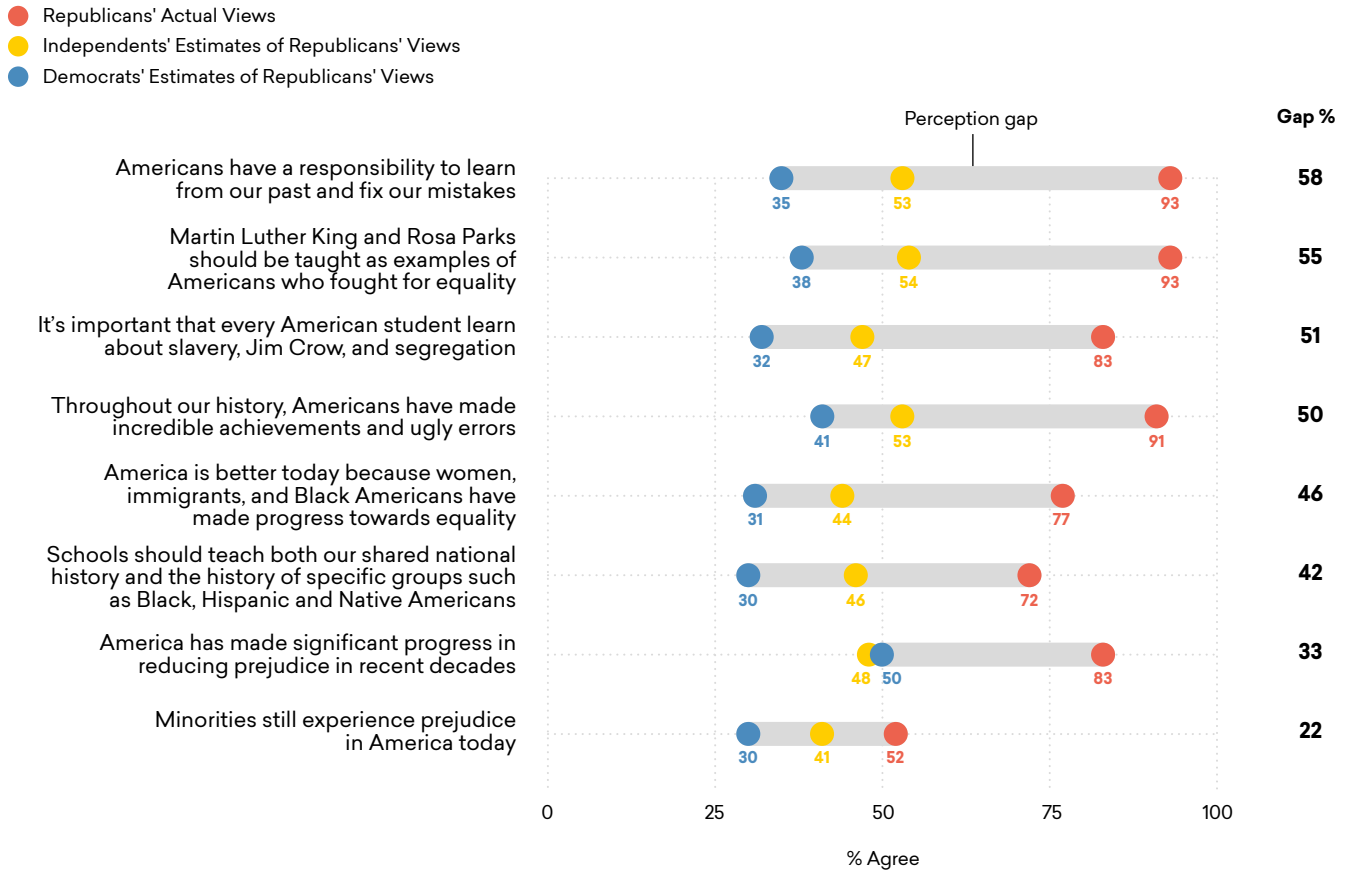
Question: [Democrats] Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 [Republicans/Independents] What percentage of Democrats do you think agree with the following statements?
 Source: More in Common

Democrats have large perception gaps when it comes to understanding how Republicans feel about teaching about failures in American history or about civil rights movements.

In a stark example, the proportion of Republicans who agree Americans have a responsibility to learn from our past is three times more than Democrats perceive it to be (93 percent versus 30 percent). Similarly, more than twice as many Republicans think schools should teach shared national history as well as the history of specific groups such as Black, Hispanic and Native Americans than Democrats think Republicans believe (72 percent versus 30 percent). In each case, Democrats think only a minority of Republicans hold such views on questions of American history, whereas the data reveal they are held by large majorities.

Figure 0.2

Democrats Underestimate Republicans' Willingness to Recognize Failures in American History and the Roles of Minority Groups in Making America Better



Question: [Republicans] Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 [Democrats/Independents] What percentage of Republicans do you think agree with the following statements?
 Source: More in Common

Points of Divergence

Our research found that the greatest disagreements are over two questions: first, how to draw connections between the past—especially past injustices—and present-day America and second, over the degree of emphasis currently given to the histories of minority groups.

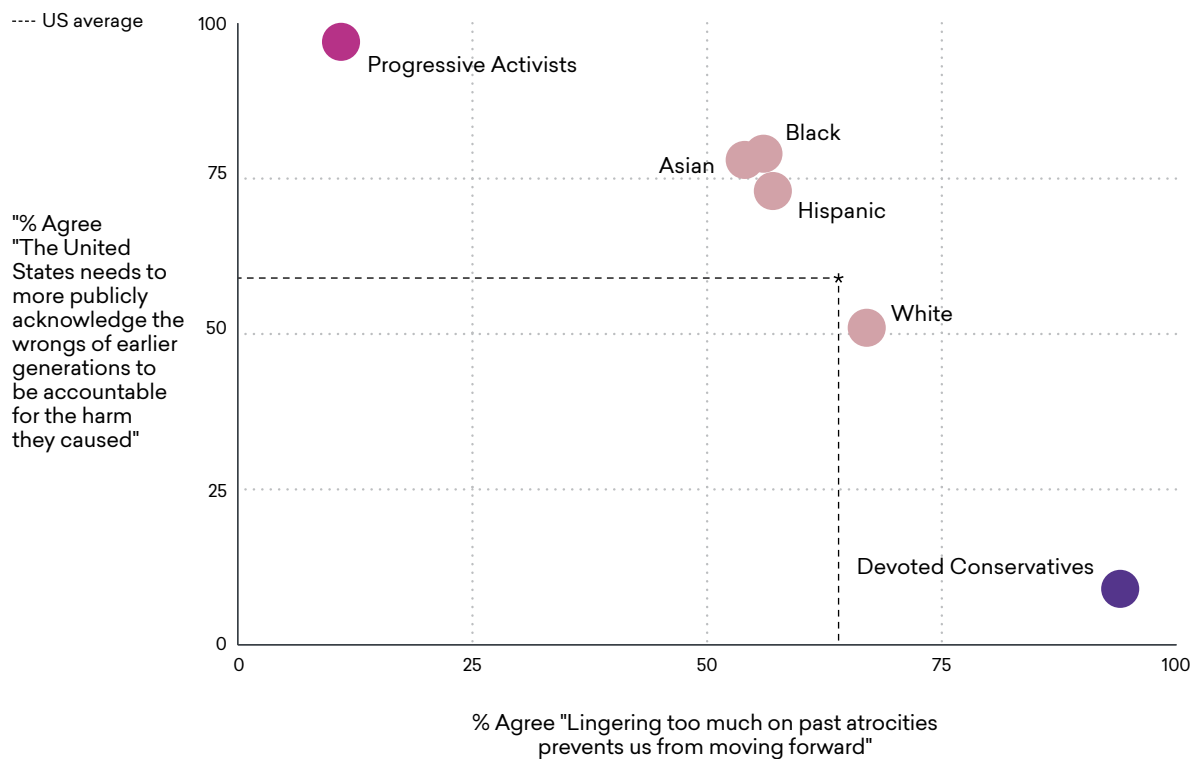
There is meaningful variation in responses to these questions by race, but our data shows greater polarization by political ideology.

More specifically, we find that the two most ideological segments of the Hidden Tribes, the Progressive Activists (8 percent of the U.S. adult population) and the Devoted Conservatives (6 percent of the U.S. adult population), hold more extreme views on these issues, and their views are in direct conflict with one another. These findings suggest that even where large groups of Americans genuinely disagree about how to teach history, the history wars reflect an amplified version of that disagreement by emphasizing the views and voices of the wing segments. The resulting misunderstanding makes it much more difficult for communities to engage on substance.

For example, when asked whether America needs to do more to acknowledge past wrongs, white Americans are less likely than non-white Americans to agree: 51 percent of the white Americans we surveyed agreed with that statement, compared to 79 percent of Black Americans, 73 percent of Hispanic Americans, and 78 percent of Asian Americans.

But the disagreement is far greater between the wing segments: A full 97 percent of Progressive Activists agree the country needs to do more to acknowledge earlier wrongs, whereas just 9 percent of Devoted Conservatives agree. The wings are similarly divided as to whether “Lingering on the past prevents us from moving forward.” A full 94 percent of Devoted Conservatives but only 11 percent of Progressive Activists agree with this statement. This underscores the extent to which the wing segments’ views, which are often the ones featured most in traditional and social media, can obscure the actual contours of disagreements.

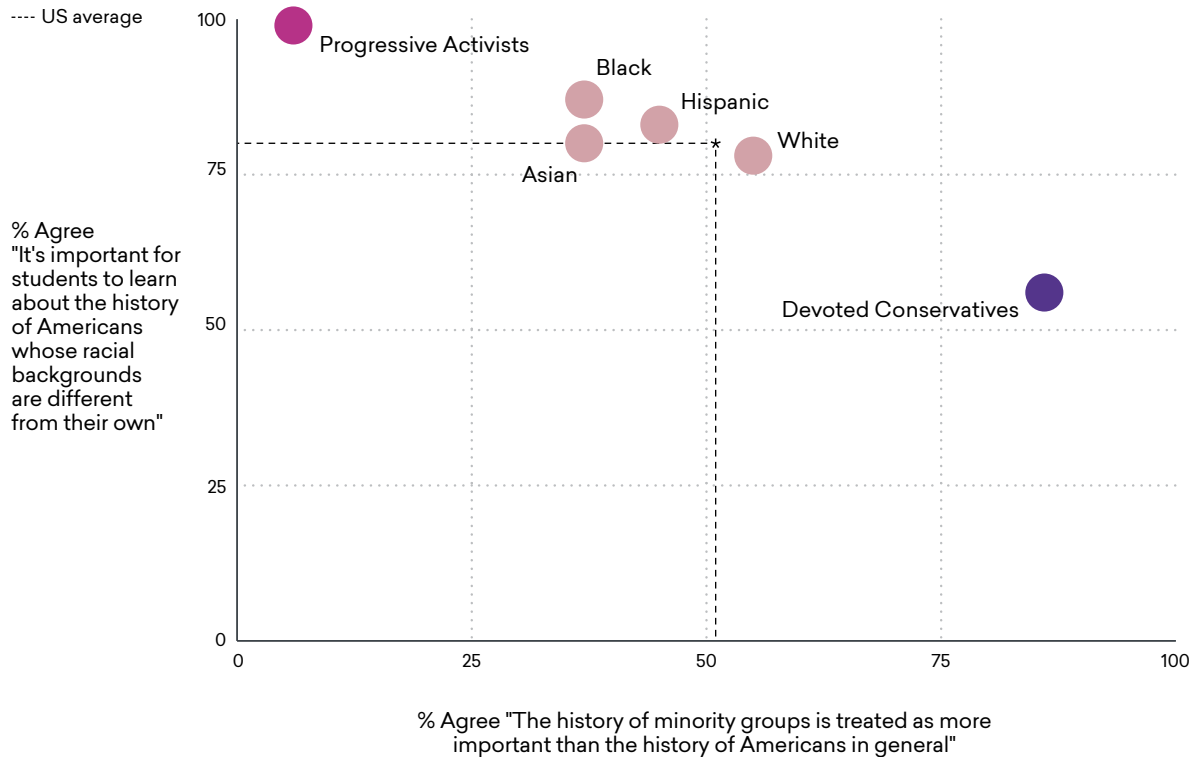
Figure 0.3 Grappling with Our History: Views Vary More by Ideology than by Race



The other area of substantive disagreement is the extent to which specific groups’ histories are perceived to be prioritized in teaching history today. Here, too, we see a similar dynamic where the greatest contrast is between the wing segments rather than across demographic groups. In general, Americans are evenly split about whether the history of specific groups, such as women, immigrants and Indigenous and Black Americans, are given preference relative to a history that elevates a shared national identity. There is meaningful variation across racial groups on this question, but the more extreme wing segments stand out for their contrasting views. Progressive Activists overwhelmingly disagree (94 percent) that the way Americans teach history prioritizes the stories of minority groups, whereas Devoted Conservatives uniformly agree (86 percent).

Figure 0.4

Telling Our Shared Story: Weaving the History of Particular Groups into History that Emphasizes a Common American Identity



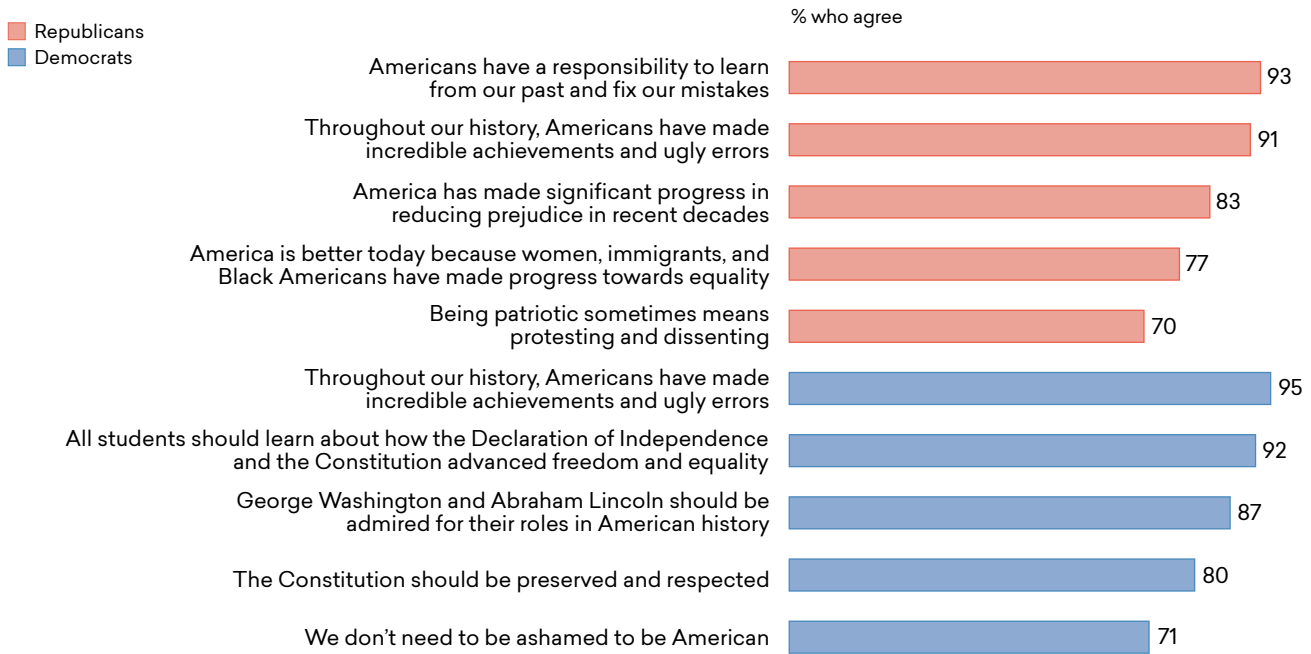
Our research suggests that while there are genuine areas of substantive disagreement about how to teach American history, these debates are currently framed by segments holding the most extreme views, despite the fact that these two groups comprise only 14 percent of the U.S. adult population. This dynamic obscures the nature and extent of the ideological disagreements and leads to situations in which communities spend time fighting imagined enemies instead of grappling with the substance where there is actual conflict.

Points of Convergence

Our research found important points of convergence in the debate on how to teach history. A clear majority of Americans wants American history to be taught in ways that include both the inspiring and the shameful; that highlight the histories of minority groups alongside history that elevates a shared American identity; and that allows students to learn from the past without feeling guilty or disempowered by the actions of prior generations.

Figure 0.5

Strong Support among both Parties for Balanced Approaches to Teaching American History

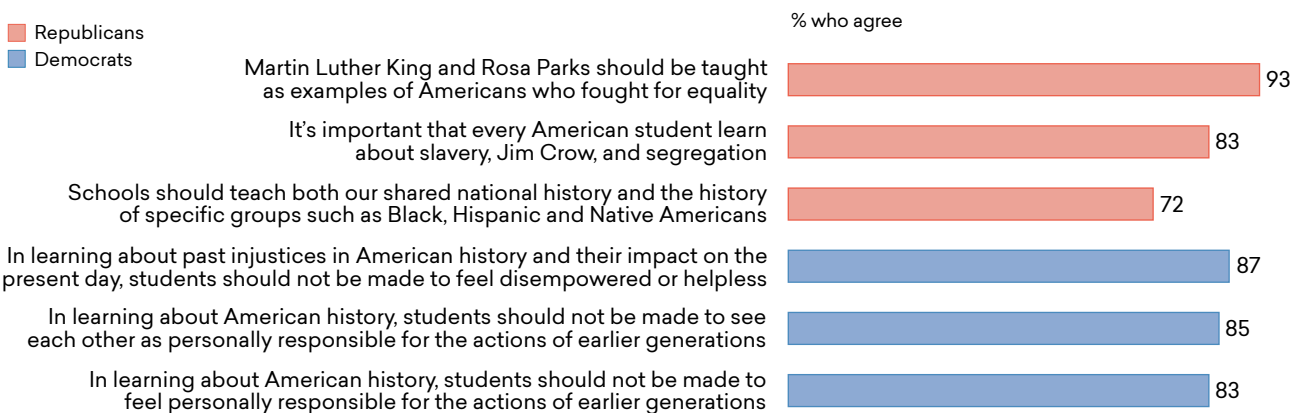


Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Note: Not every statement was asked of both political parties. Source: More in Common

Our research also found that Americans converge more than they diverge over how to teach American history even on issues that are perceived as highly contentious, such as the history of racism. We found that 71 percent of Americans believe it is important to teach the history of racism and 80 percent of Americans believe it is important for students to learn about the history of Americans whose racial backgrounds differ from their own. Across many areas connected to matters of race and racism, such as teaching the history of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation, we find strong levels of support across ideological lines.

Figure 0.6

Substantive Support Across Parties on How to Teach about the Intersection of Race and American History



Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Note: Not every statement was asked of both political parties. Source: More in Common

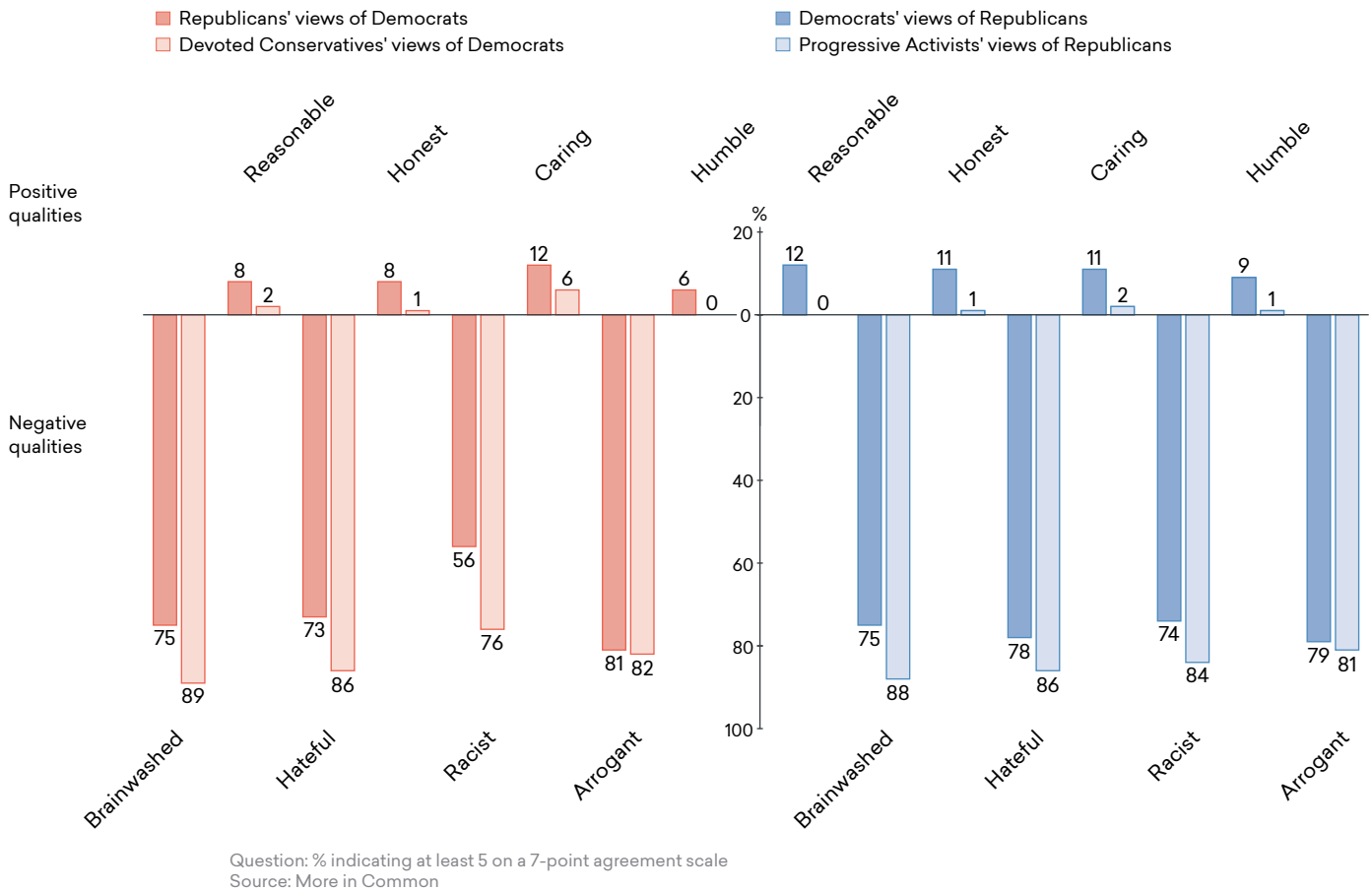
Polarization and Distrust

The history wars unfold at a time when Americans have a deep and pervasive sense that the country is divided and few institutions, including educational institutions, can be trusted. This environment primes Americans to see imagined enemies and to believe the worst about their political opponents. In a striking example, our study found that more than 7 in 10 Democrats and Republicans perceive members of the other party to be “brainwashed,” “hateful” and “arrogant.”

Figure 0.7

Partisans Hold Deep Animosity Towards their Party Opponents

How much do each of the following phrases or words apply to Democratic/Republican voters?

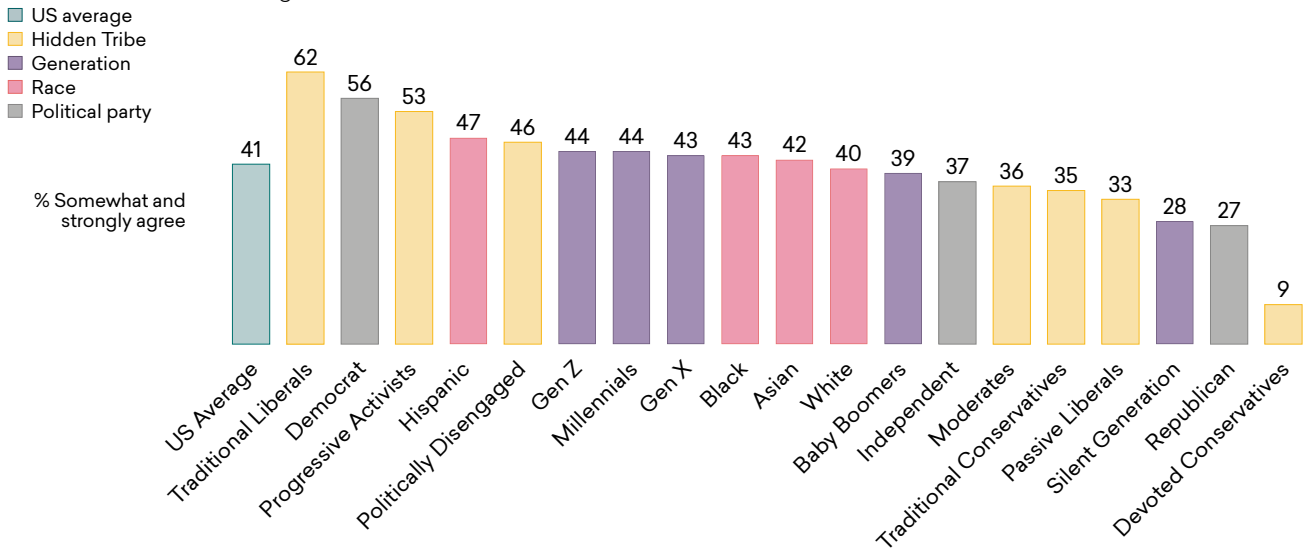


The distrust also affects schools. We found that about half—47 percent—of Americans say they do not trust education officials to be politically neutral in designing the curriculum, and only 41 percent of Americans think public schools are doing their best to teach American history in an accurate and unbiased way.

Figure 0.8

Americans Have Low Trust that Public Schools Actually Teach an Honest Account of History

Most public schools in America are doing their best to teach American history accurately, without an agenda or bias



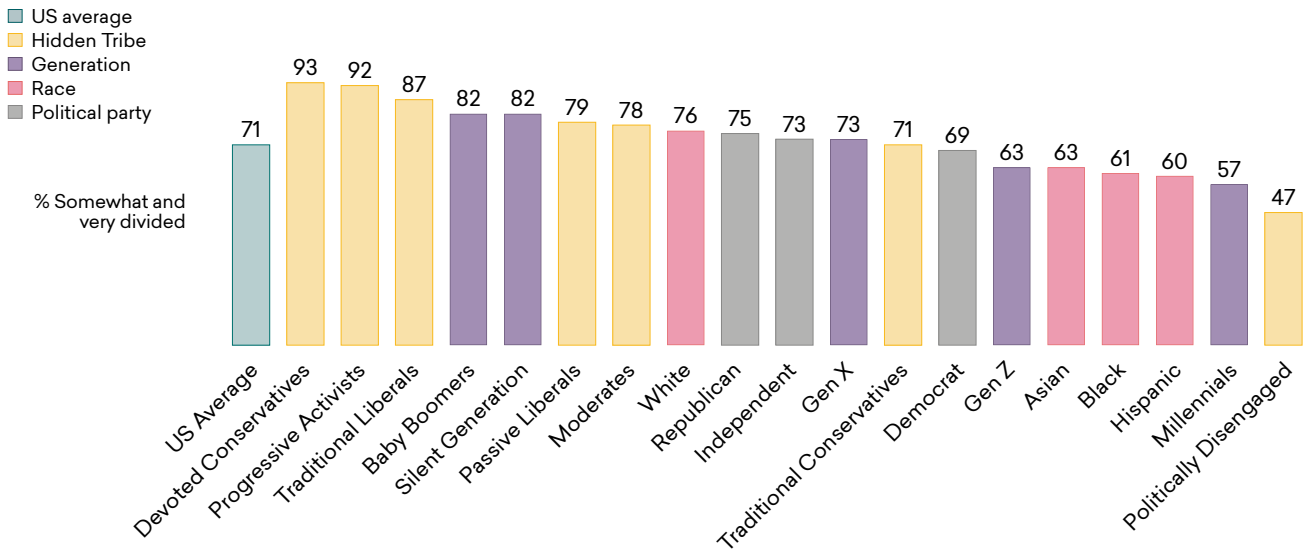
Question: Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Source: More in Common

Amid such polarization and distrust, it is not surprising that most Americans—71 percent—perceive the country to be deeply divided on the topic of history.

Figure 0.9

Americans Feel Divided on the Topic of U.S. History

How unified or divided does the United States feel today on the topic of U.S. history?



Question: How unified or divided does the United States feel today on the topic of U.S. history?
Source: More in Common

Methodology

Quantitative Research

More in Common partnered with international polling company YouGov to conduct the survey research for this study. For each survey, the data were weighted to be representative of American citizens using propensity scores, with score functions including gender, age, race, education, and region. The weights were then post-stratified on 2020 Presidential vote choice, and a four-way stratification of gender, age (6-category), race (5-category), and education (4-category).

U.S. CITIZEN SURVEY 1

Survey interviews were conducted with N=2,500 adult U.S. citizens from May 12 to June 2, 2022. The margin of error (adjusted for weighting) is +/- 1.96 for the U.S. average and higher for subgroups.

U.S. CITIZEN SURVEY 2

Survey interviews were conducted with N=1,500 adult US citizens from July 14 to July 28, 2022. The margin of error (adjusted for weighting) is +/- 2.5 for the US average and higher for subgroups.

U.S. CITIZEN SURVEY 3

Survey interviews were conducted with N=1,500 adult U.S. citizens from August 26 to September 1, 2022. The margin of error (adjusted for weighting) is +/- 2.5 for the US average and higher for subgroups.

Qualitative Research

AMERICANS IN CONVERSATION

In addition to the polls with YouGov, More in Common also formed an online community representative of the American general population and engaged them in conversations similar to focus groups from January to July, 2022. From March 11 to 15, 2022 we spoke to respondents about their views on American history. A total of N=281 American respondents completed the activity. Quotations from those conversations with respondents are included in this report. Where provided, names have been changed to protect their privacy. Grammar and punctuation have been lightly edited for clarity.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

From September to October 2022, More in Common conducted in-depth interviews with 9 Americans about their views on American history. Quotes from the respondents are included in this report. Where provided, names have been changed to protect the privacy of the respondent. Grammar and punctuation have been lightly edited for clarity. Throughout the report, we condensed information and quotes from the interviews to create short personas that describe interviewees' views on various aspects of American history.

CALCULATING THE PERCEPTION GAP

To determine how accurate Americans are in their estimates of each others' views on teaching American history, we first measured the percentage of each political party who agreed with each statement. Next, we calculated a "perception gap" for each person, which quantifies the accuracy of their estimates of the views of the opposing party. The perception gap for each item was computed by calculating the percentage difference between each respondent's estimate of how many people held a certain view and the actual percentage of people who held that view. For example, if a Democrat estimated that 35 percent of Republicans believed that "Americans have a responsibility to learn from our past and fix our mistakes", when in fact, 93 percent do, then their perception gap for this issue would be 58 percentage points.

After performing this calculation for each item for each person, we then created an averaged perception gap for each person by averaging across each of the items to which that person had responded. The perception gap for each person, therefore, represented the average deviation of that person's estimates from reality across all the statements. Once we had computed an average perception gap for each individual, we could then analyze within each party by averaging the perception gaps of every person who self identified with that party.

For Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and for the Hidden Tribes segments, the perception gap was created simply by averaging across estimates they made for the opposite party. Because Independents had estimated the views of both Democrats and Republicans, a perception gap was calculated for each of their estimates of the views of both parties, respectively.

Hidden Tribes

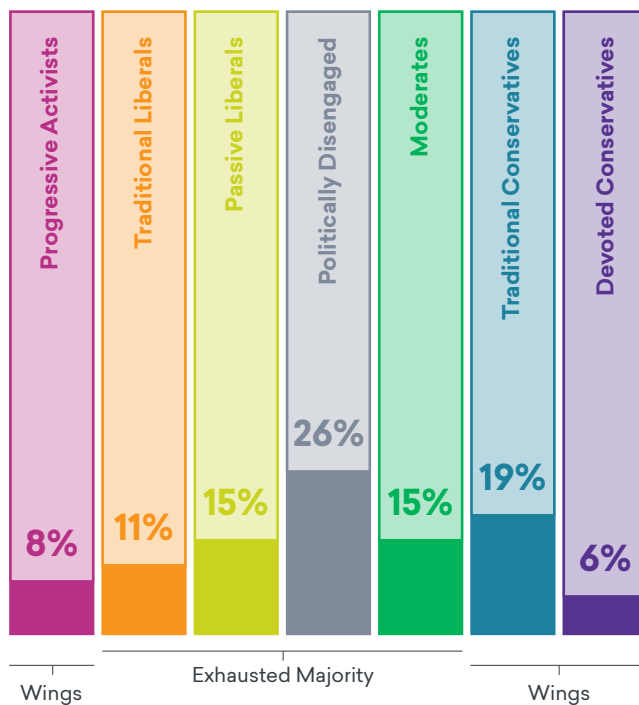
This study builds on More in Common's 2018 [Hidden Tribes project](#), which used an advanced statistical process called hierarchical clustering to identify groups of people with similar core beliefs. This revealed seven groups of Americans with distinctive views and values, groups we call Hidden Tribes.

This breakdown is based on how people express their core beliefs, which is not necessarily aligned with conventional demographic measures such as age, gender, level of education, or ethnic background. The result is a unique portrait of the American public with distinctive insights not available from traditional demographic approaches. The seven groups are:

- **Progressive Activists:** Progressive Activists have strong ideological views, high levels of engagement with political issues, and the highest levels of education and socioeconomic status. They have an outsized role in political discourse, even though they comprise a small portion of the total population. They are highly sensitive to issues of fairness and equity in society, particularly with regards to race, gender and other minority group identities.
- **Traditional Liberals:** Traditional Liberals reflect the ideals of the Baby-Boomer generation. They maintain idealistic attitudes about the potential for social justice in America. They are less ideological than Progressive Activists. They are also less critical of conservatives. They have strong humanitarian values, and around half say that religion is important to them. They are inclined to place more faith in American institutions.

- **Passive Liberals:** Passive Liberals are weakly engaged in social and political issues, but when pushed, they have a modern outlook and tend to have liberal views on social issues. They tend to feel isolated from their communities and the system at large. They are among the most fatalistic, believing that circumstances are largely outside their control. They are quite uninformed, consume little news media, and generally avoid political debates.
- **Politically Disengaged:** The Politically Disengaged most resemble Passive Liberals in having lower levels of income and education. They are more anxious about external threats and less open in their attitudes towards difference. They are practically invisible in local politics and community life. They are the most pessimistic about the possibility of reconciling differences and are a difficult segment to reach and mobilize.
- **Moderates:** Moderates reflect the middle of the road of public opinion in America. They tend to be engaged in their communities, often volunteer, and are interested in current affairs. They tend to be socially conservative and religion plays an important role in their lives. They dislike activism and what they see as extremism of both progressives and conservatives. They are worried about the state of America, and feel that American identity is slipping away.
- **Traditional Conservatives:** Traditional Conservatives value patriotism and America's Christian foundations. They feel those foundations are under threat from a liberal political culture. They have a clear sense of identity as American, Christian and conservative, but they are not as strident in their beliefs as Devoted Conservatives. They are more likely than any other group to feel that their voice is represented in American politics.
- **Devoted Conservatives:** Devoted Conservatives are the counterpart to the Progressive Activists. They are one of the highest income-earning groups, and feel happier and more secure than most Americans. They are highly engaged in social and political life. They value patriotism and loyalty to the flag. They believe that American values are being eroded rapidly and they see themselves as defenders of those issues.

The Hidden Tribes of America



Don: Knowing Our Past To Build a Better Future

Don is a Hispanic Millennial who lives in Texas. A Democrat who voted for Joe Biden in 2020, one of his most important identities is as a husband and a father to his three daughters. Being a Democrat is important to him and informs many of his life decisions. He feels proud to be American but is sometimes conflicted about his patriotism, such as in the aftermath of the January 6 assault on the U.S. Capitol.

Don sees American history as a complex mix. “I feel conflicted about a lot of American history...I do feel like there are a lot of things to be proud of and a lot of positive things that America and Americans have done. But there's also a lot of things that are not great, and some that are really terrible.”

Among the positives, he admires democracy itself, which gives everyone a voice and allows people “the ability to vote for their leaders and changes and laws that we feel are important.” He admires the Constitution and the separation of powers, which distinguish America from dictatorships. Don believes scientific research and space exploration are strengths of America’s history.

Chief among the negatives are “the history of racism, from slavery to Native American removal,” as well as current events including mass shootings and the overseas wars on terrorism that America has been involved with in recent decades.

Don believes teachers should teach history in a balanced way, allowing students to learn all facets of history—the positives and the negatives. “They need to get a full picture of what that history is, so that they can understand where the country has come from,” he says, “so the students can understand changes that shouldn't be made, or, you know, hopefully, ways that we can get better as a country.”

He believes students should not be made to feel guilty or personally responsible for the actions of the past generations. “I don't think that guilt should be the goal...But I do think it's important for them to have an accurate depiction of what has gone on.”

Chapter 1: Points of Divergence

“Nothing can change the past, but **we can all learn and grow from it**. Schools should make an effort to **teach the tragedies of America** in their American history lessons. And parents do well to talk about these issues in their home.”

—Beverly, 55-64 Black woman, Republican, Georgia

“I do think that the media or **Republicans can think that the goal of learning all of American history or especially the negative parts is to make people, to make students, feel guilty or ashamed**. Whereas I think in general, you know, the idea is more that **we want students to just get a real understanding of what happened**.”

—Michael, 35-44 white man, Democrat, Texas

“I would also want [Democrats] to know that **I don't think I'm very different when it comes to teaching history then they are**. I mean, I think **we want to teach the facts**. And we want to teach what happened. **Even if that's a disturbing or dark past**, I still think we should be teaching that. I think **it's important so that we don't repeat that again**.”

—Dan, 18-24 Hispanic man, Republican, Texas

Our study found that today's ‘history wars’ derive from two different dynamics: misperceptions and genuine differences of opinion.

Much of what Americans perceive as conflict is in fact a misperception. These points of false divergence—seeing conflict where there is actually commonality—stem from perception gaps between how Americans believe their political opponents think we should teach history.⁶

At the same time, there are areas of genuine and significant disagreement, most notably over how we believe our past interacts with our present—and on the emphasis we believe is currently placed on particular group histories alongside a history that elevates a shared national identity.

Points of False Divergence: Perception Gaps

Americans hold significantly inaccurate views about how our political opponents view teaching history. The misperceptions are not minor. Democrats and Republicans alike think the overwhelming majority of their political opponents hold sharply divergent views over teaching history, when in fact, most of the time everyone is standing on common ground.

Notably, Democrats and Republicans alike nearly unanimously agree that “Americans have a responsibility to learn from our past and fix our mistakes” —95 percent and 93 percent agree respectively. And yet members of each party believe that this sentiment is held by a much smaller proportion of their political opponents: Democrats think only 35 percent of Republicans feel this way and Republicans think that only 56 percent of Democrats feel this way.

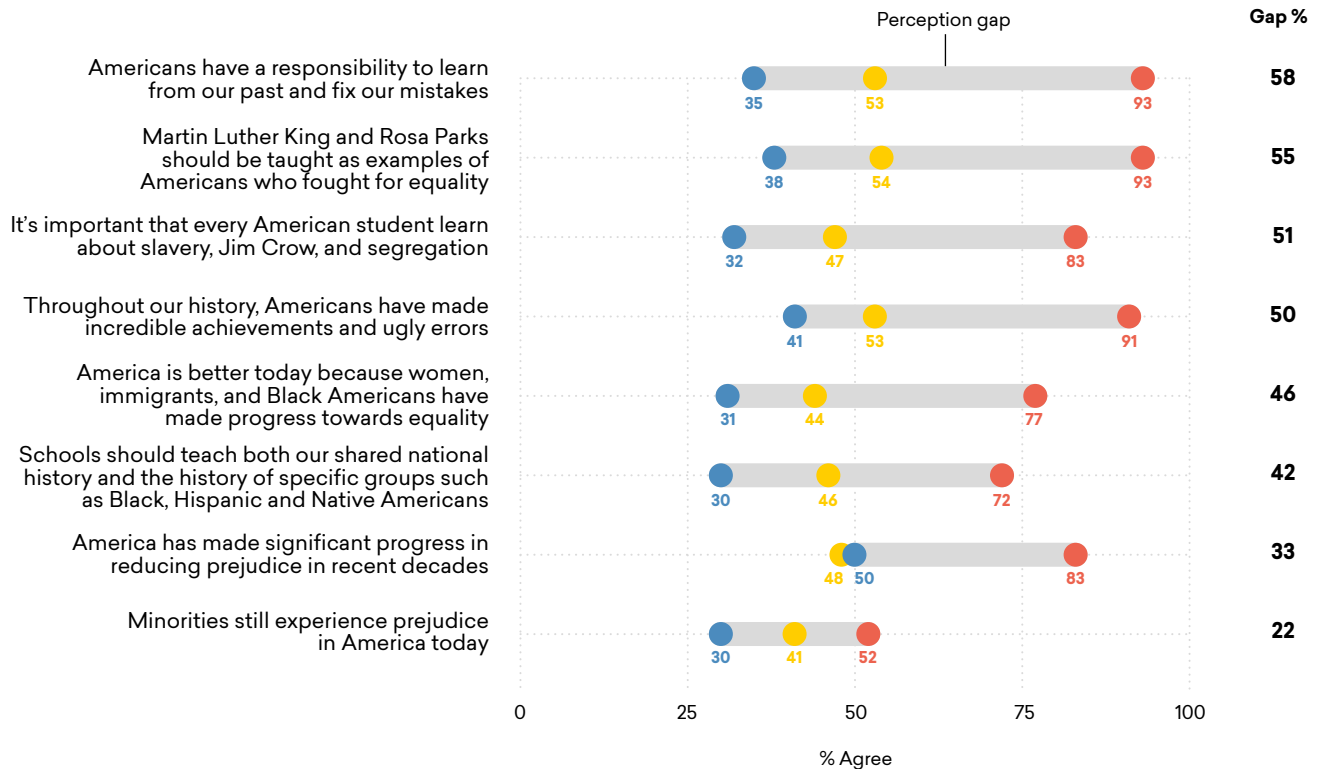
⁶ In political science, this phenomenon is referred to as false polarization.

These perception gaps exist across a host of topics related to the teaching of American history. Democrats' perception gaps are notably large when it comes to what they believe about Republicans' willingness to hold critical views of American history and to recognize the roles minority groups have played in making America better.

We found that most Republicans support teaching about Civil Rights leaders as examples of Americans who fought for equality (93 percent) and covering the country's history of slavery and segregation (83 percent). And yet Democrats think less than half of Republicans feel this way.

Figure 1.1 Democrats Underestimate Republicans' Willingness to Recognize Failures in American History and the Roles of Minority Groups in Making America Better

- Republicans' Actual Views
- Independents' Estimates of Republicans' Views
- Democrats' Estimates of Republicans' Views

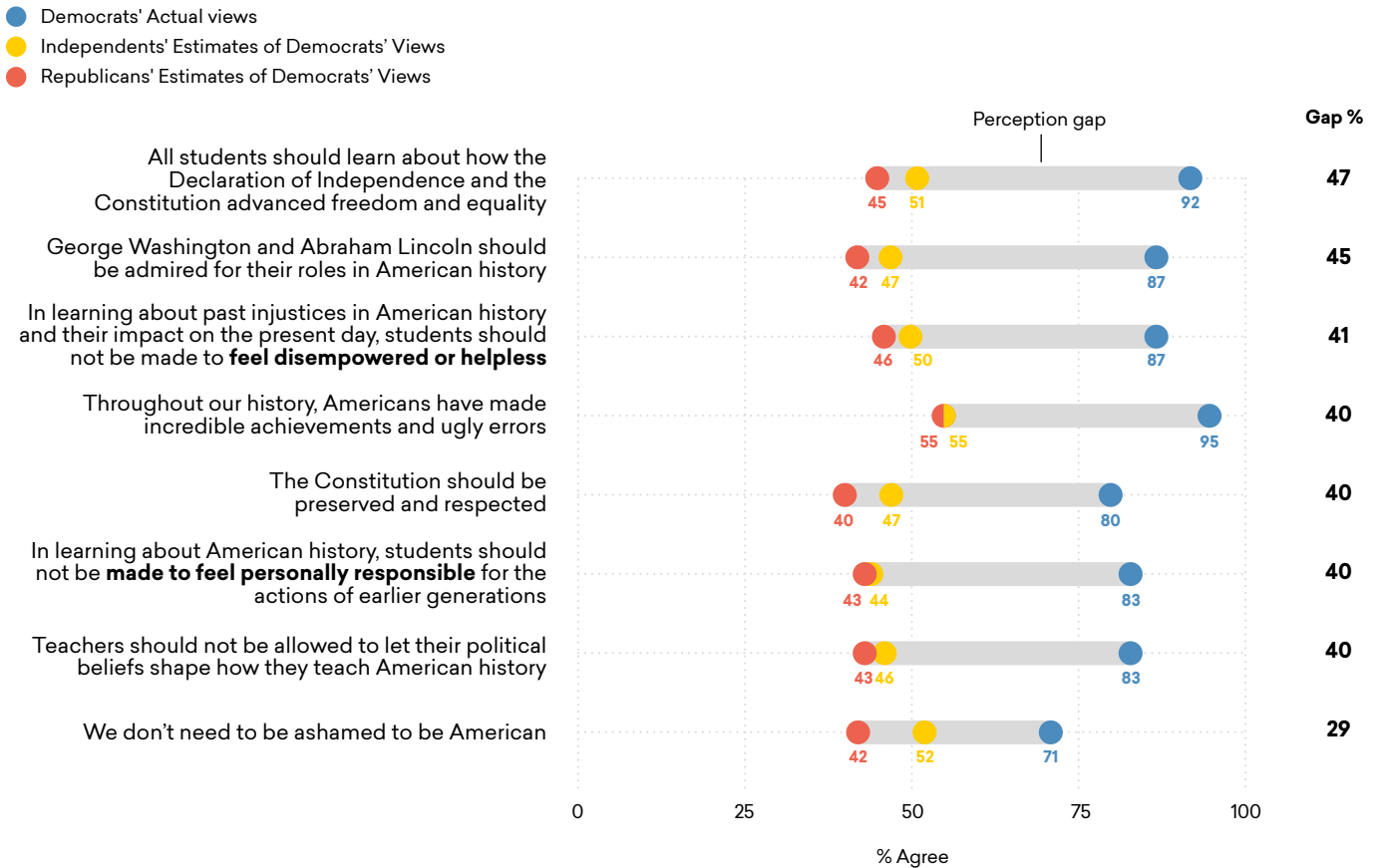


Question: [Republicans] Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 [Democrats/Independents] What percentage of Republicans do you think agree with the following statements?
 Source: More in Common

Conversely, Republicans misunderstand Democrats' commitment to celebrating American success and American history as a history of progress. Republicans also hold inaccurate views about whether Democrats believe Americans should teach history in a way that makes students feel responsible for or held back by the actions of past generations.

We found that more than 80 percent of Democrats favor teaching the merits of our founding documents, admire the leadership of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and feel students should not be made to feel guilty or disempowered by the teaching of history. And yet Republicans believe that less than half of Democrats feel this way.

Figure 1.2 **Republicans Underestimate Democrats' commitment to celebrating American Achievements and Overall Story of Progress**



Question: [Democrats] Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 [Republicans/Independents] What percentage of Democrats do you think agree with the following statements?
 Source: More in Common

Magnitude and Variation of Perception Gaps

In prior work, More in Common found that Americans who consumed higher amounts of media or had fewer friends with different political beliefs had larger perception gaps relative to other Americans.⁷ That is, the vocal fringes who misunderstood their opponents were driving the conversation while a quieter majority had more accurate perceptions of their political opponents' view and were thus a moderating influence.

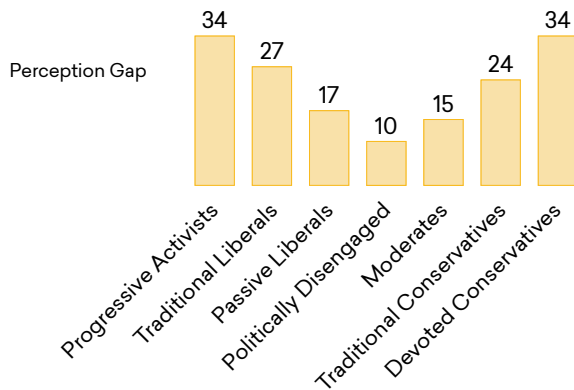
In this study over the teaching of history, however, we found a more worrisome trend: that perception gaps were both larger and more pervasive across all segments of society—removing a moderating force in the debate.

In this study, we found Democrats and Republicans alike often overestimate the proportion of their political opponents who hold views they disagree with—often by nearly fifty percentage points. The actual differences of opinion turn out to be dramatically smaller than the perceived differences of opinion. That means most Americans have imaginary enemies in their minds and a misleading picture of the country as being irreconcilably divided over how to teach our history.

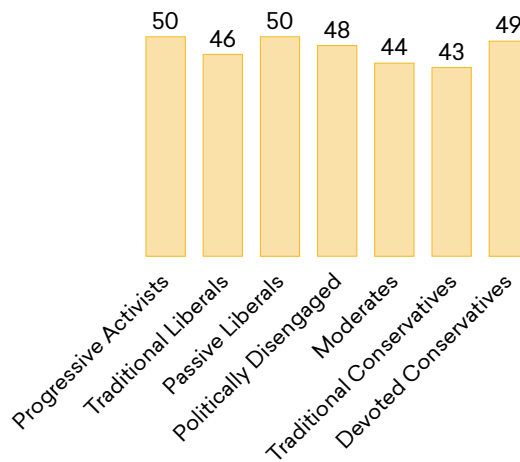
We believe these perception gaps over teaching history stem from several factors: an environment that primes us all to see imagined enemies and believe falsehoods about what others' think; real and significant disagreements on important questions about how we teach our history; and the impact of conflict entrepreneurs who profit from division and from media platforms and networks that amplify the most extreme voices and content.⁸

Figure 1.3

Overall Perception Gap by Hidden Tribe, 2019



Perception Gaps on Teaching US History by Hidden Tribe, 2022



Source: More in Common

⁷ Yudkin, Daniel et al. (2019). "The Perception Gap: How False Impressions are Pulling Americans Apart". More in Common. <https://perceptiongap.us/>.

⁸ Ibid.; Hawkins, Stephen et al. (2018). "Hidden Tribes: A Study of America's Polarized Landscape." More in Common. <https://hiddentribes.us/>.

Though largely based on falsehoods, these perception gaps have real-world consequences. Social science has demonstrated that in general, our beliefs about what others think influence our behavior. Misperceptions can fuel harmful behaviors, in the most extreme cases even support for partisan violence.⁹

In the debates over teaching history, these perception gaps help fuel the real vitriol showing up in our schools and communities. We have found that such gaps also drive moderates away from engaging in these important debates, ceding further ground to groups fomenting division.

Points of Divergence

Although most Americans, regardless of their political leanings, recognize the wrongs committed in the country's past, such as slavery, there is disagreement over how to address the relationship between historical injustices and present-day America.

Americans also disagree on the degree of emphasis currently given to history that is most salient for particular groups, such as the histories of women, Black Americans and Native Americans, versus history that emphasizes a common American identity or shared experience.

Our research found that although there is meaningful variation across demographics on these issues, ideology exerts greater influence. When asked whether America needs to do more to acknowledge past wrongs, white Americans are less likely than non-white Americans to agree: 51 percent of the white Americans we surveyed agreed with that statement, compared to 79 percent of Black Americans, 73 percent of Hispanic Americans, and 78 percent of Asian Americans.

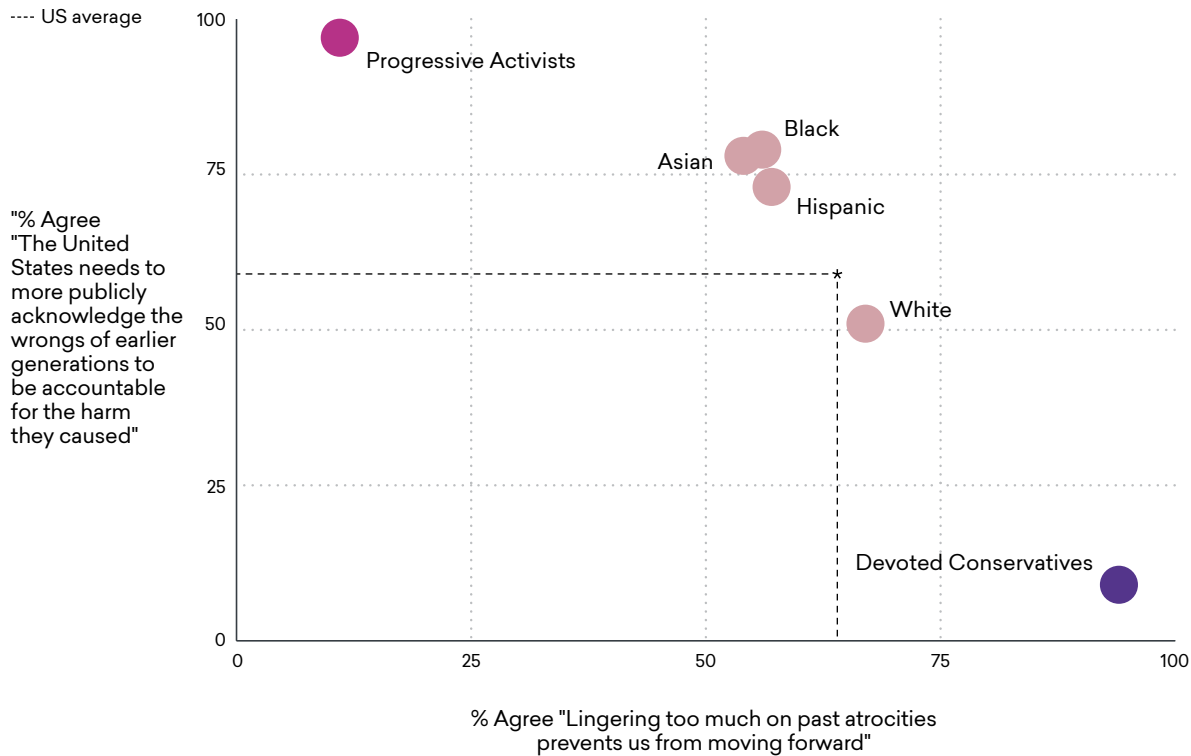
But the variation is much narrower across racial groups than across the two most ideological segments of our survey groups. We found that 97 percent of Progressive Activists agree the country needs to do more to acknowledge earlier wrongs whereas just 9 percent of Devoted Conservatives agree.

We found a similar dynamic in which ideology reveals more variation than race when we asked if people agreed with the statement "Lingering on the past prevents us from moving forward." A full 67 percent of the white Americans we surveyed agreed with this statement compared to 56 percent of Black Americans, 57 percent of Hispanic Americans, and 54 percent of Asian Americans. Once again, the difference in sentiment was much greater between the Devoted Conservatives (94 percent agree) and Progressive Activists (11 percent agree).

⁹ Reno, R., Cialdini, R., & Kallgren, C. (1993). The Transsituational Influence of Social Norms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 64, 104–112. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.64.1.104>; Jervis, R. (1988). War and misperception. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18(4), 675-700; Mernyk, J. S., Pink, S. L., Druckman, J. N., & Willer, R. (2022). Correcting inaccurate metaperceptions reduces Americans' support for partisan violence. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 119(16), e2116851119. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2116851119>

Figure 1.4

Grappling with Our History: Views Vary More by Ideology than by Race

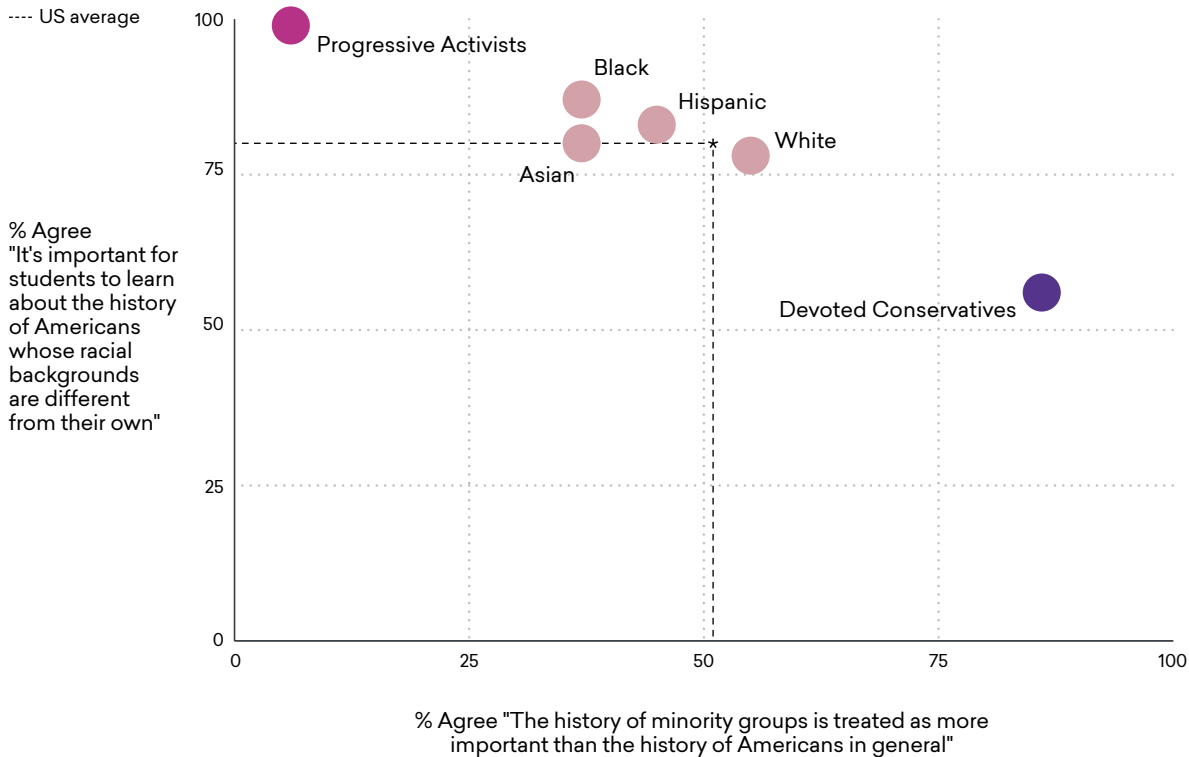


The ideological drivers are also evident in how segments respond to questions about how we should teach the history of particular groups of Americans. We found that 80 percent of Americans agree “It’s important for students to learn about the history of Americans whose racial backgrounds are different from their own,” but only 56 percent of Devoted Conservatives agree.

There is significant variation across racial groups over whether people feel “the history of minority groups is treated as more important than the history of Americans in general.” But the ideological extremes are in near-total opposition to each other. That is, Progressive Activists overwhelmingly disagree (94 percent) that our teaching of history prioritizes the stories of minority groups whereas Devoted Conservatives uniformly agree (86 percent).

Figure 1.5

Telling Our Shared Story: Weaving the History of Particular Groups into History that Emphasizes a Common American Identity



This creates a dynamic in which once again the extremes dominate the debate, despite the fact that these two groups comprise only 14 percent of the U.S. population. It also obscures the nature and extent of the ideological disagreements and leads to situations in which communities spend time fighting imagined enemies as opposed to engaging with the areas where there is genuine conflict.

Our study does not dismiss the views held by more ideological groups such as Devoted Conservatives or Progressive Activists simply because they vary significantly from the views of most Americans. On issues with moral dimensions, public opinion is one of many important variables. And as history has shown, sometimes views initially outside the mainstream eventually become the majority view. Support for same-sex marriage, for example, grew from 27 percent in 1996 to 71 percent in 2022.¹⁰

Nor are deep disagreements inherently dangerous, provided they do not foster dehumanizing rhetoric or action. But the wing groups' views should be understood as representative of only a small number of Americans and not as indicative of the views of entire political parties or of the average views of any particular racial group.

10 Gallup (2007, September 14). *LGBT Rights*. Gallup.com. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1651/Gay-Lesbian-Rights.aspx>

Jake: Teach the Good and the Bad

Jake is a white man and Millennial who lives in Georgia. He is a Republican and thinks of himself as fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

Jake thinks students should learn multiple aspects of American history in order to not repeat the mistakes of the past. “I think it's very important that students learn the history, both the positives and the negatives, because that's where they live. And they have to understand where we came from as a country so that we don't repeat some of the same problems over and over again.”

He thinks all aspects of history should be taught and teachers should not focus solely on the achievements or grave errors. Jake thinks that politics should not play a role in teaching history and teachers and schools should focus on presenting the facts instead of focusing on ideology or agendas. “We shouldn't be mixing history with the politics of today, so that we can keep the two separate,” he says. “Teach history as what happened and teach today as what is today, what are the struggles and how we can get over those as a collective.”

Jake also thinks parents should decide how topics around race and slavery should be taught in local districts, and he opposes education policy set at a national level.

Chapter 2 - Points of Convergence

“We should **focus on the past but not overdo it**. We should also **move on so that no one feels guilty for something they did not do.**”

—Cecile, 35-44 Black woman, Democrat, North Carolina

“I think we must teach what happened, but **not blame kids** and **make people feel like they are responsible.**”

—Gea, 18-24 white woman, Independent, North Carolina

“Don't spend all your time teaching about the past, or ignore it at all. We must **teach these histories, acknowledge them, and move forward.** We cannot change the past, but we can change the future.”

—Dewey, 18-24 Hispanic man, Republican, Texas

“I think that **there should be classes, you know, on the Hispanic heritage and the Polish heritage or any heritage**, because I think that when we learn more about people, we love people better, we accept people better. I think that the more that we can understand what they've gone through that we can create greater empathy and compassion.”

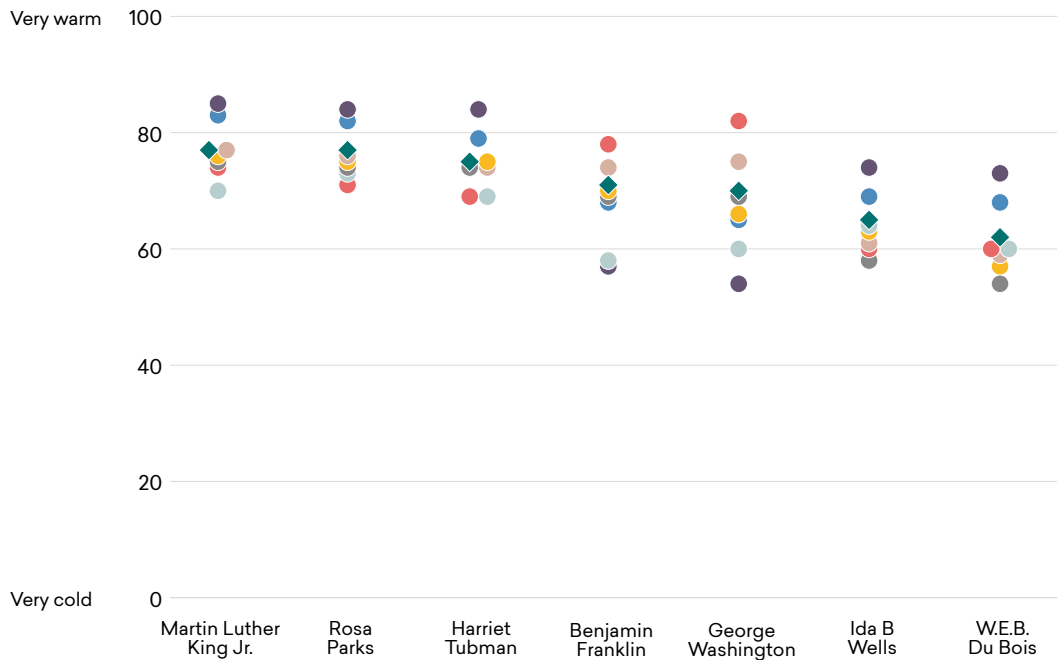
—Bonnie, 55-64 white woman, Republican, Texas

Our study found that Americans across ideological and demographic backgrounds recognize injustices in American history and also see a story of progress towards a better future. They admire our founding documents as well as leaders throughout our history who have fought to advance freedom and equality, from the founders through to the leaders of the Civil Rights movements. Although public debates often focus on the most extreme views about American history, our research demonstrates widespread desire for teaching history with an appreciation for complexity and nuance.

Figure 2.1

Americans Regardless of Party or Race hold Favorable Views towards Civil Rights Leaders and Founding Fathers

- ◆ US average
- Democrats
- Independents
- Republicans
- White
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian



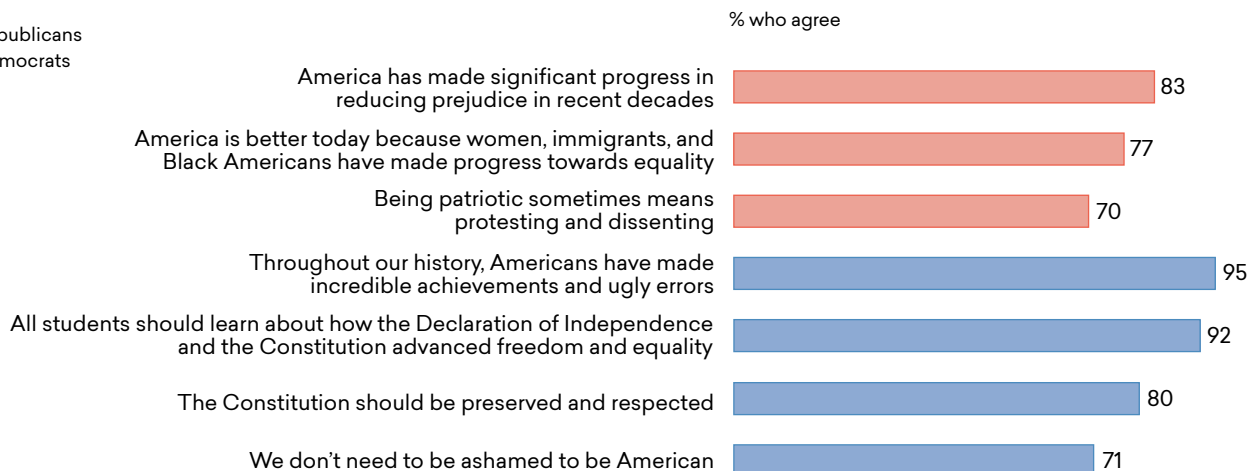
Question: On a scale from 0 to 100, how cold or warm do you feel towards the following? Familiarity with the individual was asked before asking warmth rating questions. Warmth ratings were not asked of respondents who were 'not at all familiar' with the individual.
Source: More in Common

We found important points of convergence in the debate on how to teach history. Contrary to prevailing perceptions, we found that a clear majority of Americans wants American history to be taught in ways that include both the inspiring and the shameful; that highlight the histories of minority groups alongside history that elevates a common American identity; and that allows students to learn from the past without feeling guilty or disempowered by the actions of prior generations.

Figure 2.2

Strong Support among both Parties for Balanced Approaches to Teaching American History

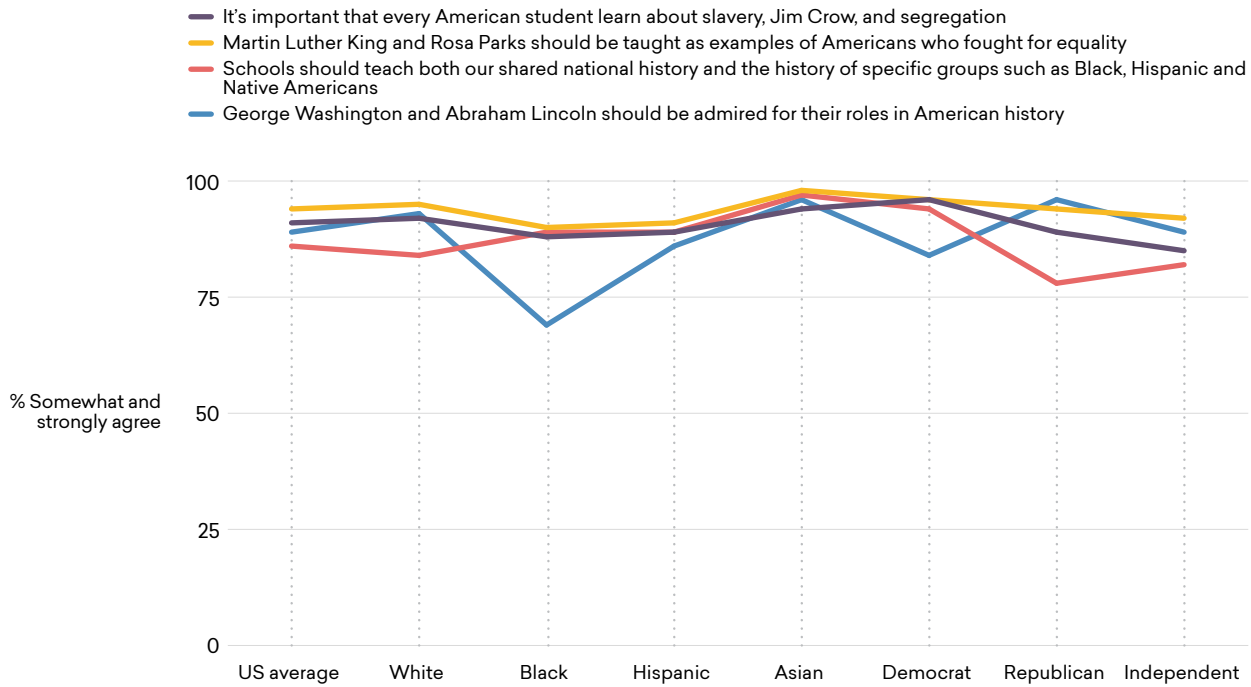
- Republicans
- Democrats



Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Note: Not every statement was asked of both political parties.
Source: More in Common

Figure 2.3

Americans Agree on Major Themes About the American Story, Including its Founding, Failures, and Progress

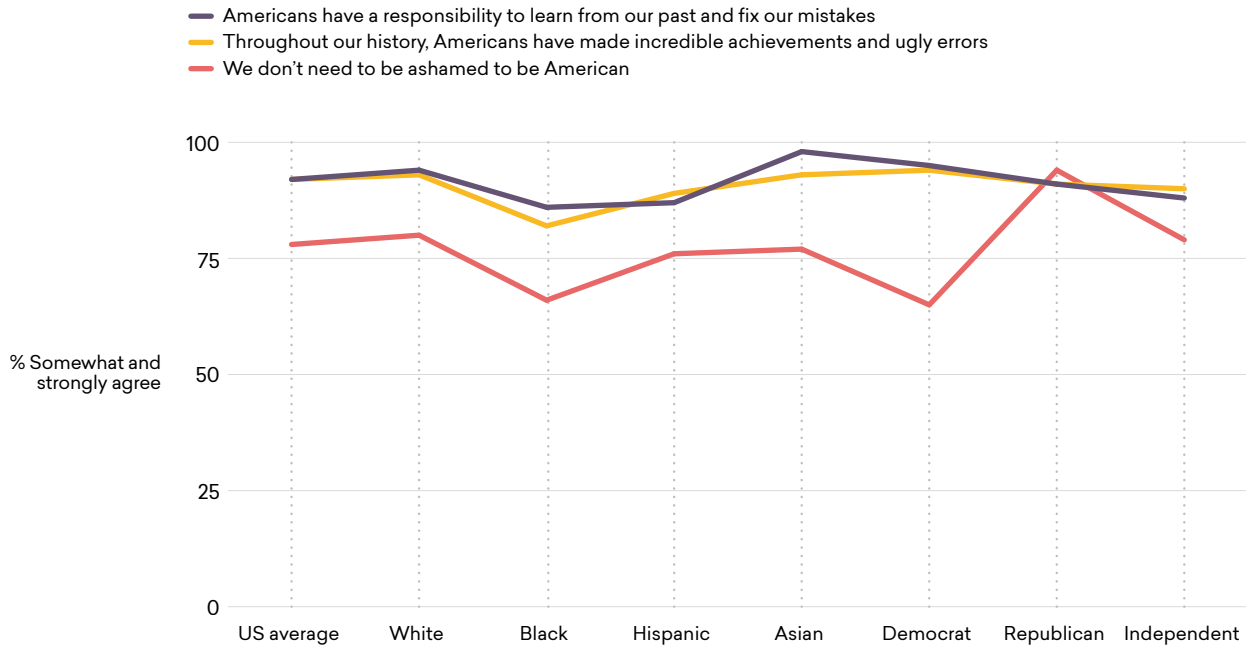


Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Note: Several questions were fielded in multiple surveys. The data above were collected in American Identity Survey 2 among the full sample. The question was re-fielded to a partial sample in American Identity Survey 3 and this more recent data is presented in the perception gap charts elsewhere in the study. Source: More in Common

Support for a nuanced approach to teaching American history is strong across all racial groups. We found that more than 87 percent of white, Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans agree that students should learn about the nation's history of slavery and segregation. And more than 83 percent across these groups agree that schools should teach history that elevates a common identity as well as history that is more focused on specific groups. This underscores the extent to which the ideologically-charged history wars misrepresent how most Americans want to see our national story told.

Figure 2.4

Americans Agree on General Principles Related to History and Identity



Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Note: Several questions were fielded in multiple surveys. The data above were collected in American Identity Survey 2 among the full sample. The question was re-fielded to a partial sample in American Identity Survey 3 and this more recent data is presented in the perception gap charts elsewhere in the study. Source: More in Common

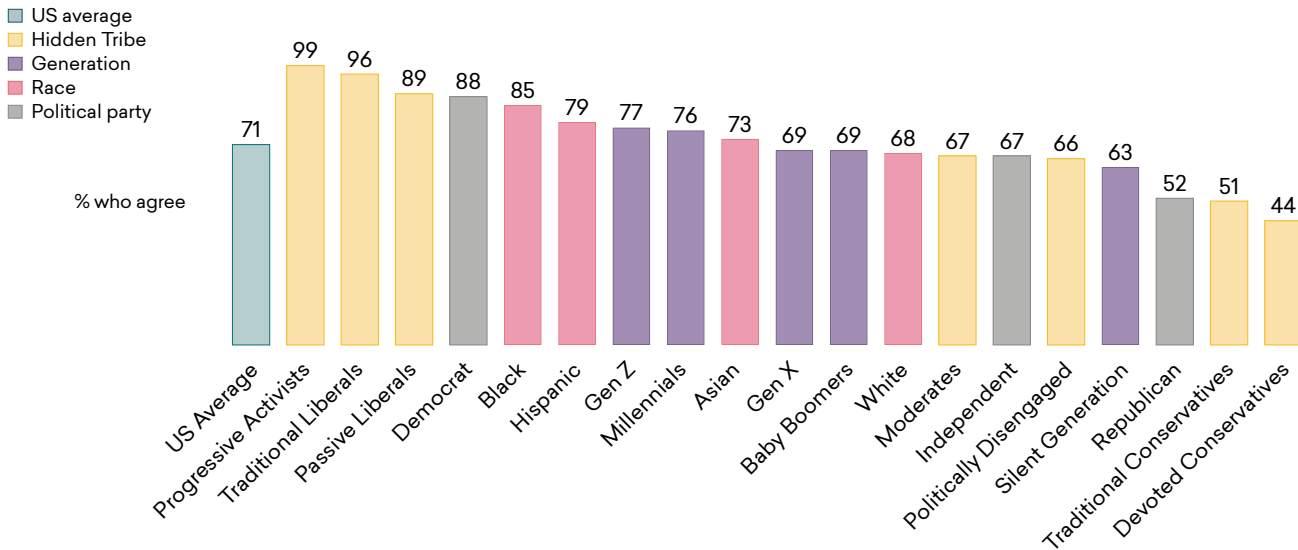
Attitudes towards Teaching about Race, Racism and History

We also found that most Americans—71 percent—believe it is important to teach the history of racism in America. There is some variation across political parties. Only 52 percent of Republicans support this broad statement and another 20 percent say they neither agree nor disagree. But when asked about teaching specific racial injustices in history, an overwhelming majority of Republicans were supportive. For example, most Republicans—83 percent—agreed with teaching students about the history of slavery, Jim Crow and segregation.

Figure 2.5

Teaching the History of Racism is Supported by Most Americans, though Devoted Conservatives Are an Outlier

It's important to teach the history of racism in America



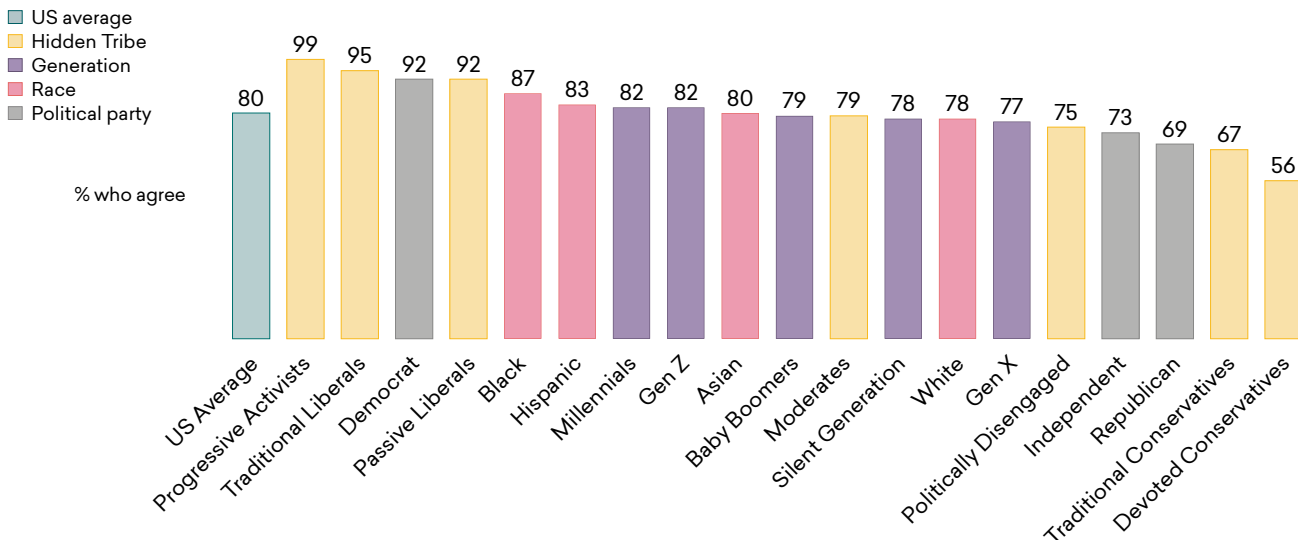
Question: It's important to teach the history of racism in America
Source: More in Common

Most Americans also agree on the importance of teaching the history of different racial groups. We found that 88 percent of Democrats and 56 percent of Republicans agree students should be taught the history of their own racial group. At the same time, approximately 8 in 10 Americans across racial groups believe that it is important for students to learn about the history of Americans whose racial backgrounds are different from their own.

Figure 2.6

Americans Agree Students Should be Taught the History of those with Different Racial Backgrounds

It's important for students to learn about the history of Americans whose racial backgrounds are different from their own



Question: It's important for students to learn about the history of Americans whose racial backgrounds are different from their own. Source: More in Common

Our research highlights the many ways that Americans agree—quite strongly—on key principles about how we teach American history. These findings help provide a roadmap for defusing history wars in ways that could move the national conversation in a healthier direction.

Tina: Forget the Politics

Tina is a Gen X white woman who lives in South Carolina. She grew up in a Pentecostal Christian church in a mostly white family and community. She has strong Christian beliefs that are important to her and identifies strongly with the Republican Party.

For information on how American history is taught in school, Tina turns to Fox News and to her son, who is in high school. Tina is alarmed by what Fox News describes as a widespread adoption of Critical Race Theory in school, yet she does not find such material and approach in her son's coursework. "I'm seeing on the news, where they're talking about Critical Race Theory, and teachers are pitting Blacks against whites and like the horrible stuff. But when my son comes home, I've never witnessed anything like that in assignments or homework that made me question what he's been taught. So I feel very conflicted. I don't know what to believe."

Tina also sees history as a mixture of good and bad. She finds it very important that history is taught and not skewed with any agenda or bias. "I just think it's important that kids know what happened, you know, and let them form their opinions on that," she says. Tina thinks it is important that America learns from its mistakes. "If we don't learn from the past, I mean, how can we be better going forward? If I didn't learn from that past, I couldn't have been a better person, I couldn't have been a better wife and a better mother."

Chapter 3: Context of Polarization

“I think we can’t move forward until historical wrongs are acknowledged and mended, and the harm is fully reckoned with. **Injustices and atrocities of the past are often directly linked to current day oppression.** Moving on without action tends to ensure the same wrongs are repeated.”

—Kris, 35-44 Black man, Democrat, Pennsylvania

“**How long do we have to keep acknowledging the wrongs of slavery** before it can be let go? It seems that whenever something goes wrong in this country, everyone wants to bring up how white America needs to make amends for the actions of their ancestors.”

—Manuela, 35-44 Hispanic woman, Democrat, Ohio

“**I’m seeing on the news, where they’re talking about Critical Race Theory**, and teachers are pitting Blacks against whites—horrible stuff. But then my son comes home and I kind of want to pick his little brain to see what he’s hearing. **He’s always like, ‘I don’t know what you’re talking about, we don’t talk about that in school, my teachers never said that.’** And I’ve never witnessed anything like in assignments or homework that made me question what he’s been taught. So I feel very conflicted. **I don’t know what to believe.**”

—Tina, 45-54 white woman, Republican, South Carolina

What explains the history wars? Why do we feel so intensely divided on issues where there is abundant common ground? The influence of vociferous conflict entrepreneurs and politicians actively fomenting these contentious debates is not the only explanation. Other crucial factors are the deepening levels of both polarization and distrust that mark our political, social and media environments, and that make it much easier for Americans to latch onto false impressions of each others’ beliefs.

Polarization

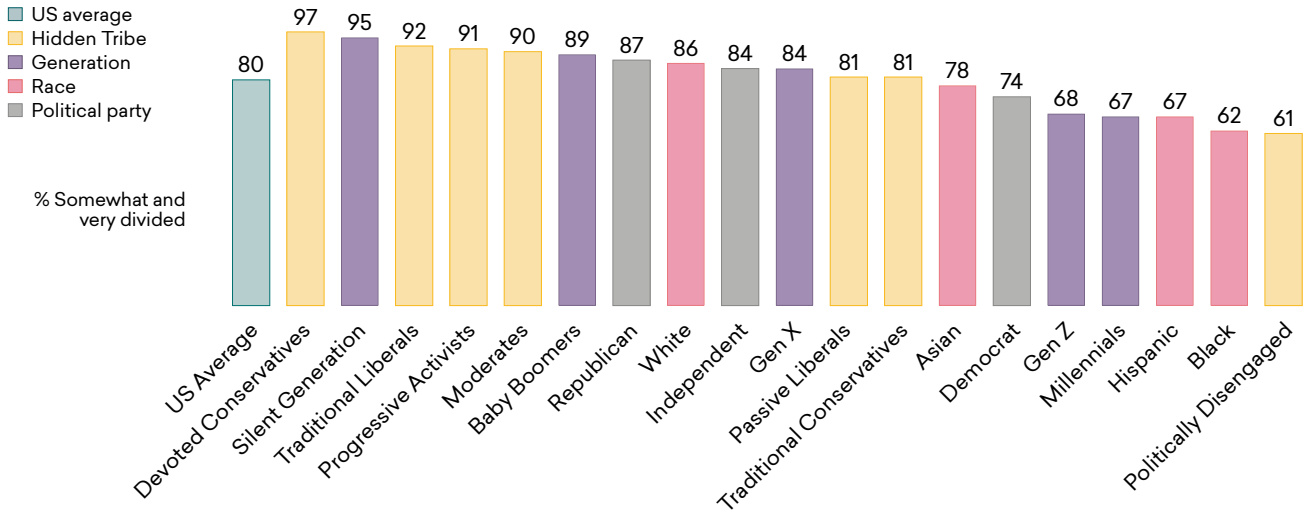
Our study found that Americans feel divided about how to teach our history largely because Americans feel divided, period. In fact, “divided” is the word Americans are most likely to choose when we asked them how to describe the country today. This cuts across ideological lines. Regardless of age, race, and party affiliation, 8 in 10 Americans say the United States feels divided, with a majority holding the opinion that the country is “very divided.”

That deep-rooted polarization inevitably comes through loud and clear in debates over how to teach history. If we don’t agree on shared reality, it’s hard to agree on how to teach the past.

Figure 3.1

Deep Division Characterizes the Country's Current Political Landscape

How unified or divided does the United States feel today?

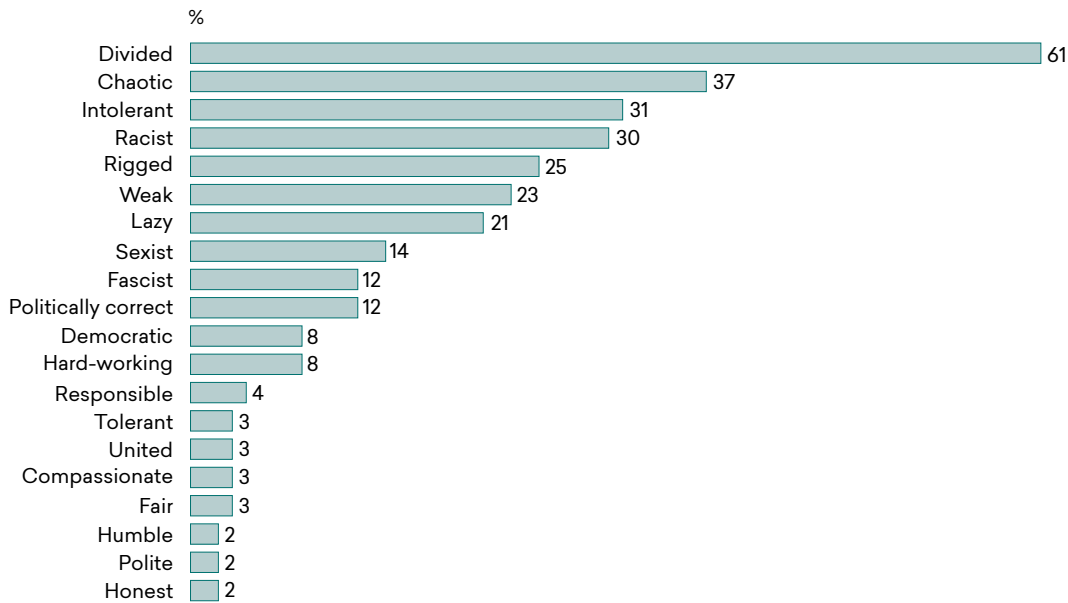


Question: How unified or divided does the United States feel today?
Source: More in Common

Figure 3.2

Deep Negativity and Pessimism Characterizes Americans' Views of the State of the Country Today

Thinking about the United States today, what qualities would you use to describe it?



Question: Showing US average. Select up to four (% selecting each quality).
Source: More in Common

These divisions are also reflected in the intensely negative feelings Americans hold about their political opponents, feelings social scientists refer to as “affective polarization.”¹¹ That polarization means Democrats are about 9 times more likely to describe Republicans as “arrogant” than as “humble,” while Republicans are more than 10 times more likely to describe Democrats as “brainwashed” than as “reasonable.”

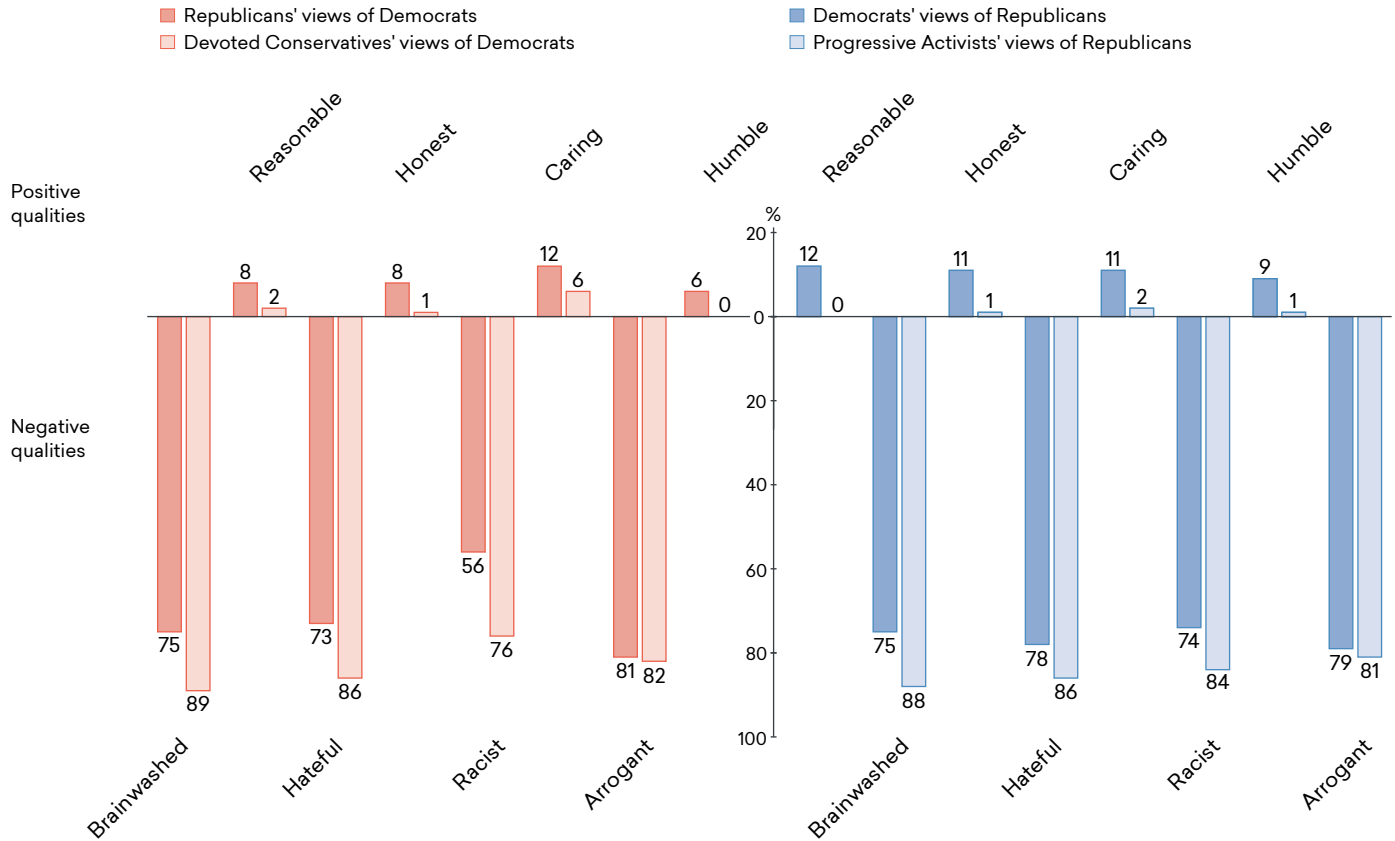
¹¹ Iyengar, Shanto and others. The origins and consequences of affective polarization in the United States. Annual Review of Political Science, 2018.

This partisan animosity is especially present among the more extreme groups of the Hidden Tribes segments. We found nearly 90 percent of Progressive Activists and Devoted Conservatives say members of the other political party are “brainwashed.” in the context of the history wars, this animosity primes us to see nefarious motives at work in anything led by our political opponents—and to overlook areas where we may agree.

Figure 3.3

Partisans Hold Deep Animosity Towards their Party Opponents

How much do each of the following phrases or words apply to Democratic/Republican voters?



Question: % indicating at least 5 on a 7-point agreement scale
 Source: More in Common

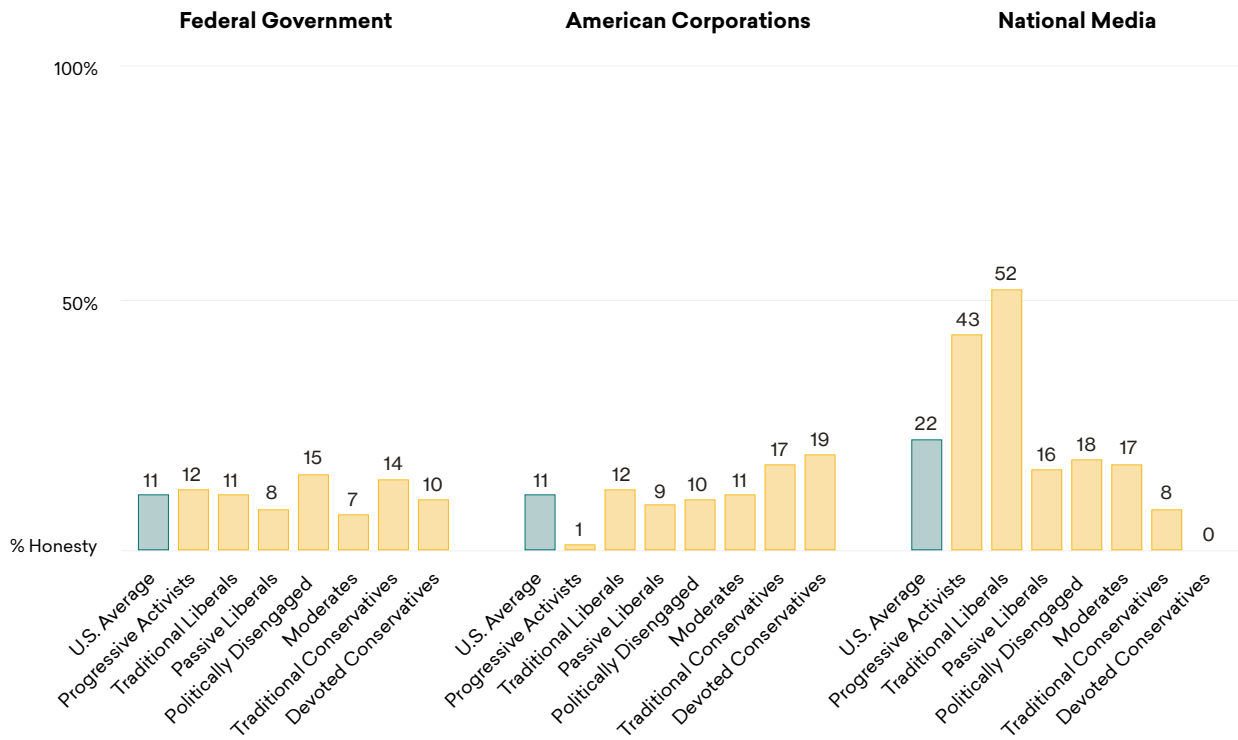
Distrust

Along with polarization, the second issue fanning the flames of the history wars is the deep and widespread level of distrust in American society. Our previous research found that no institution outside of the military garners widespread trust from across the American population—be it the federal government, corporations or the media.¹² The education sector is no exception.

¹² Vallone, Dan et al. (2021). “Two Stories of Distrust in America”. More in Common. https://www.moreincommon.com/media/yfcbfmmmp/mic_two-stories-of-distrust.pdf.

Figure 3.4

Low Level of Trust in Institutions is the Norm



Question: "In your personal experience, do you feel like...is always dishonest, more dishonest than honest, equally honest and dishonest, more honest than not, or always honest?" Showing % 'always honest' and 'more honest than not.'
 Source: More in Common, December 2020

Our study found that most Americans do not trust teachers in general to teach American history fairly, nor do they have confidence in education officials to design an unbiased curriculum. We also found that only 41 percent of Americans believe public schools are doing their best to teach American history accurately, "without an agenda or bias."

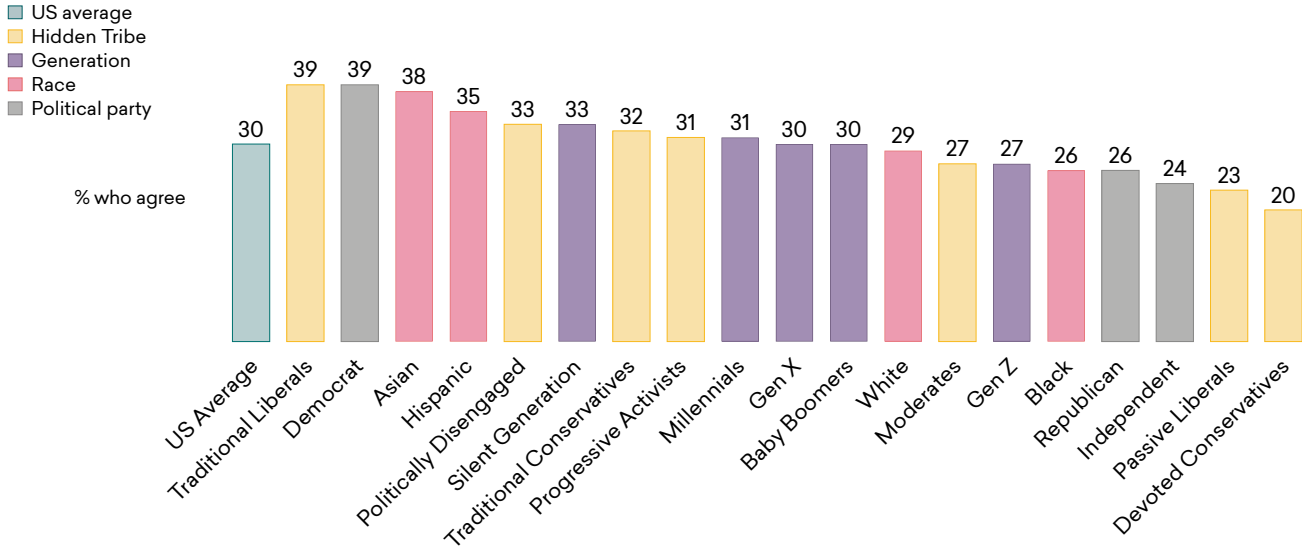
Distrust is widespread but most evident among conservatives. Only 9 percent of Devoted Conservatives versus 62 percent of Traditional Liberals feel that public schools are doing their best.

This distrust means people are primed to suspect foul motives of institutions as well as of their political opponents. This also makes it easier for issues at the local level to be viewed entirely through nationalized and politicized frames, such as the debate over Critical Race Theory.

Figure 3.5

Fractured Trust Shapes Americans' Feelings Towards Education Officials and the Curriculum

I trust education officials in my state to be politically neutral in how they design the curriculum

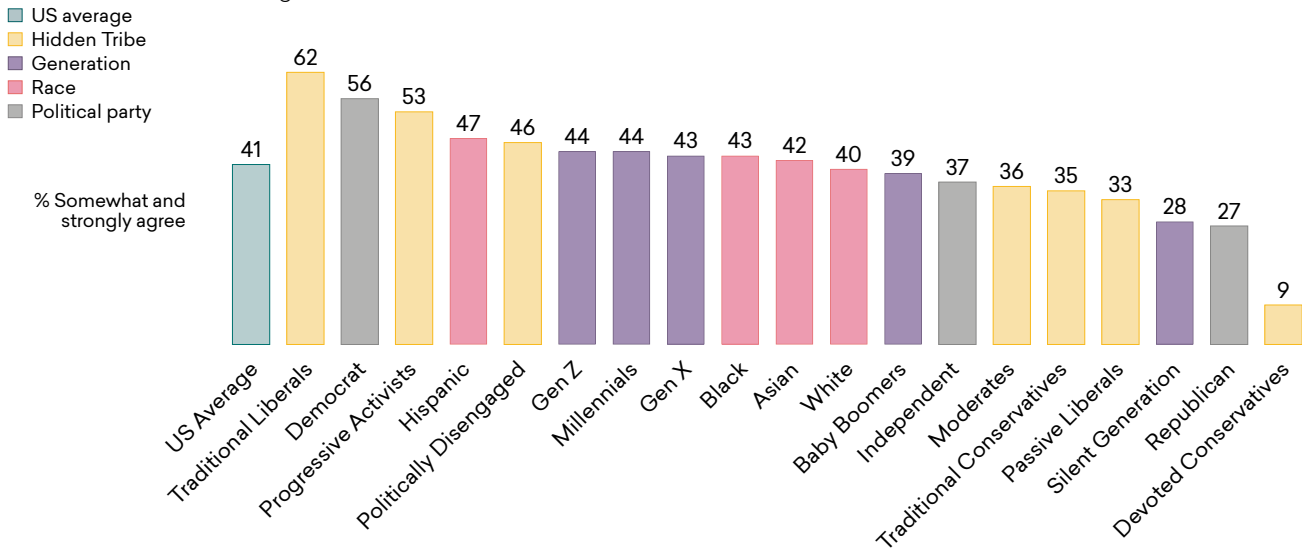


Question: To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?
Source: More in Common

Figure 3.6

Americans Have Low Trust that Public Schools Actually Teach an Honest Account of History

Most public schools in America are doing their best to teach American history accurately, without an agenda or bias



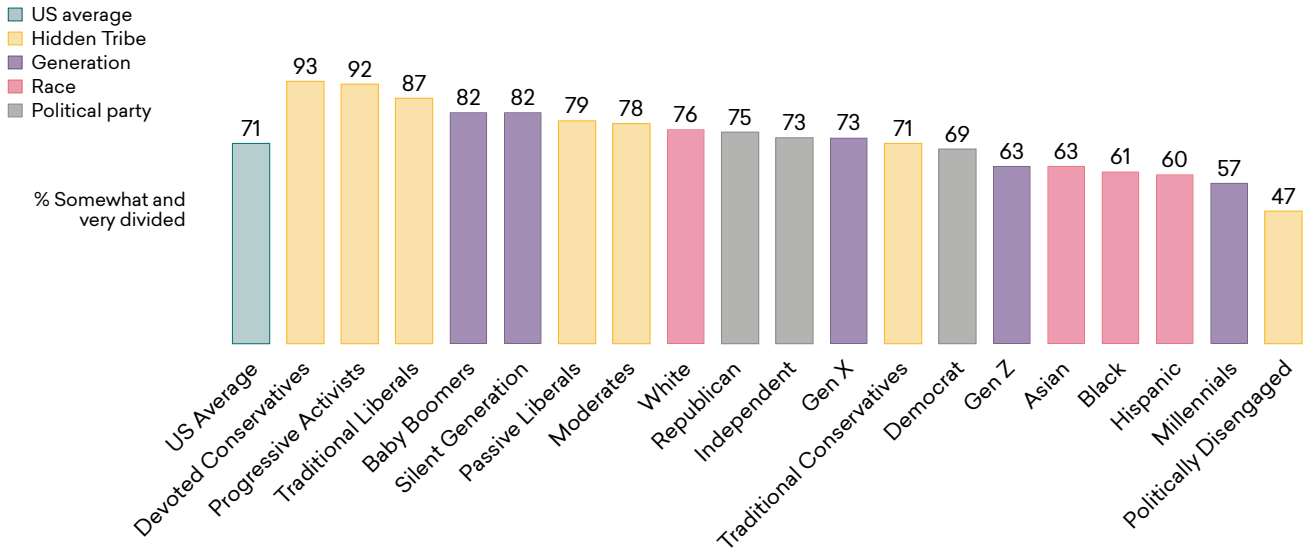
Question: Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Source: More in Common

Given these levels of polarization and distrust, it is not surprising that most Americans—7 in 10—say the country feels divided on the topic of U.S. history. Though grounded mostly in false divergences, this sense of division causes many Americans to feel they have to pick a side or sit out the debate entirely, further fueling the history wars.

Figure 3.7

Americans Feel Divided on the Topic of U.S. History

How unified or divided does the United States feel today on the topic of U.S. history?



Question: How unified or divided does the United States feel today on the topic of U.S. history?
Source: More in Common

Andy: The Truth Helps Everyone Out

Andy is a Gen X Black man who lives in New York. His identity as Black man is important to him, as is being a Democrat. Andy is proud to be American and supports the democracy building the United States has done globally. He is also proud of the contributions of Black Americans, such as the policies President Barack Obama passed while in office.

Andy sees American history as a mixed bag; he sees slavery as an important part in the story of America, but he also deeply values the stories of Americans fighting for freedom and improving the country for the better. Andy hopes history can be taught in a more truthful and inclusive manner that spotlights more Black figures. He laments that the history of Black Americans is rarely taught beyond the history of slavery and the Civil Rights movement, which he thinks overlooks the broad contributions and diverse experiences of Black Americans in the country.

He says: "We shouldn't be ashamed to be American because we learn from the mistakes by writing laws to change the messed-up things that once were legal, from lynching to segregation. So, we change the law, and we should be proud. So, we should admit our mistakes but we're proud of them. Be proud that America fixed and changed the laws."

Andy wants American students to be taught the truth when it comes to American history. He does not believe students should be made to feel personally guilty for the wrongs of previous generations but thinks students should make up their own mind on how they should react to slavery and other injustices in America's past.

Andy also thinks teachers should not hold a bias when it comes to history, either from the left or the right. He wants history to be taught honestly, saying "I just care about the facts of American history...I'm just all about the truth... That's all I want, the truth, none of this...manipulation and nitpicking...that's just annoying. The truth helps everyone out."

Recommendations

Our research found genuine and substantive disagreements over how Americans want our history to be taught. These disagreements on how to reconcile our past and our present are at the heart of our national identity. Healthy debates about how to teach history would make our society stronger. At our best, America has demonstrated a unique capacity to wrestle with such questions in ways that pave the way for progress.

Today's history wars do not reflect us at our best. Americans see a rancorous conflict shaped by two camps holding irreconcilable views. Fueling this illusion are widely-held perception gaps that obscure the abundant common ground Americans have around teaching history. Defusing the history wars and elevating our common ground will require sustained efforts from all corners.

We do not suggest that Americans put aside their disagreements, if that were even possible. Rather, these recommendations are aimed at generating better conversations, dialogue, and debate—the kind of engagement that leads to progress and learning instead of division and hostility. At the core of our recommendations are ways we can stop seeing imagined enemies and situate our disagreements in contexts that bind us together in how we want to tell our common story.

1 Do not accept debates about teaching history framed in extreme binaries. Instead, assume greater complexity in the beliefs of Americans.

Real divides exist among Americans' conceptions of history, but there is much more nuance and common ground. Americans overwhelmingly acknowledge both the good and bad in American history, and also admire many of the same historical figures and events, ranging from George Washington and Benjamin Franklin to Rosa Parks and Harriet Tubman. Organizations and practitioners in politics, advocacy, civil society, and education and history can be confident that Americans hold complex views and appreciate nuance in our national history. Dispel the illusion of imaginary enemies by revealing the multitude of ways that Americans actually agree on how we should teach history.

2 Cultivate more shared spaces for people to sensibly discuss and question these topics.

Polarization and distrust make it difficult to have complex conversations on how we should teach history. Many Americans feel they will be judged if they ask questions or use language perceived as insensitive, or that they could be attacked or trolled if they put forth a dissenting view. Community institutions such as business groups, faith actors, veterans groups, and civil society organizations, should work together to create spaces that are intentionally designed to allow for more open and frank conversations, and that allow people to ask questions without fear of judgment. Without such spaces, too often people either retreat entirely or turn to ideologically-charged echo chambers that exacerbate feelings of hostility and threat.

- 3 In communicating about how to teach history, use language that is concrete and accessible. Where possible, use language and framings customized to the local context.** Abstract language, which tends to be more academic in origin and orientation, often makes many Americans feel confused or excluded from the conversation. Abstract language is also ripe for misinterpretation or for manipulation by conflict entrepreneurs. Instead, communication about how to teach history should be clear, specific and should refrain from jargon. Similarly, political, community, and educational leaders should, wherever possible, avoid nationalizing conversations about teaching history. Given the highly decentralized nature of education in America, rather than adopting language, terms, or frames that are used in national debates and in national media, leaders should put concepts into terms that have unique local salience.
- 4 Media should reject the presumption of conflict in the conversation about teaching history and when reporting, distinguish between areas of genuine disagreement and areas where Americans agree.** Too often coverage of the conversation on teaching history presumes conflict. Media actors should dedicate greater coverage to voices from the Exhausted Majority, who are likely to hold more nuanced views on issues of race, identity, and history that are often framed in binary terms. Similarly, greater attention could be paid to the underlying issues of polarization and distrust that fuel the history wars.
- 5 Organizations in the education space should build cross-cutting coalitions to push back against the highly toxic polarization of the history wars and set healthier norms for how communities address disagreements.** Conflict entrepreneurs recognize how polarization and distrust prime us to see the worst in each other—and so they elevate this sense of threat for their own political or economic ends. They find examples of ideologies that are outside the mainstream and portray them as representative of a mass movement that threatens the nation’s very existence. Their tactics work, in part, because communities face a much more difficult time building networks that bring Democrats, Independents, and Republicans together to establish norms for how the community will handle disagreements.

To defuse the history wars, we need to build networks that include groups with different ideological orientations. Such networks can help establish and enforce boundaries to behavior and rhetoric that is considered acceptable—such as making clear that the community will not tolerate violence or dehumanizing rhetoric in the debate over how to teach history. These networks need not, and in most cases should not, try to create a consensus policy or to make curriculum decisions. The greater value is likely in the enforcement of norms across the ideological spectrum for how to resolve disagreements.

- 6 Support and lead interventions to reduce perception gaps.** Recent research has shown that correcting misperceptions is both possible and productive. An October 2022 study by Stanford University’s Strengthening Democracy Challenge has indicated that correcting such perceptions can reduce Americans’ support for partisan violence. The study also emphasizes the need for improving Americans’ understanding of their political counterparts.¹³ Philanthropic institutions, universities, and other institutions can provide resourcing and support to help lead evidence-based interventions to reduce the perception gaps Americans hold about how to teach our history.
- 7 Challenge zero-sum thinking.** Our research found that one of the major tension points in the debate about teaching history is over the extent to which Americans feel that certain group histories are prioritized over history that emphasizes a common American identity. Politicians, educators, media, and influencers in the fields of education and history should acknowledge the concerns about preferencing one group’s history over another’s, but challenge any notion that this is a zero-sum consideration. Americans should do more to lift up ways of teaching history where all groups feel their stories are included and where such learning reinforces a shared narrative of American history. Communications should avoid activating a false binary and underscore how such learning better prepares us to build a stronger future together.

¹³ Mernyk, J. S., Pink, S. L., Druckman, J. N., & Willer, R. (2022). Correcting inaccurate metaperceptions reduces Americans’ support for partisan violence. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 119(16), e2116851119. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2116851119>.

Conclusion

“We must know where we came from and **not forget and also be better and do better now.**”

—Adrianna, 25-34 Hispanic woman, Democrat, Texas

James Baldwin once wrote that “American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it.”¹⁴

Given the enormity and complexity of our national story, teaching it has always been and likely will always be a subject of important and fraught debates. Our data shows that today we have much more overall agreement on how to teach history than we had in the past. But in a polarized political and media landscape, we currently do not see this common ground.

To bring Americans together in more constructive conversations about how to teach our history, leaders and communities at all levels need to take clear and decisive action. They need to work hard to find common-ground solutions. It will take such concerted effort to push back against conflict entrepreneurs who seek to foment polarization.

A key element in such efforts will be helping Americans envision what it could look like to have healthy and constructive conversations on how to teach history. It is easy to picture chaos and division, but what about unity and substantive debate?

The conclusion of the 2022 Midterm elections provided a glimpse of what might be possible. After a contentious election cycle, the elections themselves featured a kind of patriotic normalcy. Americans voted at record levels. Losing candidates conceded quickly and gracefully. Elections administrators did their jobs professionally and with high integrity.

This speaks to what is possible if we can come together. After years of lowering our expectations of each other, this is a moment to imagine something brighter. We can start building this better future together with meaningful conversations about how to teach our past.

¹⁴ Baldwin, James (1963). “A Talk to Teachers,” *Saturday Review*. https://www.spps.org/cms/lib010/mn01910242/centricity/domain/125/baldwin_atalktoteachers_1_2.pdf.

Appendix Table of Contents

Chapter 1

- 1 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- 2 A number of atrocities were committed in America both before and after its founding. Quite often they had racial dimensions, such as the genocide and forced removal of Native Americans, enslavement of Africans and their descendants, and more. Thinking about these atrocities, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Lingering too much on past atrocities prevents us from moving forward.
- 3 A number of atrocities were committed in America both before and after its founding. Quite often they had racial dimensions, such as the genocide and forced removal of Native Americans, enslavement of Africans and their descendants, and more. Thinking about these atrocities, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The United States needs to more publicly acknowledge the wrongs of earlier generations to be accountable for the harm they caused.
- 4 Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: It's important for students to learn about the history of Americans whose racial backgrounds are different from their own.
- 5 Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: The history of minority groups is treated as more important than the history of Americans in general.

Chapter 2

- 6 For each of the following individuals, indicate how cold or warm you feel towards them, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm.
- 7 Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
- 8 Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: It's important to teach the history of racism in America.
- 9 Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: It's important for students to be taught the history of their own racial backgrounds.

Chapter 3

- 10 How unified or divided does the United States feel today?
- 11 Thinking about the United States today, what qualities would you use to describe it? Please select up to four.
- 12 How much do each of the following phrases or words apply to Republican voters?
- 13 How much do each of the following phrases or words apply to Democratic voters?
- 14 I trust education officials in my state to be politically neutral in how they design the curriculum.
- 15 How unified or divided does the United States feel today on the topic of U.S. history?
- 16 Most public schools in America are doing their best to teach American history accurately, without an agenda or bias.

Appendix

Chapter 1

1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Party ID	
Americans have a responsibility to learn from our past and fix our mistakes.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	93%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	7%

Party ID	
Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks should be taught as examples of Americans who fought for equality.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	93%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	7%

Party ID	
It's important that every American student learn about slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	83%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	17%

Party ID	
Throughout our history, Americans have made incredible achievements and ugly errors.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	91%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	9%

Party ID	
America is better today because women, immigrants, and Black Americans have made progress towards equality.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	77%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	23%

Party ID	
Schools should teach both our shared national history and the history of specific groups such as Black, Hispanic and Native Americans.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	72%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	28%

Party ID	
America has made significant progress in reducing prejudice in recent decades.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	83%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	17%

Party ID	
Being patriotic sometimes means protesting and dissenting.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	70%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	30%

Party ID	
Minorities still experience prejudice in America today.	Rep
Somewhat or strongly agree	52%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	48%

Party ID	
All students should learn about how the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution advanced freedom and equality.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	92%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	8%

Party ID	
George Washington and Abraham Lincoln should be admired for their roles in American history.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	87%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	13%

Party ID	
In learning about American history, students should not be made to see each other as personally responsible for the actions of earlier generations.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	85%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	15%

Party ID	
In learning about past injustices in American history and their impact on the present day, students should not be made to feel disempowered or helpless.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	87%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	13%

Party ID	
Throughout our history, Americans have made incredible achievements and ugly errors	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	95%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	5%

Party ID	
The Constitution should be preserved and respected.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	80%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	20%

Party ID	
In learning about American history, students should not be made to feel personally responsible for the actions of earlier generations.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	83%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	17%

Party ID	
Teachers should not be allowed to let their political beliefs shape how they teach American history.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	83%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	17%

Party ID	
We don't need to be ashamed to be American.	Dem
Somewhat or strongly agree	71%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	29%

2. Lingering too much on past atrocities prevents us from moving forward.

Lingering on past atrocities	US Avg.	Gender		Age					Race			
		Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Strongly disagree	19%	19%	18%	15%	20%	20%	18%	17%	17%	26%	20%	18%
Somewhat disagree	18%	16%	19%	14%	16%	15%	22%	22%	16%	18%	23%	28%
Somewhat agree	28%	27%	29%	28%	25%	27%	32%	28%	26%	32%	32%	31%
Strongly agree	36%	37%	34%	43%	40%	38%	29%	32%	41%	24%	25%	23%

Lingering on past atrocities	US Avg.	Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Strongly disagree	19%	33%	5%	13%	63%	37%	30%	9%	10%	5%	2%
Somewhat disagree	18%	25%	9%	18%	27%	24%	24%	20%	15%	8%	3%
Somewhat agree	28%	27%	27%	29%	8%	28%	28%	36%	31%	29%	13%
Strongly agree	36%	16%	59%	41%	3%	11%	19%	35%	44%	58%	82%

3. The United States needs to more publicly acknowledge the wrongs of earlier generations to be accountable for the harm they caused.

Acknowledge wrongs	US Avg.	Gender		Age					Race			
		Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Strongly disagree	23%	27%	19%	33%	27%	25%	19%	13%	29%	8%	14%	7%
Somewhat disagree	18%	20%	17%	16%	19%	18%	18%	18%	20%	13%	13%	15%
Somewhat agree	28%	25%	30%	36%	23%	26%	31%	32%	24%	32%	36%	37%
Strongly agree	31%	28%	34%	15%	31%	32%	33%	36%	27%	47%	38%	41%

Acknowledge wrongs	US Avg.	Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Strongly disagree	23%	6%	45%	25%	1%	5%	6%	21%	27%	42%	63%
Somewhat disagree	18%	10%	25%	21%	2%	12%	13%	21%	17%	27%	28%
Somewhat agree	28%	33%	22%	25%	17%	32%	26%	37%	31%	21%	9%
Strongly agree	31%	50%	8%	28%	80%	51%	54%	20%	25%	10%	0%

4. It's important for students to learn about the history of Americans whose racial backgrounds are different from their own

History of different racial backgrounds	US Avg.	Gender		Age					Race			
		Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
1 – Strongly disagree	3%	4%	2%	1%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	0%	1%	3%
2	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
3	3%	4%	2%	5%	4%	3%	1X%	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%
4	13%	16%	10%	13%	11%	14%	13X%	12%	13%	9%	10%	14%
5	12%	14%	11%	10%	8%	14%	17%	12%	13%	11%	10%	11%
6	22%	22%	23%	23%	22%	19%	24%	25%	23%	19%	22%	32%
7 – Strongly agree	45%	38%	51%	44%	49%	44%	41%	44%	42%	57%	51%	37%

History of different racial backgrounds	US Avg.	Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
1 – Strongly disagree	3%	0%	5%	4%	0%	1%	1%	3%	4%	6%	8%
2	2%	0%	3%	2%	0%	0%	1%	1%	3%	2%	6%
3	3%	1%	5%	5%	0%	1%	2%	4%	4%	3%	8%
4	13%	7%	18%	16%	1%	3%	5%	17%	11%	22%	23%
5	12%	10%	16%	12%	3%	5%	8%	17%	13%	18%	10%
6	22%	20%	27%	21%	11%	19%	19%	27%	26%	24%	19%
7 – Strongly agree	45%	62%	26%	40%	85%	70%	65%	31%	39%	25%	27%

5. The history of minority groups is treated as more important than the history of Americans in general.

		Gender		Age					Race			
History of minorities	US Avg.	Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Strongly disagree	27%	26%	29%	16%	26%	32%	27%	28%	24%	37%	30%	35%
Somewhat disagree	22%	21%	23%	13%	21%	16%	25%	34%	21%	26%	25%	28%
Somewhat agree	25%	22%	27%	30%	24%	25%	24%	23%	26%	21%	22%	23%
Strongly agree	26%	30%	22%	42%	29%	27%	23%	14%	29%	16%	22%	14%

		Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
History of minorities	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Strongly disagree	27%	45%	7%	23%	79%	44%	42%	11%	22%	10%	8%
Somewhat disagree	22%	27%	14%	23%	15%	38%	26%	29%	16%	16%	6%
Somewhat agree	25%	17%	35%	25%	4%	12%	20%	31%	31%	33%	24%
Strongly agree	26%	12%	43%	29%	1%	6%	12%	30%	31%	42%	62%

Chapter 2

6. For each of the following individuals, indicate how cold or warm you feel towards them, where 0 means very cold and 100 means very warm.

Historic figures	US Avg.	Gender		Age					Race			
		Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Benjamin Franklin	71	73	68	78	77	70	64	65	74	57	70	58
George Washington	70	73	67	80	78	71	63	63	75	54	66	60
Martin Luther King Jr.	77	76	79	77	80	76	75	76	77	85	76	70
Rosa Parks	77	74	79	78	80	74	73	79	76	84	75	73
Harriet Tubman	75	73	77	71	77	75	74	76	74	84	75	69
Ida B. Wells	65	62	67	67	68	64	61	67	61	74	63	64
W.E.B. DuBois	62	61	64	65	63	60	62	61	59	73	57	60

Historic figures	US Avg.	Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Benjamin Franklin	71	68	78	69	60	74	60	68	71	80	86
George Washington	70	65	82	69	52	71	58	67	73	85	92
Martin Luther King Jr.	77	83	74	75	86	84	77	73	73	79	78
Rosa Parks	77	82	71	74	86	84	80	71	74	75	74
Harriet Tubman	75	73	77	71	77	75	74	76	74	84	75
Ida B. Wells	65	69	60	58	73	68	68	62	62	63	61
W.E.B. DuBois	62	68	60	54	72	70	63	58	59	59	55

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

(Note: Several questions were fielded in multiple surveys. The data above were collected in American Identity Survey 2 among the full sample. The question was re-fielded to a partial sample in American Identity Survey 3 and this more recent data is presented in the perception gap charts elsewhere in the study.)

		Party ID			Race			
Americans Have A Responsibility To Learn From Our Past And Fix Our Mistakes	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Somewhat or strongly agree	92%	95%	91%	88%	94%	86%	87%	98%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	8%	5%	9%	12%	6%	14%	13%	2%

		Party ID			Race			
Throughout Our History, Americans Have Made Incredible Achievements And Ugly Errors	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Somewhat or strongly agree	92%	94%	91%	90%	93%	82%	89%	93%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	8%	6%	9%	10%	7%	18%	11%	7%

		Party ID			Race			
We Don't Need To Be Ashamed To Be American	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Somewhat or strongly agree	78%	65%	94%	79%	80%	66%	76%	77%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	22%	35%	6%	21%	20%	34%	24%	23%

		Party ID			Race			
It's Important That Every American Student Learn About Slavery, Jim Crow, And Segregation	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Somewhat or strongly agree	91%	96%	89%	85%	92%	88%	89%	94%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	9%	4%	11%	15%	8%	12%	11%	6%

	US Avg.	Party ID			Race			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Martin Luther King And Rosa Parks Should Be Taught As Examples Of Americans Who Fought For Equality								
Somewhat or strongly agree	94%	96%	94%	92%	95%	90%	91%	98%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	6%	4%	6%	8%	5%	10%	9%	2%

	US Avg.	Party ID			Race			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Schools Should Teach Both Our Shared National History And The History Of Specific Groups Such As Black, Hispanic And Native Americans								
Somewhat or strongly agree	86%	94%	78%	82%	84%	89%	89%	97%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	14%	6%	22%	18%	16%	11%	11%	3%

	US Avg.	Party ID			Race			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
George Washington And Abraham Lincoln Should Be Admired For Their Roles In American History								
Somewhat or strongly agree	89%	84%	96%	89%	93%	69%	86%	96%
Somewhat or strongly disagree	11%	16%	4%	11%	7%	31%	14%	4%

8. It's important to teach the history of racism in America

History of racism	US Avg.	Gender		Age					Race			
		Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
1 – Strongly disagree	6%	7%	5%	7%	7%	5%	4%	4%	7%	1%	2%	4%
2	4%	5%	4%	8%	4%	7%	3%	4%	5%	2%	4%	1%
3	4%	5%	3%	7%	7%	3%	2%	2%	5%	1%	2%	1%
4	14%	17%	12%	15%	13%	16%	16%	13%	15%	11%	13%	21%
5	11%	11%	10%	9%	8%	12%	14%	10%	11%	11%	10%	16%
6	19%	19%	20%	21%	18%	15%	23%	22%	20%	17%	21%	16%
7 – Strongly agree	41%	36%	46%	33%	43%	42%	38%	45%	37%	57%	48%	41%

History of racism	US Avg.	Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
1 – Strongly disagree	6%	1%	13%	5%	0%	0%	1%	4%	8%	11%	19%
2	4%	1%	8%	4%	0%	1%	1%	5%	4%	9%	8%
3	4%	1%	7%	6%	0%	1%	0%	4%	5%	9%	10%
4	14%	8%	20%	18%	0%	2%	9%	21%	16%	20%	19%
5	11%	9%	12%	12%	1%	8%	9%	15%	11%	14%	9%
6	19%	17%	23%	19%	10%	20%	17%	24%	21%	19%	17%
7 – Strongly agree	41%	62%	17%	35%	89%	68%	63%	27%	35%	17%	18%

9. It's important for students to be taught the history of their own racial backgrounds

		Gender		Age					Race			
History of racial backgrounds	US Avg.	Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
1 – Strongly disagree	5%	6%	3%	3%	6%	4%	4%	3%	5%	2%	2%	2%
2	3%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%	2%	1%	4%	1%	1%	1%
3	4%	6%	3%	9%	5%	4%	2%	5%	5%	2%	2%	1%
4	16%	18%	13%	19%	14%	20%	15%	14%	17%	12%	15%	14%
5	14%	16%	12%	10%	10%	14%	18%	18%	13%	11%	18%	23%
6	21%	19%	24%	23%	20%	19%	24%	25%	22%	15%	20%	27%
7 – Strongly agree	37%	31%	43%	34%	42%	35%	35%	35%	34%	56%	41%	31%

		Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
History of racial backgrounds	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
1 – Strongly disagree	5%	1%	7%	6%	0%	2%	1%	3%	6%	9%	14%
2	3%	0%	5%	4%	0%	1%	1%	3%	4%	4%	9%
3	4%	1%	7%	6%	0%	1%	3%	3%	3%	9%	11%
4	16%	9%	24%	18%	6%	6%	7%	20%	17%	24%	19%
5	14%	13%	15%	15%	7%	10%	9%	19%	14%	16%	11%
6	21%	22%	22%	19%	18%	22%	22%	23%	23%	19%	19%
7 – Strongly agree	37%	54%	19%	33%	69%	58%	56%	29%	33%	18%	17%

Chapter 3

10. How unified or divided does the United States feel today?

		Gender		Age					Race			
Unity in America	US Avg.	Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Very unified	3%	4%	2%	0%	2%	2%	6%	3%	2%	6%	4%	2%
Somewhat unified	6%	6%	6%	4%	4%	3%	8%	12%	4%	8%	11%	7%
Neither unified nor divided	11%	10%	12%	1%	4%	11%	19%	16%	7%	24%	18%	13%
Somewhat divided	25%	23%	26%	29%	26%	24%	23%	26%	24%	20%	29%	36%
Very divided	55%	57%	53%	66%	64%	60%	44%	43%	62%	42%	37%	42%

		Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
Unity in America	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Very unified	3%	5%	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%	5%	3%	6%	2%
Somewhat unified	6%	9%	5%	3%	3%	4%	4%	11%	2%	8%	0%
Neither unified nor divided	11%	13%	6%	10%	5%	3%	14%	24%	6%	6%	1%
Somewhat divided	25%	26%	26%	23%	20%	35%	22%	23%	28%	28%	14%
Very divided	55%	48%	61%	61%	71%	57%	59%	38%	62%	53%	83%

11. Thinking about the United States today, what qualities would you use to describe it? Please select up to four.

Qualities of US today	US Avg.	Gender		Age					Race			
		Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Humble	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	2%	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	2%
Polite	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	2%	3%	3%	1%	4%	2%	3%
Honest	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%
Global	6%	6%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%	8%	5%	4%	7%	11%
Traditional	4%	5%	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%	7%	3%	8%	7%	2%
Democratic	8%	8%	7%	10%	6%	6%	9%	12%	7%	10%	9%	8%
Hard-working	8%	9%	7%	12%	7%	6%	9%	9%	7%	10%	10%	11%
Tolerant	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	5%	3%	3%	5%	2%	5%
Independent	4%	4%	4%	6%	3%	4%	6%	3%	3%	6%	8%	11%
Fair	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	2%	5%	6%	3%
Green	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	6%	2%	1%	2%	2%
United	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	5%	4%	3%	4%	5%	6%
Compassionate	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%	3%	5%	5%	5%
Responsible	4%	5%	3%	6%	4%	3%	5%	6%	3%	6%	9%	8%
Christian	5%	5%	5%	8%	3%	3%	5%	7%	4%	5%	3%	5%
Chaotic	37%	34%	41%	38%	44%	38%	31%	31%	40%	29%	31%	38%
Politically correct	12%	16%	8%	17%	13%	15%	8%	10%	14%	4%	9%	7%
Racist	30%	25%	36%	30%	37%	29%	25%	27%	28%	43%	33%	35%
Sexist	14%	10%	17%	11%	15%	12%	14%	15%	13%	16%	16%	13%
Fascist	12%	13%	11%	9%	13%	14%	11%	10%	13%	9%	12%	11%
Lazy	21%	21%	21%	26%	23%	23%	18%	15%	25%	11%	11%	12%
Intolerant	31%	29%	34%	40%	40%	32%	23%	18%	33%	26%	25%	34%
Rigged	25%	28%	22%	25%	26%	27%	21%	25%	28%	15%	21%	16%
Divided	61%	57%	65%	73%	73%	67%	45%	49%	66%	51%	52%	48%
Weak	23%	21%	24%	24%	27%	24%	18%	17%	26%	14%	16%	15%
None of the above	7%	6%	8%	4%	3%	5%	12%	9%	5%	10%	11%	7%

		Party ID			Hidden Tribes							
Qualities of US today	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives	
Humble	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	4%	0%	2%	0%	
Polite	2%	2%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	4%	0%	2%	0%	
Honest	2%	3%	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%	5%	1%	3%	0%	
Global	6%	6%	5%	6%	3%	8%	3%	6%	5%	6%	6%	
Traditional	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%	2%	5%	5%	5%	5%	2%	
Democratic	8%	10%	9%	4%	2%	4%	5%	10%	10%	10%	2%	
Hard-working	8%	10%	7%	7%	7%	11%	4%	8%	6%	13%	2%	
Tolerant	3%	3%	4%	3%	1%	2%	1%	4%	4%	6%	1%	
Independent	4%	7%	2%	4%	2%	5%	5%	6%	3%	5%	0%	
Fair	3%	4%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	6%	2%	4%	1%	
Green	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	4%	2%	1%	1%	
United	3%	5%	3%	2%	0%	1%	1%	6%	2%	5%	1%	
Compassionate	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%	
Responsible	4%	6%	4%	3%	1%	1%	2%	7%	2%	7%	4%	
Christian	5%	5%	5%	4%	8%	3%	5%	5%	3%	5%	2%	
Chaotic	37%	34%	43%	38%	36%	46%	45%	25%	44%	40%	46%	
Politically correct	12%	3%	19%	17%	0%	9%	6%	9%	17%	20%	31%	
Racist	30%	48%	13%	24%	69%	51%	47%	19%	30%	13%	8%	
Sexist	14%	23%	4%	10%	38%	24%	25%	8%	9%	4%	2%	
Fascist	12%	12%	10%	12%	27%	14%	18%	7%	8%	8%	18%	
Lazy	21%	11%	35%	21%	4%	10%	11%	17%	34%	31%	43%	
Intolerant	31%	36%	25%	34%	55%	55%	37%	17%	32%	24%	32%	
Rigged	25%	16%	29%	31%	33%	19%	24%	17%	24%	29%	44%	
Divided	61%	60%	65%	64%	74%	78%	70%	37%	73%	63%	80%	
Weak	23%	10%	38%	25%	5%	8%	16%	19%	31%	35%	52%	
None of the above	7%	5%	5%	8%	1%	2%	6%	16%	2%	4%	1%	

12. How much do each of the following phrases or words apply to Republican voters?

	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	7%	2%	1%
2	3%	3%	2%
3	6%	2%	4%
4	9%	12%	5%
5	13%	16%	15%
6	17%	21%	26%
Strongly applies 7	44%	45%	47%

	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	44%	36%	51%
2	20%	36%	29%
3	13%	17%	12%
4	12%	6%	7%
5	5%	1%	0%
6	4%	2%	0%
Strongly applies 7	3%	1%	0%

	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	3%	1%	1%
2	3%	3%	2%
3	4%	8%	3%
4	12%	15%	8%
5	17%	19%	22%
6	19%	21%	25%
Strongly applies 7	42%	32%	40%

	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	41%	30%	38%
2	14%	19%	22%
3	17%	28%	20%
4	17%	16%	19%
5	4%	7%	0%
6	5%	1%	0%
Strongly applies 7	3%	0%	1%

	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	4%	0%	1%
2	6%	1%	2%
3	5%	7%	4%
4	11%	16%	10%
5	17%	26%	21%
6	18%	22%	25%
Strongly applies 7	39%	29%	38%

	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	43%	36%	48%
2	19%	28%	30%
3	13%	16%	12%
4	14%	18%	8%
5	5%	2%	1%
6	4%	2%	1%
Strongly applies 7	2%	0%	0%

Humble	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	51%	44%	57%
2	19%	26%	22%
3	12%	18%	12%
4	9%	9%	8%
5	3%	2%	0%
6	3%	0%	1%
Strongly applies 7	3%	1%	0%

Arrogant	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Dem	Ind	Progressive Activists
Does not apply at all 1	5%	0%	0%
2	3%	1%	1%
3	5%	5%	6%
4	8%	13%	12%
5	20%	22%	22%
6	17%	21%	17%
Strongly applies 7	42%	37%	42%

13. How much do each of the following phrases or words apply to Democratic voters?

Brainwashed	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	4%	8%	5%
2	2%	1%	0%
3	5%	3%	0%
4	14%	8%	6%
5	13%	15%	12%
6	13%	10%	9%
Strongly applies 7	49%	55%	67%

Reasonable	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	45%	49%	62%
2	19%	21%	25%
3	15%	16%	7%
4	13%	10%	5%
5	3%	1%	0%
6	2%	2%	0%
Strongly applies 7	3%	2%	2%

Hateful	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	5%	9%	6%
2	3%	5%	3%
3	6%	6%	1%
4	12%	10%	3%
5	15%	15%	8%
6	17%	13%	22%
Strongly applies 7	40%	42%	56%

Honest	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	43%	44%	61%
2	18%	12%	21%
3	13%	13%	6%
4	17%	22%	12%
5	3%	5%	1%
6	2%	3%	0%
Strongly applies 7	3%	1%	0%

Racist	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	5%	8%	4%
2	9%	6%	2%
3	9%	4%	8%
4	21%	16%	10%
5	10%	18%	12%
6	12%	14%	17%
Strongly applies 7	33%	34%	47%

Caring	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	36%	41%	51%
2	20%	11%	19%
3	15%	13%	11%
4	18%	23%	13%
5	6%	7%	3%
6	2%	2%	0%
Strongly applies 7	3%	3%	3%

Humble	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	50%	65%	71%
2	16%	17%	16%
3	17%	8%	5%
4	12%	8%	8%
5	2%	0%	0%
6	2%	0%	0%
Strongly applies 7	2%	2%	0%

Arrogant	Party ID		Hidden Tribes
	Rep	Ind	Devoted Conservatives
Does not apply at all 1	4%	7%	7%
2	2%	2%	0%
3	4%	3%	3%
4	9%	12%	7%
5	17%	10%	9%
6	19%	17%	17%
Strongly applies 7	44%	49%	56%

14. I trust education officials in my state to be politically neutral in how they design the curriculum.

		Gender		Age					Race			
Trust education officials	US Avg.	Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Strongly disagree 1	27%	28%	25%	21%	32%	30%	20%	24%	28%	24%	20%	28%
2	9%	9%	9%	16%	12%	6%	8%	8%	10%	10%	7%	7%
3	11%	13%	10%	15%	11%	11%	11%	11%	12%	7%	10%	15%
4	13%	11%	15%	12%	10%	13%	16%	14%	13%	17%	11%	4%
5	12%	12%	11%	11%	11%	13%	12%	13%	11%	9%	14%	17%
6	10%	10%	9%	10%	9%	10%	10%	9%	9%	11%	10%	11%
Strongly agree 7	9%	10%	8%	12%	10%	7%	9%	5%	9%	7%	11%	10%
Don't know	10%	6%	13%	4%	5%	9%	15%	16%	7%	17%	15%	10%

		Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
Trust education officials	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Strongly disagree 1	27%	17%	31%	34%	23%	17%	27%	21%	33%	29%	52%
2	9%	7%	12%	10%	12%	7%	12%	8%	10%	7%	12%
3	11%	11%	14%	11%	14%	15%	11%	7%	14%	13%	9%
4	13%	16%	12%	11%	11%	17%	14%	12%	12%	15%	5%
5	12%	15%	10%	8%	9%	17%	8%	13%	12%	13%	8%
6	10%	15%	7%	7%	17%	13%	9%	9%	7%	8%	4%
Strongly agree 7	9%	9%	9%	9%	5%	9%	5%	11%	8%	11%	7%
Don't know	10%	10%	6%	10%	9%	4%	13%	18%	5%	5%	2%

15. How unified or divided does the United States feel today on the topic of U.S. history?

		Gender		Age					Race			
Division: history	US Avg.	Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Very unified	3%	5%	2%	1%	1%	2%	8%	3%	4%	3%	3%	4%
Somewhat unified	6%	8%	5%	7%	5%	5%	8%	10%	6%	8%	7%	12%
Neither unified nor divided	19%	17%	21%	11%	12%	20%	27%	24%	15%	28%	29%	22%
Somewhat divided	30%	30%	29%	44%	32%	29%	23%	34%	33%	19%	24%	28%
Very divided	41%	40%	43%	38%	50%	44%	34%	29%	43%	42%	36%	35%

		Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
Division: history	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Very unified	3%	5%	4%	1%	0%	0%	2%	7%	2%	5%	0%
Somewhat unified	6%	7%	8%	4%	0%	4%	2%	10%	6%	10%	3%
Neither unified nor divided	19%	19%	14%	21%	7%	9%	17%	36%	14%	15%	3%
Somewhat divided	30%	30%	30%	30%	33%	42%	29%	21%	33%	32%	32%
Very divided	41%	39%	45%	44%	59%	45%	50%	26%	45%	39%	61%

16. Most public schools in America are doing their best to teach American history accurately, without an agenda or bias.

		Gender		Age					Race			
Teaching history	US Avg.	Male	Female	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
Strongly disagree	31%	35%	28%	38%	36%	35%	24%	23%	32%	28%	26%	32%
Somewhat disagree	28%	25%	31%	34%	25%	22%	32%	33%	28%	29%	27%	26%
Somewhat agree	28%	25%	31%	23%	25%	30%	30%	31%	27%	28%	29%	31%
Strongly agree	13%	15%	11%	5%	14%	13%	14%	14%	12%	15%	18%	11%

		Party ID			Hidden Tribes						
Teaching history	US Avg.	Dem	Rep	Ind	Progressive Activists	Traditional Liberals	Passive Liberals	Politically Disengaged	Moderates	Traditional Conservatives	Devoted Conservatives
Strongly disagree	31%	16%	46%	36%	17%	9%	29%	27%	34%	43%	77%
Somewhat disagree	28%	28%	27%	27%	30%	29%	37%	27%	30%	22%	14%
Somewhat agree	28%	37%	19%	25%	32%	42%	26%	32%	21%	25%	9%
Strongly agree	13%	18%	8%	11%	21%	20%	8%	14%	15%	10%	0%

