

# Representation in Practice:

From text selection to  
classroom practice

(language, race and  
representation).





**What is it?**

**What types of text  
might it contain?**

**Who belongs here?**

**How would one of  
your Year 9  
students feel here?**





34.4%



of school students in England  
are not White British.

Fewer than

1%



of candidates for GCSE English  
Literature in 2019 answered a  
question on a novel by an author  
of colour. Broadening the range of  
available texts is necessary but  
not sufficient to change this.

(Elliott et al.,  
2021)



82% of youth survey respondents  
did not recall ever studying a text  
by a Black, Asian or minority  
ethnic author.

(Elliott et al.,  
2021)

# **Are any of these terms preferable?**

- **Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME).**
- **Ethnic Minority.**
- **People of Colour (POC) /Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC).**
- **Minoritised people.**
- **Global Ethnic Majority (GEM).**
- **People of the Global Majority.**

‘We already knew the phrase BAME was problematic. The acronym, constantly used as a noun, and constantly misused by people who are actually talking about a specific ethnicity. It groups all minoritised people who aren't the 86% white British together, often masking further inequalities faced by certain ethnic groups. Without any sense of uniformity, the acronym conflates both race and ethnicity, merging them as though they are the same. ‘Black’ focusing on racial physical characteristics and ‘Asian’ on ethnicity, with people identified through reference to a continent and thereby focussing on a geographical location. Then we have the term ‘minority ethnic’, or ‘ethnic minority’ which is tagged on the end to make sure the phrase includes everyone else that doesn't fit into the group of black or Asian.’ [https://www.womensequality.org.uk/from\\_bame\\_to\\_gem](https://www.womensequality.org.uk/from_bame_to_gem)

‘[...] the DfE’s new categories include a ‘Mixed’ group that combines one of the highest achieving groups (White/Asian students) alongside one of the lowest (White/Black Caribbean). Similarly, the lower average attainments and higher rates of exclusion experienced by Black Caribbean students are obscured by their being included in a general ‘Black’ group alongside Black African students.’ (Gillborn et al., 2016, p. 45).



The

*Culture*



Trap

*Ethnic Expectations and Unequal  
Schooling for Black Youth*

DERRON WALLACE



# People of the Global Majority

‘A collective term that speaks to and encourages non-White persons as belonging to the majority in the globe, referring to people who are racialized as Black, African, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the Global South and/or racialized as ‘ethnic minorities’. These groups currently represent approximately 80% of the world’s population.’



No more than 7% of  
candidates for GCSE English  
Literature in 2019 answered  
on a full length novel or  
play by a woman.

(Elliott et al.,  
2021)

70% of youth  
survey respondents,  
rising to 77% of  
Black, Asian or  
Minority Ethnic



youth survey respondents, agreed that  
diversity is part of British society and as such  
should be *represented* in the school curriculum.



The teaching profession in England is overwhelmingly White and there is evidence that teachers of English have even lower levels of ethnic ~~diversity~~

3/4 of teacher survey respondents had never been taught English by a Black, Asian or minority ethnic teacher.

12%

of secondary  
teacher

and

13%

of primary  
teacher

survey respondents had training on  
how to talk about race as part of  
their initial teacher training.

(Elliott et al.,  
2021)

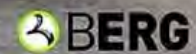


# SPACE INVADERS

Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place



NIRMAL PUWAR





Does this resonate in your subject?

When serving as Education Secretary, Michael Gove proposed that ‘our literature is the best in the world’ (Gove, 2010, n.p. in Elliott, 2020, p.28). Given that his list of this ‘best’ includes only White writers, it is clear what is meant by ‘our’ type of writers. The British self is taken as a *White* self. GEM students learn that ‘some bodies become understood as the rightful occupants of certain spaces’ (Ahmed, 2012, p. 2), and their stories will not be admitted into these spaces.

Ahmed, S. (2012). *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Duke University Press.

Elliott, V. (2020). *Knowledge in English: Canon, Curriculum and Cultural Literacy*. Routledge.

Does this relate to your subject?

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. considers education as ‘the teaching of an aesthetic and political order, in which no women and people of color’ can see the ‘representation of their images, or hear the resonances of their cultural voices.’ (Gates, 1990, p. 105).

Gates, H. (1990). ‘The Master’s Pieces: On Canon Formation and the African-American Tradition.’ *South Atlantic Quarterly* 89.

The stories that we tell in our subjects enable students to imagine and create a world. This might be one in which they feel at home. This is crucial because 'All [...] young people need to feel a sense of belonging, and understand their identities' (McIntosh et al, 2019, p. 4). Contrary to this, contemporary curriculums have led to the exclusion of global majority voices. The 'set of knowledges' formed historically by white thinkers, has 'gagged and disempowered' people of the global majority, making the site of writing and theorising 'forbidden territory' (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xxv).



