

MATTERS OF BELONGING

TEACHING RACE AND
IDENTITY
IN TUDOR AND STUART
ENGLAND



Introduction

Witber would you go? What country/ should give you harbour...?

This course material draws on the [TIDE project](#)'s Keywords essays to offer support for educators looking to teach migration, race, and identity, and to diversify their approaches to the National Curriculum. This mini course is concerned with how we incorporate a history of cross-cultural identities and a history of human mobility into the national story, drawing on material from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. It is our contention that this era is critical to understanding colonialism and its legacies. This was the time when the English first began to extend their authority over territories and peoples beyond the British Isles. Many of the ideas around civility, empire, citizenship, and race that underpinned subsequent colonial projects were first debated under the Tudors and Stuarts. As we explain below, each Reading Pack builds on several of our TIDE: Keywords essays, clustered in four themes: Belonging, Outsiders, Perceptions, and Empire.

About TIDE: Keywords

[TIDE: Keywords](#) began as an application of the twentieth-century scholar and critic Raymond Williams' *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976). Williams sought to trace changes in the way certain recurring words, such as 'imperialism' or 'racial', were used in English. Such words were not, Williams maintained, 'a neutral review of meanings', but 'an exploration of the vocabulary of a crucial area of social and cultural discussion, which has been inherited within precise historical and social conditions'. In an early modern context, locating and examining words pertaining to issues of identity and belonging reveal complex, often ambiguous discussions around human difference and categorization. As Williams recognized in his original list, these words are not neutral but highly charged, even today. They bring us into the realm of human rights, imperial legacies, statehood, and racial discrimination.

The TIDE team is currently preparing a revised edition of the Keywords for print publication with Amsterdam University Press. This will be available as a freely downloadable book by 2021. The current, pre-print version is freely available online at <http://www.tideproject.uk/keywords-home/>.

The Beacon Fellowship scheme and resources

The Beacon Fellowship scheme began as a collaboration between the TIDE project and the Runnymede Trust, the UK's leading race equality think tank. Our 12-week course, with a cohort of 12 secondary school teachers, first ran in Spring 2019. The fellowship offered training and professional development for teachers, with instructions in the best practice for teaching British migration and empire in schools. The discussion boards, online reading assignments, and archival masterclasses were intended as forums for mutual exchange and cross-institutional conversation between teachers, university researchers, and museum educators.

In summer 2019, TIDE and the Runnymede Trust produced a report on 'Teaching Belonging, Migration, and Empire in Secondary Schools' based on their research and conversations with teachers over the course of the Beacon Fellowship. This report was launched in parliament in July 2019, and has since become widely used on social media and among policy makers as a call to action. The report can be accessed here: <http://www.tideproject.uk/tide-runnymede-report/>

How to use the reading material

We believe that developing conversations in schools about migration and transcultural identities – including the possibilities of being a 'third thing', belonging neither to one culture or another, but a mixture of them based on personal experiencing and adaptation – is integral to understanding our history and who we are today. This seems particularly important given the rise in initiatives to 'decolonize' the curriculum, but also

with the recent pandemic that has seen many institutions necessarily make the difficult decision to close their doors to visitors. We hope these resources can assist teachers who face the task of moving their teaching to online platforms and devising alternatives to school trips to museums and historic properties to engage with issues of cultural heritage and identity.

In the Spring 2020 issue of *History Workshop Journal* on decolonizing the curriculum, scholars raised attention to the fact that diversifying approaches to English history cannot just include ‘tokenism or the barest diversification of reading lists and course themes’. Rather, ‘decolonizing history requires rigorous critical study of empire, power, and political contestation, alongside close reflection on constructed categories of social difference’. It is our belief that diving into the multifaceted ways in which key terms were debated in the early modern era can be a means of probing complex histories, concepts, preconceptions, and debates that came to play seminal roles in articulations of identity, rights, and power.

Each Reading Pack in this mini-course centres on one or more keywords, most of them terms of identification or categorization that offers a prism through which to explore key ideas around citizenship, belonging, and colonial/imperial legacies. Alongside the TIDE Keywords essays that address those specific terms, you will find a cluster of historical and literary excerpts, with brief explanatory headnotes. These can be used to spark conversations, open up debates, and prompt further activities or assignments. The aim is to help you to explore important concepts in a way that will allow you to modify or adapt the material to teach a range of other subjects, from the *Windrush* scandal to *Lord of the Flies*, as well as to revisit well-known topics such as the Tudors with new analytical frameworks.

Teaching the histories of empire and migration can be emotive, difficult, and highly political. Although we are not running a discussion board, we encourage you to take time to reflect on the weekly readings, and, where you feel comfortable, to share your thoughts and lessons with us. We welcome your input on how you might use TIDE: Keywords in your teaching, and we invite short blog entries (300-700 words) on how these resources have sparked new projects or approaches in your classroom and schools. An example can be found here:

<http://www.tideproject.uk/2019/07/01/arriving-at-an-enquiry-question-beacon-fellowship-blog/>.

Further reading:

- TIDE teaching resources, blogs, and links to academic research, www.tideproject.uk
- ‘Our Migration Stories’, <https://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/>
- Black Cultural Archives, <https://blackculturalarchives.org/>
- National Portrait Gallery, ‘People, Portrait and Places: Africa’, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/explore/by-country/africa>
- Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I’m No Longer Talking to White People about Race* (Bloomsbury, 2017)
- Onyeka Nubia, *England’s Other Countrymen: Blackness in Tudor Society* (Zed Books, 2019)
- David Olusoga, *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (Macmillan, 2016)
- Nikesh Shukla, *The Good Immigrant* (UK edition Unbound, 2016; US edition Dialogue Books, 2019)

Creative responses:

Keywords can be used alongside Tudor or Stuart portraits or museum objects to produce a range of creative responses to early modern visual and textual material, such as:

- Think about the life of an object, from its origins to its new function in England. What does it feel like to be transformed from a porcelain bowl to a sugar dish on display in a country house, or to be a leopard skin taken out of the jungle and turned into the lining of a nobleman’s cloak?

- Where do the thousands of pearls and gemstones in Tudor portraits come from – who sourced them? How would our stories and perspectives about English identities be different if we told stories about the hands of the producers and the makers, rather than the wearers? See the National Portrait Gallery’s ‘Global Tudors’ portraiture resource for ideas: <https://www.npg.org.uk/learning/schools-and-colleges/news#global-tudors>
- Use a historical document from the reading packs to write a story or poem that puts yourself in the place of the person mentioned with it. For inspiration, see TIDE’s first Visiting Writer, the award-winning poet and novelist Fred d’Aguiar’s interpretation of black lives in Elizabethan parish records in his recent poetry collection, *Translations from Memory* (Carcenet, 2018). Some additional teaching material is available here: <http://www.tideproject.uk/ks3-level-sample-teaching-resources/>

Reflect on your own backgrounds and beliefs, and use your knowledge of motifs and themes in Tudor portraiture to create your own portrait. How would you visually convey your sense of self, and what elements would be important for you to express?

- Take a non-English character from an Elizabethan play and write a scene, dialogue, or monologue from their perspective. You may choose characters who already have significant parts, such as Cleopatra or Othello, or lesser-known characters such as a lady-in-waiting, or an offhand mention of a person who never actually appears on stage. How might keywords like ‘foreigner’, ‘alien’, or ‘stranger’ function in the way such characters define themselves, manipulate perceptions of them, or indeed reject such categories for other ones?

Research for this publication was supported by the ERC TIDE Project (www.tideproject.uk). This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 681884).

