



FLATIRON
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You Sound Like a White Girl Reading Group Guide

Welcome to the Reading Group Guide for *You Sound Like a White Girl: The Case for Rejecting Assimilation*. Please note: In order to provide reading groups with the most informed and thought-provoking questions possible, it is necessary to reveal important aspects of this book. If you have not finished reading *You Sound Like a White Girl*, we respectfully suggest that you consider waiting before reviewing this guide.

1. *You Sound Like a White Girl* opens with a scenario of a runner facing an endless marathon and inhumane obstacles, all because of the way she looks, until one day she decides to walk off the track in hopes of achieving something closer to freedom. Can you recognize ways in which reality reflects this very scenario?
2. Julissa describes how a boy she had a crush on told her that she sounded like a white girl, and how she took it as a compliment because it made her feel secure (p. 3). How are immigrants forced to assimilate to American culture? How is this damaging to the way they live their lives?
3. Julissa talks about American exceptionalism and the ways in which immigrants adhere to it. What is American exceptionalism? How is it a lie? In what ways does this outdated idea tie back into the marathon scenario Julissa opened with?
4. Reflecting on all that she had to do to climb up the ladder as an undocumented immigrant in the United States, Julissa writes “When you are someone like me, you can’t get to the top without bending the rules because the rules are meant to keep you at the bottom” (p. 4). What “rules” is Julissa referring to? How do both systemic racism and white supremacy largely contribute to keeping certain people at the bottom?
5. Julissa describes how immigrants are often forced to shed their heritage and “Americanize.” In what ways are immigrants expected to “become white?” As

- much as they might “assimilate,” is it ever considered to be enough?
6. Recalling how she was exposed to the importance of whiteness, Julissa writes about how it’s often celebrated in every area of Mexican life and how the media shapes her family viewed themselves and those around (p. 16). In what ways does the media contribute to this? How does this tie back to colonization? How does the idea of whiteness infiltrate cultures beyond the one in the United States?
 7. Julissa notes how many conservative circles spread the rhetoric that if immigrants came into the country legally, America would welcome them with open arms (p. 39). How is this an illusion that is proved false by current immigration laws?
 8. Julissa discusses why she never got to renew her visa, writing “My parents’ financial situation had drastically changed, and to get a visa, one must not be poor” (p. 40). How does the United States make it increasingly difficult for immigrants to attain “legal” status? How does one’s socioeconomic status affect their chance of staying in the United States?
 9. When Julissa decides to let go of her white-girl voice, she is reminded by her Wall Street bosses that certain “colloquialisms” are not professional (p. 55). How does this very idea invalidate the way many people might communicate? Why is one deemed “acceptable” behavior while the other is not?
 10. Julissa highlights how Latinx representation in the mainstream media has been staggering low, and the little bit of representation usually reinforces stereotypes (p. 120). How does this affect the way people perceive Latinos? How does this affect the way Latinos view themselves?
 11. As Julissa advocates for change, she writes, “The systems of policing and immigration enforcement are so corrupt and so rooted in white supremacy that they are beyond reforming. They must be abolished” (p. 124). In what ways do you see law enforcement agencies fortify racist ideologies against BIPOC? How would abolishing these agencies positively change the way of life for BIPOC?
 12. In recognizing that white America puts artificial boundaries that define communities, Julissa writes, “There is only one way to be Latina, one way to be Black, but somehow many ways to be white” (p. 147). How can communities of color break such boundaries placed upon them?

13. Throughout the book, Julissa writes about the importance of learning truthful American history. How can revisionist history help us have a better understanding of America's story? What Latinx history, or history from your own community, do you want others to learn?
14. Toward the end of *You Sound Like a White Girl*, Julissa speaks about the importance of Latinx people reclaiming their culture (p. 166). What would this look like? In what ways are Latinx communities already their own saviors?
15. Julissa writes about the mistakes of movements of the past, but also the ways in which they came together. How can justice movements today work together to create a freer world?
16. Julissa writes, "Belonging is about acceptance, and for us, that means accepting our power" (p. 182). How will you accept your power?