

SYSTEMIC ACHE

Listen to the ROOM 2B podcast **SYSTEMIC ACHE** at mrreview.org and complete the following exercise. Be prepared to discuss with your classmates.

1. Explain what is meant by “systemic” racism.
2. Identify and explain how these social movements addressed systemic (or institutional) flaws found in our American culture:

Great Awakening
Second Great Awakening
Progressive Era
New Deal

3. Explain how the following institutions have imbedded inequalities, and what can be done to alleviate them?

Health Care
Education
Criminal Justice

4. Read the scenario below taken and answer the prompts that follow:

...The notion of “systemic racism,” once confined to academic and activist circles on the left of the spectrum, has become the phrase du jour, with Google searches for the term rising a hundredfold in a matter of months and mainstream conservatives like former President George W. Bush joining historically moderate Democrats like Joe Biden in embracing the term to call for a national reckoning.

This spreading recognition highlights an ever-starker dividing line in America. On one side, a growing majority of the country is increasingly ready to repudiate its history of structural racism. On the other, many of those in power, especially at the White House, are eager to deny it. This is no surprise. By definition, systemic racism is embedded deep and wide across American society and, therefore, can't easily be rectified. But, for many of those who have spent their lives fighting for racial justice, this is a moment of reckoning that has been a long time coming. “Not everything that is faced can be changed,” James Baldwin, the black author and activist wrote in the manuscript of his memoir *Remember This House*, “but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

...Systemic racism also found its way, more insidiously, into the institutions many Americans revere and seek to safe-guard. Established in the 1930s, Social Security helped ensure a stable old age for most Americans, but it initially excluded domestic and agricultural workers, leaving behind two-thirds of black Americans. Federal mortgage lending programs helped white Americans buy homes after World War II, but black Americans suffered from a shameful catch-22. Federal policy said that the very presence of a black resident in a neighborhood reduced the value of the homes there, effectively prohibiting African-American residents from borrowing money to buy a home. And sentencing laws of the past several decades meant that poor black Americans were thrown in prison for decades-long terms for consuming one type of cocaine while their wealthier white counterparts got a slap on the wrist for consuming another.

Excerpted from Justin Worland, *America's Long Overdue Awakening to Systemic Racism*, Time, June 11, 2020

- A. Describe the main idea or essential claim.
- B. In the context of the scenario, explain how the claim discussed in (A) can be affected by Congress, the President and the Courts.
- C. Explain how the Fourteenth Amendment gives the civil rights movement authority to act.