



Title: The Autobiography of Malcolm X

Author: Malcolm X

Imprint: Ballantine Books

Publisher: Random House Publishing Group

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ISBN: 9780345376718

Format: Paperback

BOOK RESUME: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X

BOOK SYNOPSIS

In the searing pages of this classic autobiography, originally published in 1964, Malcolm X, the Muslim leader, firebrand, and anti-integrationist, tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues of our own time. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* stands as the definitive statement of a movement and a man whose work was never completed but whose message is timeless. It is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand America.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

“The story of the late Malcolm X is more than the mere recollecting of events that shaped his life. It is a remarkable testimony of a man who experienced utter pathos as a child and a young man, but within a very few years transformed his life to impeccable piety.” —Miles J. Jackson Jr., *Library Journal*

“This book will have a permanent place in the literature of the Afro-American struggle.” —I. F. Stone

“A great book . . . Its dead level honesty, its passion, its exalted purpose, will make it stand as a monument to the most painful truth.” —The Nation

“Extraordinary . . . a brilliant, painful, important book.” —*The New York Times*

“Malcolm X’s autobiography seemed to offer something different. His repeated acts of self-creation spoke to me; the blunt poetry of his words, his unadorned insistence on respect, promised a new and uncompromising order, martial in its discipline, forged through sheer force of will.” —Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father*

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Penguin Random House

Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

“The most important book I’ll ever read, it changed the way I thought, it changed the way I acted. It has given me courage I didn’t know I had inside me. I’m one of hundreds of thousands whose lives were changed for the better.” —Spike Lee

“This book opened my eyes to so many things. It starts with Malcolm X’s early life and criminal activity, and his imprisonment and conversion to the ‘Nation of Islam’ while in prison. Then his rise to prominence as a fierce critic of racism and race relations in the America of the 1960s. Finally to his experience with true Islam and his Hajj, where he learns that race is not the defining factor he thought it was. It is a story of struggle and redemption. His tragic assassination in 1965 cut short a life that was just starting to open up to a whole new field of possibilities.”
—[Recommendation from an employee at the U.S. Embassy Bern for World Book Day 2020](#)

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- National Coalition Against Censorship, [“Top 10 Banned Books that Changed the Face of Black History”](#) (2015)
- *Business Insider*, [“39 Classic Books Every Modern Gentleman Should Read”](#) (2014)
- Library of Congress, [“Books that Shaped America, 1950-2000 National Book Festival Exhibit”](#) (2012)

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- American History TV C-SPAN, [“Malcolm X Interview \(1963\)”](#)
- History, [“The Explosive Chapter Left Out of Malcolm X’s Autobiography”](#) (2023)
- National Coalition Against Censorship, [“5 Books They Don’t Want You Reading: Black History Month Edition”](#) (2013)
- *The New York Times*, [“Alex Haley Taught America About Race – and a Young Man How to Write”](#) (2021)
- PBS American Experience, [“The Autobiography of Malcolm X”](#)
- Penguin Random House, [Teaching Guide](#) (includes teaching ideas, discussion and writing, and activities)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

- [The Censorship Files](#)
 - “Due to its controversial tones and ideas, the movement to ban the book grew. Indeed, one of the most debated

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topics in schools was whether or not the book should be used in the curriculum. Marilyn Maxwell and Marlene Berman discuss this situation in their article 'To Ban or Not to Ban: Confronting the Issue of Censorship in the English Class.' In the article they express the notion that school boards often censor works, removing controversial texts to create and establish a conformity of ideas (92). While this conformity helps to foster harmony, it may not allow the students to grow in their own opinions and develop strong independent arguments. Thus, Berman and Maxwell created 'The Book Banning Project' to examine the use of books such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *The World According to Garp* by John Irving. They found that students found reading these books to be a meaningful experience (Berman and Maxwell 96)."

- "Opponents of the book's censorship argue that these concerns need to be raised in the classroom, not just once or twice, but often. In his article, 'Autobiography of Malcolm X Imparts Important Lessons About Teaching and Learning,' Eugene Gallagher argues for the educational value of the book. He mentions a passage in the book where the teacher tells Malcolm that his aspiration to be a lawyer was no suitable goal for a black man (Gallagher). Gallagher acknowledges that Malcolm was intimately familiar with the power of teachers to have a huge impact in the lives of their students, including negatively deterring them from reaching their potential (Gallagher)."
- Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center School of Law. "[Banning the Caged Bird: Prison Censorship Across America](#)" (2021): "Prisons throughout the country have banned books relating to racial justice, prisoner rights, and civil rights. Banning books such as *The New Jim Crow*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* are unlikely to withstand the Turner test. Courts have consistently struck down prison bans on books touching upon racial topics, including texts advocating racial supremacy, as long as they do not advocate violence."

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