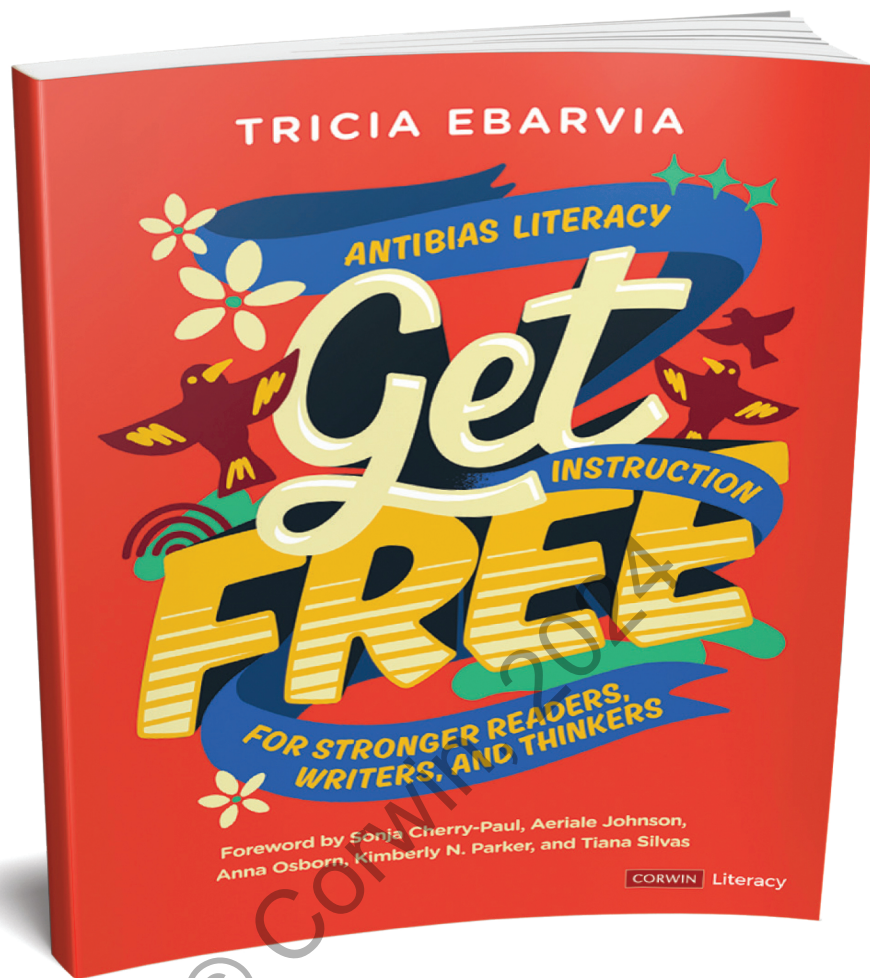


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Study Guide

Please enjoy this complimentary study guide for Tricia Ebarvia's **Get Free**.

Study guide written by Jessyca Mathews

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the study guide for *Get Free: Antibias Literacy Instruction for Stronger Readers, Writers, and Thinkers* by Tricia Ebarvia! Whether you're embarking on this journey as part of a classroom assignment, a book club, or simply for personal enrichment, I am thrilled to have you join the many educators exploring freedom in education by reading this book.

Before diving into *Get Free's* content, you should approach this guide at your own pace and fully immerse yourself in the experience. This isn't about rushing through pages or meeting deadlines; it's about embracing the ideas presented by Tricia Ebarvia and allowing them to resonate with you in your own time.

Get Free isn't just a book; it's a call to action.

It challenges us to engage in brave conversations and to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and advocacy in our educational spaces. Through this guide, I hope to push the boundaries of traditional learning and encourage you to challenge the status quo in pursuit of liberation for all students in all spaces.

So, take a deep breath as a mindfulness pause, grab your copy of *Get Free*, and let's embark on this transformative journey together. Get ready to explore new perspectives, confront uncomfortable truths, and emerge with a renewed commitment to creating equitable and empowering educational environments for all.

As bell hooks once said, "The classroom remains the most radical space for possibility in the academy." Let's all work toward freedom in education.

—**Jessyca Mathews**, award-winning teacher and activist



Introduction: Get Free . . . Get Free . . . Get Free . . .

“To be effective as a liberation worker—that is, one who is committed to changing systems and institutions characterized by oppression to create greater equity and social justice—a crucial step is the development of a liberatory consciousness.”

—Dr. Barbara Love

Visual suggestion before discussion: Watch or listen to the classic hit by Nina Simone, [I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free](#). Write down a list of people in education who you believe are not free in this space.

On page 5 of the Introduction, Tricia explains that she asked students to define what being free means to them. In thinking about educational freedom, what holds kids back from feeling free at school? What roadblocks are preventing those in marginalized groups to feel truly free at school?

1. On page 9 of the Introduction, Tricia poses an important focal point before beginning this work. She writes, “Are we—through our reading and nonreading, through our actions and inactions—socialized into people who care about others or who care only about ourselves?” Take an inventory of the reading done by the group in attendance. What books are you teaching? Reading? What voices are missing from your classrooms? Are you a community that shows care for one another or a space that is focused on the care of just oneself?
2. What does it mean to “be free”? What resources are available for you and your fellow educators to help students feel liberated? Does your curriculum reflect this message to others who are outside your community?
3. Take a look at “A Note on Artwork.” Here, we see important cultural symbolism attached to the key areas we will explore in reading *Get Free*. Tricia shares with us important symbols from her Philippine upbringing and culture. Take a moment to think about the symbols on the topics the author has chosen to focus on. Think about your own cultural symbols and experiences. The focus areas are:

Ourselves	Community	Identity
Conversation	Reading	Perspectives



Chapter 1: Starting With Ourselves

Visual suggestion before discussion: Have attendees watch/listen to [Amazing Grace—Your WHY Gives Your WHAT More Impact](#) by Jonathan Schlenger, a comedian and public speaker. Tricia states in Chapter 1 that “teaching is an intensely human activity (14).” After watching, take a moment to write down how your WHY gives your WHAT more impact.

1. Delve into the moral dilemmas presented in “Dangerous Discussions: Voice and Power in My Classroom” by featured educator Ursula Wolfe-Rocca (15). After the discussion of graffiti at her school turned into a racially charged discussion, she realized she hadn’t thought of all the dynamics of what could be discussed before having this moment with her students. How do you as a teacher confront ethical challenges in pursuing freedom in your classrooms and spaces? Have you made mistakes like Ursula’s? What do you wish you would have done?
2. Analyze the role of storytelling in Chapter 1. How does Tricia use narratives within the narrative to convey different perspectives on freedom, and what impact does storytelling have on the book’s overall message?
3. Teacher bias is a major problem within education. Think about your curriculum. Why do kids struggle with certain topics or texts? What steps has your community taken to help those students? Is there a “classic” or “canon” text that students are required to read but don’t always connect with? What steps can you and your staff take to break the curse of teacher bias in areas discussed in this chapter, such as curse of knowledge, nostalgia, anchoring, and in-group bias?
4. Have members of your discussion group do a privilege checklist. Consider using the terms mentioned on page 38. After finishing your privilege checklist, answer the following questions:
 - a. Reflecting on your completed privilege checklist, which aspects of your identity or background do you perceive as providing you with certain societal advantages or opportunities?
 - b. Were there any items on the privilege checklist that you initially didn’t consider privileges, but upon further reflection, you now recognize as such? If so, can you describe your thought process in realizing this?
 - c. How do you plan to use the insights gained from completing this privilege checklist to promote equity and inclusivity in your personal and professional interactions?
 - d. In what ways might acknowledging and addressing your own privileges impact your understanding of systemic inequalities and contribute to creating a more just and fair society?
 - e. Considering the outcomes of this privilege checklist exercise, what steps do you envision taking to continue learning about privilege and actively engaging in efforts to dismantle oppressive structures in your community?



Chapter 2: Creating Brave Spaces

Visual suggestion before discussion: Have attendees watch [Why Black Girls are Targeted for Punishment at School—and How to Change That](#) by Monique W. Morris, an author, social justice scholar, and co-founder of the National Black Women’s Justice Institute. Monique asks, “What does it mean for a school to be a location of healing?” In what areas does your educational community struggle to provide a brave space for healing? How can these issues be addressed?

1. How does Tricia explore the concept of being brave, and what examples of anecdotes stand out to you in illustrating this theme? In what areas can you focus on being brave in your educational space?
2. Analyze the role of personal stories provided in this section. How does Tricia depict the student impact of having opportunities to share their personal stories within your learning space? What insights do the personal examples shared in this section help you in reimagining your educational systems? What limitations are there to sharing personal stories in a creative fashion in your educational space?
3. Throughout the first two chapters, there is a heavy focus on the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop’s work with Liberatory Consciousness. In the first steps of Dr. Bishop’s work, there is a focus on awareness. She says that we must have the “capacity to notice, to give attention to our daily lives, our language, our behaviors or even our thoughts.” How do you need to build your awareness on issues in your community, your school, and in the world? Where do you need to put more awareness in the lives of your students?
4. After reading Chapter 2, make a list indicating how many times you have intentionally created a space that puts students at the core of choices made in the curriculum. How can you feature various cultures, holidays, and celebrations in your educational space?



Chapter 3: Unpacking Multitudes

Visual suggestion before discussion: Read some poems on intersectionality on [Hello Poetry](#). What do you notice in these poems? What do you notice about how the writers process identity?

1. How can your educational community use poetry and children's books to help students express their thoughts and emotions, especially those related to the social justice issues they face in their own communities?
2. What specific passages or techniques presented in this chapter particularly resonated with you?
3. Create a lesson for your students that incorporates intersectionality. Reflect back on the examples presented in this chapter for ideas on how to celebrate the many identities of your students.
4. Examine the intersectionality of identities. How does Tricia explore the complexities of freedom concerning race, gender, and other social identities within education?
5. Create a plan to discuss with colleagues and community members how to make decisions focused on intersectionality within your educational community. Where can you begin? What reservations do you have in making this educational shift?



Chapter 4: Listening and Speaking

Visual suggestion before discussion: Take a look at this [political cartoon](#) by Patrick Lamontagne. How does this cartoon reflect the current atmosphere in education? Who could the individuals in this cartoon represent?

1. Examine the role of communication in your educational community. How can you use language to support and affirm various identities within your educational space. How can you advocate for their freedom?
2. Explore the notion of personal agency. How do you navigate your paths toward freedom, and what lessons can you draw from your experiences?
3. Analyze the role of storytelling in this chapter. How does Tricia use narratives within the chapter to convey different perspectives on freedom? What impact does storytelling have on the book's overall message?
4. Think about a time you didn't listen to a student. Reflect on the mistakes you made in this situation. What do you wish you would have done? How could you have been a better listener? Did this chapter change how you think about listening to others, and if so, how?



Chapter 5: Rethinking Reading

Visual suggestion before discussion: Study and reflect on the [infographic “Diversity in Children’s Books 2018”](#) that was created to show the importance of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop’s concept of Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors (via The Huffington Post). What do you notice? What do you wonder? How does it reflect the issues in your educational space?

1. Dr. Barbara J. Love explains that the second step in Liberatory Consciousness is Analysis, which means it’s time to think about your reading. Walter Mosley once said, “A man’s bookcase will tell you everything you’ll ever need to know about him.” Think about your book collection inside and outside of school. What does your bookcase say about you?
2. Dr. Bishop explains to us that students need “windows, mirrors, and sliding doors.” Are you providing students with readings where they see themselves? Who is and is not represented in your classroom/ educational space?
3. How do the books in your school library reflect your school’s systemic structures. How does student access to books written by and for marginalized groups reflect institutional barriers in your school? What insights does Tricia offer on dismantling or reforming such barriers?
4. Explore the concept of reading allyship. How can educators around the country support one another in their quest to provide reading freedom for students?



Chapter 6: Perspective-Taking and Perspective-Bending

Visual suggestion before discussion: If you have a copy, read the children's book *Big* by Vashti Harrison. Reflect on the images, words, and themes, paying careful attention to how the little girl pushes beyond the boundaries and barriers that others use against her. How does Harrison's picture book help us think about the importance of perspective-taking, perspective-bending, and ultimately, the importance and necessity of resistance?

1. Explore the theme of resistance. What barriers do we as educators face in doing our work? How can we resist oppressive forces and what strategies or tactics should we employ in this resistance?
2. Reflect on your emotional journey as you read *Get Free*. How did your emotional experiences in reading this book contribute to your understanding of Tricia's ideas? What are the emotional tolls of doing the work presented in *Get Free*?
3. Discuss the importance of community. How can you build and rely on community members to navigate the specific challenges presented in this book? How does your notion of community change as you think about your city, state, country, and the world?
4. Reflect on the title of the book *Get Free*. What interpretations can be drawn from these two words? How does the title encapsulate the central themes and messages of the book?
5. Reflect on the educational reforms proposed by Tricia. Do you agree with her suggestions? How might these changes positively impact your educational community? In what areas do you disagree with her suggestions?
6. Reflect on the concept of empowerment. How can students find strength and agency in adversity? How can you empower teachers, educators, and leaders in your community?



Final Personal Reflections

1. As Tricia points out in the Introduction, “lesson suggestions and classroom experiences [shared in the book] build on each other” (12). Many of the reflections, practices, structures, and strategies shared in the beginning of the book provide scaffolding for later work she suggests. Review the book chapter-by-chapter using the table below. How can you build a progression of instruction from chapter-to-chapter? How does this progression support student learning, especially around challenging topics or texts?

CHAPTER	REFLECTION / STRATEGY / PRACTICE	WHEN CAN I USE THIS? (TIMING)	WHY THIS? HOW CAN THIS HELP STUDENTS? WHAT DO I HOPE STUDENTS WILL LEARN? (OUTCOME)
Introduction			
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

2. Consider the student examples and artifacts shown in this book. Which ones resonate with you? Which ones inspire you to rethink elements of your classroom?
3. Consider the recurring motifs in the book. Which specific themes appear throughout the book, and what significance do they hold in shaping the overall message of *Get Free*?
4. Connect the themes of *Get Free* to current events or contemporary social issues. How do the book’s messages relate to today’s current challenges and discussions, in your hometown or around the world?

