



DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Hate U Give

“[A] page turner brimming with pop culture references and humor...I marveled at the balancing act between dead-serious politics and concerns familiar to kids and former kids of all backgrounds. ...[T]here's plenty for readers of all ages to enjoy.”

Marjorie Ingall - New York Times Book Review

Summary

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends.

The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of a police officer. Khalil was unarmed.

Soon afterward, his death is a national headline. Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Protesters are taking to the streets in Khalil's name. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family.

What everyone wants to know is: what **really** went down that night? And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr.

But what Starr does—or does not—say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life.

(From the publisher.)

Angie Thomas

- Birth—ca. 1987-88
- Where—Jackson, Mississippi, USA
- Education—B.F.A., Belhaven University
- Awards—Walter Dean Myers Grant
- Currently—lives in Jackson, Mississippi

Angie Thomas is an African-American author and former teen rapper. Her debut novel, *The Hate U Give*, whose manuscript was the object of a 13-publishing-house bidding war, was released in 2016 by a HarperCollins young adult imprint. The book has received wide acclaim, starred reviews, and considered required reading by the *New York Times* and *Entertainment Weekly*.

Thomas was raised, and still lives, in Jackson, Mississippi. From a young age, she was enthralled by stories and books. At the age of six, while out riding her bike, she was nearly trapped in the middle of gun fire. After that frightening experience, Angie turned to books and escaped into another world, soon

using her own imagination to tell and write stories. Knowing budding talent when she saw it, her third grade teacher asked Angie to read one of her stories to the class every Friday after lunchtime.

Several years on, Thomas became a teen rapper—a proud achievement was a feature article about her in *Right-On* magazine. Thomas went on to graduate from Belhaven University where she studied creative writing. She won the very first Walter Dean Myers Grant, awarded in 2015 by We Need Diverse Books. (*Adapted from various online sources, including the [author's website](#).*)

Discussion Questions

1. As Starr and Khalil listen to Tupac, Khalil explains what Tupac said "Thug Life" meant. Discuss the meaning of the term "Thug Life" as an acronym and why the author might have chosen part of this as the title of the book. In what ways do you see this in society today? (*Chapter 1, p. 17*)
2. Chapter 2 begins with Starr flashing back to two talks her parents had with her when she was young. One was about sex ("the usual birds and bees"). The second was about what precautions to take when encountering a police officer (*Chapter 2, p. 20*). Have you had a similar conversation about what to do when stopped by the police? Reflect upon or imagine this conversation.
3. Thomas frequently uses motifs of silence and voice throughout the book. Find instances in the book where silence or voice and speech are noted, and talk about the author's possible intentions for emphasizing these motifs.
4. At the police station after Starr details the events leading up to the shooting, the detective shifts her focus to Khalil's past. Why do you think the detective did this? Discuss Starr's reaction to this "bait" (*Chapter 6, pp. 102–103*).
5. Once news of Khalil's shooting spreads across the neighborhood, unrest arises: "Sirens wail outside. The news shows three patrol cars that have been set ablaze at the police precinct.... A gas station near the freeway gets looted.... My neighborhood is a war zone" (*Chapter 9, pp. 136–139*). Respond to this development and describe some parallels to current events.
6. How do you think Starr would define family? What about Seven? How do you define it?
7. Chris and Starr have a breakthrough in their relationship—Starr admits to him that she was in the car with Khalil and shares the memories of Natasha's murder (*Chapter 17, pp. 298–302*). Discuss why Starr's admission and releasing of this burden to Chris is significant. Explore the practice of "code switching" and discuss how you might code switch in different circumstances in your own life.
8. How and why does the neighborhood react to the grand jury's decision (*Chapter 23*)? How does Starr use her voice as a weapon, and why does she feel that it is vital that she does? Refer back to "Thug Life" and discuss how the acronym resonates in this chapter.
9. Starr pledges to "never be quiet" (*Chapter 26, p. 444*). After reading this book, how can you use your voice to promote and advance social justice? Reflect on how you and your community discuss and address inequality.
(*Questions issued by publishers.*)

SOURCE: LitLovers.com