



## Questions and Topics for Discussion

### Between the World and Me by Ts-Nehisi Coates

For a printable copy of these questions, visit: [beclibrary.org/book-discussion-questions](http://beclibrary.org/book-discussion-questions)

1. How would you describe the overall tone of *Between the World and Me*? What emotions are expressed by Coates in his writing — and what emotions did you feel while reading it?
2. Discuss the title of the book and what Coates may have meant by it.
3. The book is written in the form of a letter from Coates to his 15-year-old son, Samori. Why do you think Coates chose to structure the book in this way? How did this format affect your reading?
4. The book was written in 2015, shortly after the police officer responsible for the death of Michael Brown was exonerated of charges. What comparisons can you draw between that time and now? What has changed since then?
5. One broad concept that Coates introduces is that of “the Dream” and “Dreamers.” What do you understand these terms to mean?
6. Why does Coates argue that he and other Black people are cut off from “the Dream”?
7. There are three clear instances in the book where Coates fears for his life: After witnessing a young man draw a gun in Baltimore, when he’s pulled over by a cop in Prince George’s County, and when a stranger threatens to have him arrested at a New York movie theater. What common threads underlie these encounters?
8. Discuss Coates’s definition of race, and how it relates to racism.
9. We hear about the life of Prince Jones in part III when Coates speaks to Prince’s mother. In what ways are the experiences of these two men different — and in what ways are they similar?
10. Books are of the highest importance to Coates. How does Coates’s relationship with books contrast with his attitude toward the classroom?
11. How does Coates’s passion for books and writing influence his final advice for Samori?
12. What surprised you most about the book? What will you take with you after reading it?

Do you have a good question to add to this list? Contact: [reference@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:reference@blueearthcountymn.gov)