



Easy Read Edition

What Is Structural Racism?

Part 5: Structural Racism
is still with us

Structural Racism is Still With Us



A lot of the examples we gave happened in the past.



A lot of people fought against racism in America.



Most of the people fighting racism were people of color.



People marched, and organized boycotts, and refused to follow racist laws.



A lot of people fighting racism were arrested and violently attacked by police.



A lot of people fighting racism were threatened and attacked by people who wanted to keep white supremacy.



A lot of people fighting racism were even killed.



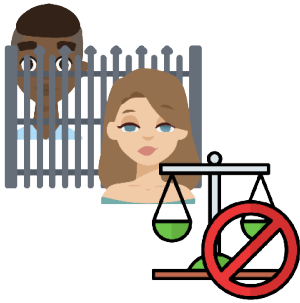
After a long time, people changed the laws.



There are new laws now.



There are new ways people should do things.



Segregation isn't legal anymore.



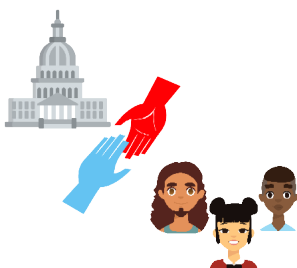
It's illegal to make rules to keep people of color from buying homes.



It's illegal for jobs to discriminate against people of color.

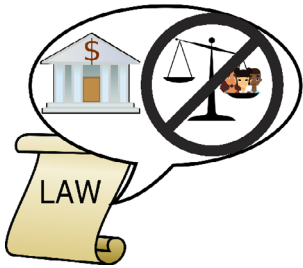


It's illegal to ban people of color from coming to the US.

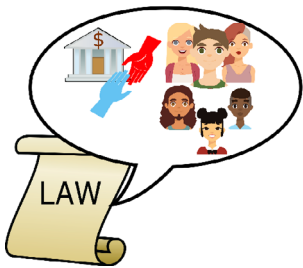


The government isn't supposed to leave out people of color when it helps people.

For example:



A new law said banks couldn't use racist rules to help people buy homes.



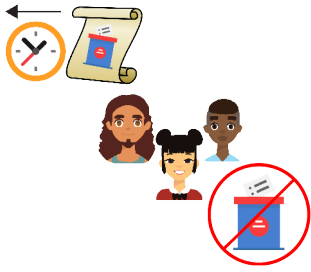
Banks had to help both white people and people of color buy homes.



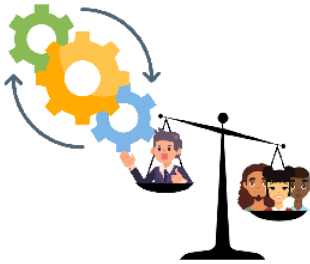
Another example is the Voting Rights Act.



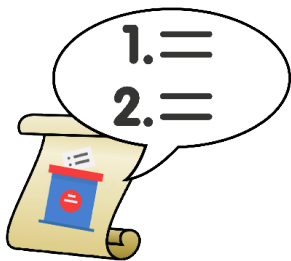
The Voting Rights Act passed in 1965.



Before 1965, many people of color could not vote.



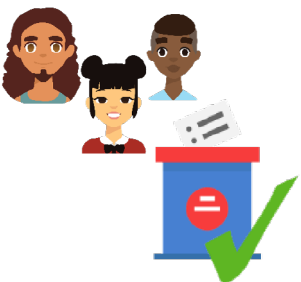
This is structural racism.



The Voting Rights Act made a lot of new rules to make sure people of color could vote.



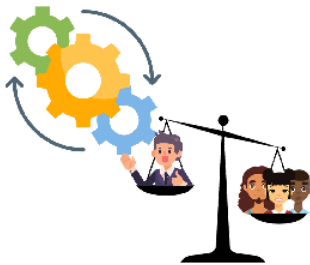
Many people of color fought for these changes.



Now, many more people of color can vote.



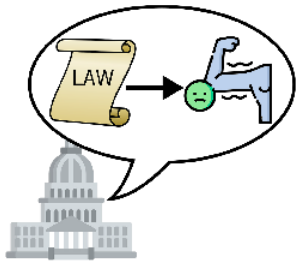
But these new laws didn't mean everything was equal.



Structural racism still exists.



There are a few reasons why.



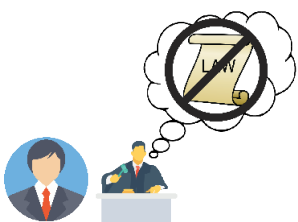
Sometimes, a new law bans discrimination, but then the government makes that law weaker.



Sometimes judges and lawmakers think the problem went away.



They decide the law doesn't need to be as strong anymore.



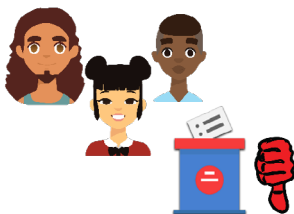
They might even decide that nobody needs the law anymore.



For example, the Supreme Court decided that people didn't need parts of the Voting Rights Act anymore.



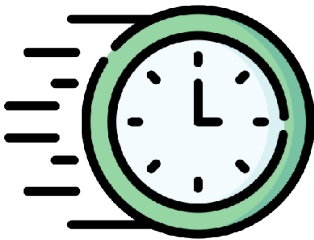
They decided that some of the rules of the Voting Rights Act should go away.



This meant that places could make it harder for people of color to vote.



And that is what happened.



A lot of places did this right away.



We still need the Voting Rights Act,
because racism never went away.



Sometimes, laws ban discrimination.



But structural racism continues anyway.

Here is how:



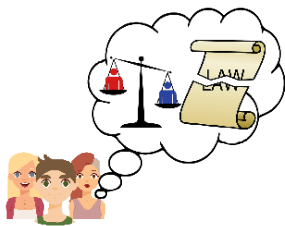
Sometimes, people refuse to follow the law.



For example, a new law said it was illegal to discriminate in housing.



But a lot of white people didn't want to sell or rent homes to people of color.



So they broke the law and discriminated anyway.



A lot of banks still didn't want to lend to people of color, even though it is illegal.



So they kept doing it.



When this happens, the government is supposed to stop them.



The government is supposed to punish people who break these laws.



But sometimes it doesn't.



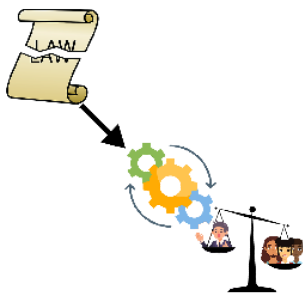
Sometimes the people in charge of the government don't want to stop these things at all.



Sometimes the people who are supposed to stop them don't have enough money.



Sometimes they think it is too hard to prove someone broke the law.



If the new law isn't followed, then structural racism keeps happening.

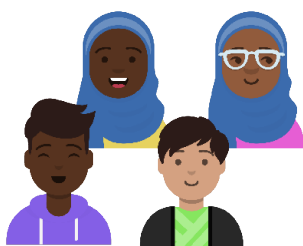


Sometimes people are allowed to discriminate if they don't say they are discriminating.

For example:



President Trump banned people from certain countries from coming to the US.



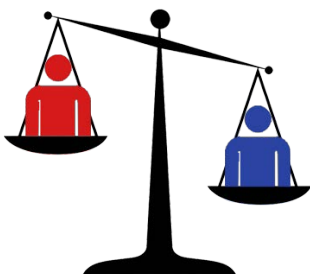
These countries were places where mostly Muslim people lived.



They were countries where mostly people of color lived.

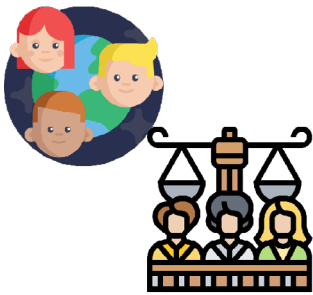


The new order does not say that people from these countries are banned because they are Muslim.



So President Trump was allowed to discriminate.

Here is another example:



The law says everyone has a right to serve on a jury.



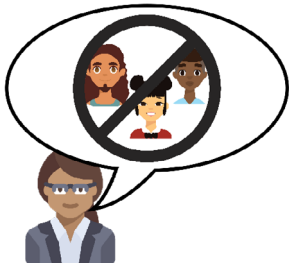
A jury is the part of the court that decides if someone broke the law and how much they should be punished.



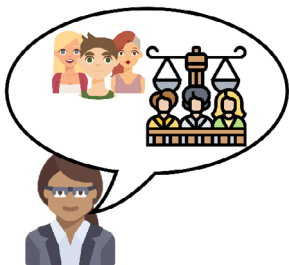
Every citizen can be asked to be part of a jury.



After people are called for jury duty, the lawyers in a case get to pick who will be on the jury for that case.



But a lot of times lawyers did not want to let people of color on juries.



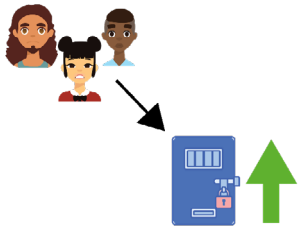
Some lawyers think that it is easier to have only white juries.



White people are more likely to say that people of color broke the law.



White people are also more likely to say that white people accused of racism did not break the law.



This is one reason why more people of color get sent to prison.



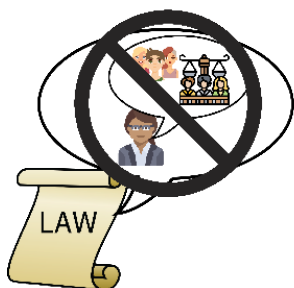
This is unfair.



It is racist.



The law says lawyers could not do this.



The law said lawyers could not keep people out of juries because of their race.



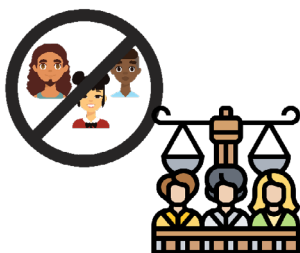
But lawyers could use any other reason.



So instead, lawyers use things like how people dress or talk, or what neighborhood they are from.



Sometimes they even use how people answer questions about whether racism exists or how they feel about it.



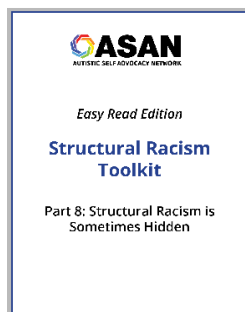
These are all ways to keep people out of juries because of their race.



But they are allowed because the lawyers pretended to have a different reason.



This is still racist.



We will talk more in the next section about how systems try to hide discrimination like this.