

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Marley Dias

Author, Activist

“Frustration is fuel that can lead to the development of an innovative and useful idea.”

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FIGURE 1 COURTESY OF TEEN VOGUE

Background Information

Born: January 4, 2005

Marley Dias is a youth activist that focuses on culturally relevant book advocacy. She was born on January 4, 2005, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. As a child, her family moved to West Orange, New Jersey.

Resistance

As a young child, Marley loved reading as many books as possible. In fifth grade, she noticed many books at her school did not have characters that looked like her. Marley felt troubled that many books in her school featured white children or animals as the main characters. As a book advocate, she knew there were more cultural stories to share. Frustrated with the lack of African American female representation, Marley wanted something done. At just ten years old, she created a goal of collecting and donating 1,000 books featuring black girls as the main character. In 2015, Marley launched #1000BlackGirlBooks as a hashtag on social media. The hashtag went viral across platforms and spread awareness of Marley’s mission. Since then, she has collected nearly 13,000 books! More than half of the collected books are donated internationally to places like Jamaica, her mother’s birthplace.ⁱ Marley’s campaign brought attention to the lack of representation of women of color as main characters in children’s literature.ⁱⁱ “I don’t want people to think that #1000BlackGirlBooks is about equality without regard to race. It’s about equity with regard to race. That’s why it’s called #1000BlackGirlBooks.”ⁱⁱⁱ Marley is an author and wrote ‘Marley Dias Gets it Done: And So Can You!’, a toolkit for youth activism. Marley began college at Harvard University in 2022.

Achievements

Marley has received numerous awards including the Smithsonian Ingenuity Award and Ebony 100.^{iv} She is the youngest member featured in Forbes’ 30 Under 30 list. (2018). Marley was also the 2021 Ambassador of National Educational Association (NEA) Read Across America.

Essential Questions

1. Why do you think Marley was frustrated by mainly seeing white children and animals as the main characters in the books that she read at school?
 - a. Have you read books that feature more main characters of other races than your own? If so, how did you feel about it?

2. How did Marley resist against a lack of African American female representation in children's books?

3. Promoting #1000BlackGirlBooks on social media platforms was very effective.
 - a. How can youth activists use social media for important causes?

4. ***"Frustration is fuel that can lead to the development of an innovative and useful idea."***
 - b. What does the author mean in this quote?
 - c. Is there an issue youth are currently frustrated with that could use some innovative ideas to solve them?
 - i. If so, what are the issues? Give one innovative idea that could solve it.

ⁱ <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/marley-dias-female-heroes>

ⁱⁱ <https://cypp.rutgers.edu/office/marley-dias/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://yr.media/arts-culture/marley-dias-black-girl-bookmarks-netflix-alva-chavez/>

^{iv} <https://www.marleydias.com/about/>