

# Why The Academic Achievement Gap Is A Racist Idea

OCTOBER 20, 2016 BY IBRAM X. KENDI **21 COMMENTS**

***“Standardized tests have become the most effective racist weapon ever devised to objectively degrade Black minds and legally exclude their bodies”***



Source: [citizenstewart.org](http://citizenstewart.org)

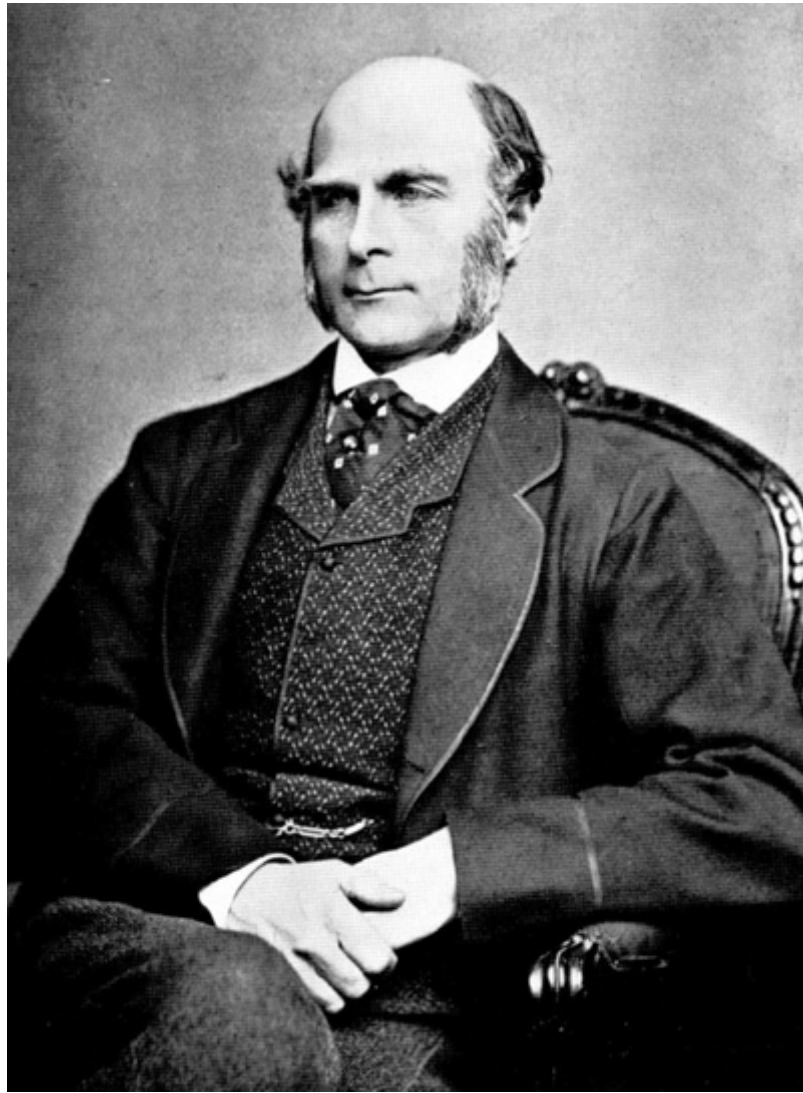
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This year marks the 100-year anniversary of the academic achievement gap—built and continuously renovated by the 100-year standardized testing movement. It is a centennial that hardly anyone knows about.

These days, many people are **criticizing** the testing movement. **Colleges** are slowly diminishing the importance of standardized testing in admissions decisions. We are seeing unprecedented numbers of **wealthy white parents** opting their school children out of these tests.

But few testing critics are bursting its biggest bubble: *the existence of the achievement gap itself*. To believe in the existence of any sort of racial hierarchy is actually to believe in a racist idea. The achievement gap between the races—with Whites and Asians at the top and Blacks and Latinos at the bottom—is a racial hierarchy. And this popular racial hierarchy has been constructed by our religious faith in **standardized testing**.

Americans have been led to believe that intelligence is like body weight, and the different intellectual levels of different people can be measured on a single, standardized weight scale. Our faith in standardized tests causes us to believe that the racial gap in test scores means something is wrong with the Black test takers—and not the tests. And the belief that “inferior” Black minds are capable of doing as well as the “superior” White minds does not take away from the racist belief in the existence of the racial hierarchy itself. Let me explain.



**Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911)**

In 1869, Charles Darwin's cousin, English statistician Francis Galton, hypothesized in *Hereditary Genius* that "[t]he average intellectual standard of the negro race is some two grades below our own." Galton pioneered the western eugenics movement. Galton failed to develop a testing mechanism that verified his racist hypothesis. Where Galton failed, France's Alfred Binet and Thod Simon thought they succeeded in 1905 when they developed an IQ test that Stanford University psychologist Lewis Terman revised for Americans in 1916.