



ABHM Book Club Discussion Guide
November 14th, 2024 at 6 PM CT
***Half American* by Matthew F. Delmont (2022)**

How to Use this Guide:

[America's Black Holocaust Museum](https://www.abhmuseum.org/) staff created this guide to assist in reading and discussion of *Half American*. Please feel free to print a copy and keep it with your book as you lend to friends and others who are interested. Do not expect to get through all of the questions during the upcoming meeting nor in one sitting. Perhaps consider them as conversation starters or an invitation to reflect more deeply about this book.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. How does learning about WWII history through the lens of Black men and women change how we see the war? Why did Delmont employ this lens? How did your own understanding of WWII change by reading this book? See pages xii, xx, and 138.
2. What parallels did Black Americans see between Jim Crow America and Nazi Germany and what were the basic tenets of the Double V campaign? How did this compare to how most white people were viewing WWII at the time? How does knowledge of what racism is and how it affects communities impact the way we approach conflict at home and abroad, or does it? See pages xii, xiii, xviii, 4, 14, 17, 43, 81, 91, 97, 99, 102, 103, 104, 129, 134, 148, 158, 180, 190, 196, 238, 243, 265, and 272.
3. What role did the Black press have in helping create and proliferate the Double V campaign? In preserving the stories of Black servicemen and women? What was the cost of their dedication? See pages xiv, 3, 21, 34, 48, 75, 106, 107, 108, 155, and 236.
4. Segregation was a flashpoint issue during this time. Why do you think that was the focus of so much of this early civil rights work? How would addressing segregation and racism in the U.S. military impact people on the homefront ultimately? See pages xi, xvi, 40, 52, 59, 67, 144, 166, 179, and 287.

5. What other forms of discrimination were faced by Black people both serving in the military and on the homefront during this time? In what ways did the U.S.'s commitment to racism impact the war effort? Why do you think leaders were willing to sacrifice efficiency to maintain prejudices? See pages 39, 62, 105, 118, 127, 135, 143, 144, 153, 176, 209, 239, and 266.
6. Delmont argues that the Allies would not have won the war without the contributions made by Black people to the war effort. What were these contributions? What did these successes mean to the entire country? See pages xiii, 26, 78, 112, 116, 119, 178, 216, 220, 232, 252, and 255.
7. What were the contributions of Black women, specifically, to both the war effort and continuing the fight for civil rights at home? See pages xviii, 9, 51, 123, 141, 142 193-195, and 227.
8. What made the violence aimed at Black families, workers, and servicemen particularly awful during World War II? What were some of the tensions fueling the race riots all over the nation? How were Black WWII veterans treated when they returned home? How did this fuel the civil rights struggle of the next two decades? See pages xv, 32, 73, 154, 161, 183, 197, 199, and 225.
9. After the war, Black veterans had the foresight to meet and talk about their shared experiences. This, along with the documentation of the Black press, helped preserve their stories. Why was it important for them to collect and share their own history? What can places like ABHM and other museums learn from this effort? Do you think it is important to collect history as it is happening? How can we do that in our own lives? See pages 253, 254, 297, 298, and 301.
10. What did you think about Delmont's argument that "the war era shaped how Americans talk about, or avoid talking about, race and racism"? Has our understanding of race and racism shifted today from changing "hearts and minds" to systems? See pages 198, 305, and 306.