

# Handout A: Background Essay: African Americans in the Gilded Age Answer Key

## Review Questions

1. The Thirteenth Amendment forever banned slavery from the United States, the Fourteenth Amendment protected black citizenship, and the Fifteenth Amendment granted the right to vote to African-American males.
2. African Americans faced economic hardship throughout the country in the late nineteenth century. Almost all Southern black farmers were generally forced into sharecropping and a crop lien system that usually made it impossible for them to get out of debt. In the cities, north or south, Blacks were usually in menial, low-paying jobs because white employers discriminated against African Americans in hiring. Black workers also faced a great deal of racism at the hands of labor unions which severely limited their ability to secure high-paying, skilled jobs. While the Knights of Labor and United Mine Workers were open to blacks, the largest skilled-worker union, the American Federation of Labor, curtailed black membership, thereby limiting them to menial labor.
3. African Americans suffered several forms of violence during the late nineteenth century.  
  
Lynchings (executions without due process) by angry white mobs, resulted in hangings, burnings, shootings, and mutilations for between 100 and 200 blacks annually. Race riots broke out in southern and northern cities from New Orleans and Atlanta to New York and Evansville, Indiana, causing dozens of deaths and property damage.
4. Despite the amendments to the Constitution protecting the rights of African Americans, some states used several discriminatory devices systematically to take away these rights, including poll taxes and literacy tests. Furthermore, the white clerks at courthouses had already decided that any black applicant would fail, regardless of his true reading ability.
5. In *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the Court decided that “separate, but equal” public facilities did not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment or imply the inferiority of African Americans. Justice John Marshall Harlan was one of the two dissenters who wrote, “Our constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law.”
6. Students may explain that African Americans experienced both gains and setbacks during the Progressive Era. Segregation, discrimination, and economic hardship continued, and blacks were subject to both random and systematic violence. At the same time, however, leaders such as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Ida B. Wells, as well as the NAACP, worked tirelessly to shine a light on injustices and press toward equality. New economic opportunities and migration related to the Spanish American War and World War I had a profound effect on hundreds of thousands of blacks as families moved to the cities seeking jobs. Furthermore, military service and travel overseas exposed many to the possibility of freedom and equality.

7. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois agreed that blacks in America were entitled to equality and justice. However, they advocated different methods to achieve those goals. Washington advocated that African Americans achieve racial equality slowly by patience and accommodation. Washington thought that blacks should be trained in industrial education and demonstrate the character virtues of hard work, thrift, and self-respect. They would therefore prove that they deserved equal rights and equal opportunity for social mobility. By contrast, W.E.B. DuBois believed that African Americans should win equality through a liberal arts education and fighting for political and civil equality. He wrote the *Souls of Black Folk* and laid out a vision whereby the “talented tenth” among African Americans would receive an excellent education and become the teachers and other professionals who would uplift fellow members of their race.
8. World War I and the Great Migration changed the lives of African Americans as hundreds of thousands left southern farms to migrate to cities in the South such as Birmingham or Atlanta, or to northern cities in a mass movement called the Great Migration. This internal migration greatly increased the number of African Americans living in American cities. As a result, tensions grew with whites over jobs and housing that led to deadly race riots during and immediately after the war. However, a thriving black culture in the North also resulted in the Harlem Renaissance and the celebration of black artists. The Great Migration eventually led to over six million African Americans following these migration patterns and laying the foundation for the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-twentieth century.

## Handout B: Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law,” 1893 (Excerpts)

### Review Questions

1. Students may note the following:
  - The first table shows records of lynching from 1882 – 1891, totaling 800. The second table shows the crimes for which those individuals were “charged,” but the second table shows a total of only 701. Were records unavailable for the charges against the remaining 99? Were there no charges at all? Was the use of lynching (an execution without due process) even more random for those 99 individuals?
  - In the narrative, Ms. Wells embellishes some of the numbers compared to the tables. For example, the total of 800 becomes “nearly a thousand,” and 32 lynchings for which no reason was given becomes “nearly fifty.” What might have been her reasoning for doing this? Do students think these overestimations affect the credibility of her article?
2. Journalist Ida B. Wells states that the total number of lynchings in 1892 was 241. After remaining in the 70s for several years, the number spikes to 95 in 1889, and continues to increase in following years.
3. The main goals of this article include explaining the origin of the term, “lynching,” providing a brief history of lynchings, and exposing its brutality and increasing frequency.

4. Lynching demonstrates an absence of the virtues of respect and justice. Ida B. Wells demonstrates courage and responsibility in conducting a crusade against lynching. She exhibits the virtues of civil discourse and perseverance in using her position as a journalist to work for justice. Constitutional principles of inalienable rights, freedom of speech and assembly, and rule of law are relevant in confronting the brutality of lynching.
5. Accept reasoned responses regarding the most powerful or important passages. Students are likely to select passages from the last two paragraphs, for example, “The real need is for a public sentiment in favor of enforcing the law and giving every man, white and black, a fair hearing before the lawful tribunals...”

## Handout C: Booker T. Washington: “The Atlanta Exposition Address” 1895 (Excerpts)

### Review Questions

1. Booker T. Washington’s main ideas include the following:
  - The theme of “Cast down your bucket where you are” refers to both races learning to cultivate friendship with and trust for one another, rather than seeking ways outside their own environment to better themselves.
  - Blacks had demonstrated their faithfulness as workers, and would continue to be loyal and industrious.
  - Washington advised his own race to work hard and demonstrate that they could be important contributors to progress for the South, and by that effort they would earn respect.
  - Washington counseled blacks to be patient in expecting social equality: “The opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory just now is worth infinitely more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.”
  - The ultimate goal was an end to racial animosities, absolute justice, and obedience to the law.
2. Virtues include: courage, respect, civil discourse, justice, moderation, perseverance, and responsibility. Constitutional principles include: private property, rule of law, and freedom of contract.
3. Students may suggest that Washington’s address came to be called the Atlanta Compromise because he said that “agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly,” advising blacks to prioritize economic opportunity over social equality for the time being.
4. Student answers will vary regarding the extent to which they agree with Washington’s counsel. Accept reasoned responses and encourage civil discourse as students focus on Washington’s approach.

5. In the paragraph beginning “Nearly sixteen millions of hands...” Washington alludes to the fact that as one third of the South’s population, blacks would be a powerful influence either for improvement or for ignorance and crime.

## Handout D: John Hope “We Are Struggling for Equality” 1896 (Excerpts)

### Review Questions

1. John Hope maintains that blacks’ failure to insist on full equality is cowardly, lazy, and dishonest, and that blacks must work to break down the “wall of prejudice.”
2. Virtues include: courage, respect, justice, perseverance, and responsibility. Constitutional principles include: inalienable rights, equality, and rule of law. Free speech and assembly are implied in the second paragraph.
3. Both statements emphatically make the point that complete equality is a necessary component of true liberty. They both refer to the virtue of honor, the need for education, and the importance of wise management of money.
4. Student answers will vary regarding the extent to which they agree with Hope’s speech. Accept reasoned responses and encourage civil discourse as students focus on Hope’s approach.
5. While Washington emphasizes the importance of economic rights over social equality, Hope insists that true liberty incorporates both.

## Handout E: John Marshall Harlan, Dissent from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) (Excerpts)

### Review Questions

1. Justice Harlan’s opinion makes the following main points
  - The Constitution does not permit any legislature or court to regard the race of any citizen in considering the enjoyment of civil rights.
  - In spite of the advantages of wealth and power held by the white race, “our Constitution is color-blind... In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law.”
  - In time, the *Plessy* decision will be understood to be just as wicked as the *Dred Scott* decision.
2. Relevant virtues include: respect, civil discourse, justice, and responsibility. Constitutional principles include: inalienable rights, rule of law, and equality.

3. Students may point out such passages as “The arbitrary separation of citizens on the basis of race...cannot be justified upon any legal grounds.” Accept reasoned responses and encourage civil discourse as students discuss the controversial issues surrounding this topic.

## Handout F: W.E.B. DuBois, “The Talented Tenth” 1903 (Excerpts)

### Review Questions

1. Born a slave, Booker T. Washington (1856 – 1915), spent his childhood working in salt mines and coal mines. William Edward Burghardt “W. E. B.” Du Bois (1868-1963) was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and excelled in his community’s public schools. Both valued education and hard work.
2. DuBois emphasized the following main ideas:
  - The object of education must not be development of artisans, workers, or moneymakers. Rather, it must focus on development of men, through cultivation of “broad sympathy, knowledge of the world that was and is, and the relation of men to it.”
  - Political voice is an essential part of blacks’ opportunity to experience freedom and equality.
  - Those most inclined to lead and teach must go to college, and then become teachers and teachers of teachers.
  - The example set by talented black leaders is crucial to help Negro children understand that their ideals are attainable.
  - The system of education must “strengthen the Negro’s character, increase his knowledge, and teach him to earn a living.”
  - “It is the trained, living human soul, cultivated and strengthened by long study and thought, that breathes the real breath of life into boys and girls and makes them human...”
  - He stresses the importance of community and its role in the education of the whole person. There must be enough college-educated men to “leaven the lump, to inspire the masses, to raise the Talented Tenth to leadership...”
  - “Here is a race transplanted through the criminal foolishness of your fathers. Whether you like it or not the millions are here, and here they will remain. If you do not lift them up, they will pull you down.”
3. Relevant virtues are: courage, honor, justice, perseverance, and responsibility. Constitutional principles include: inalienable rights, freedom of speech and assembly, rule of law, and equality.
4. Accept reasoned responses and encourage civil discourse as students discuss “The Talented Tenth,” comparing and contrasting it to other relevant documents.

## Handout G: W.E.B. DuBois: “Advice to a Black Schoolgirl” 1905

### Review Questions

1. While both documents emphasize the importance of education, the Talented Tenth is focused mostly on the education of men. However, DuBois points out to the schoolgirl that job categories for black women include teachers, nurses, physicians, clerks, stenographers, “and above all the host of homemakers.” His advice is essentially the same: you have a responsibility both to yourself and to your community, both now and in the future, to make the most of your educational opportunities.
2. Relevant virtues include: courage, respect, honor, perseverance, and responsibility. Constitutional principles include: inalienable rights, rule of law, and equality.
3. Accept reasoned responses and encourage civil discourse as students discuss “Advice to a Black Schoolgirl,” comparing and contrasting it to other relevant documents.

## Handout H: Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles 1905 (Excerpts)

### Review Questions

1. According to the Declaration of Principles, “persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty.”
2. Accept reasoned responses and encourage civil discourse.
3. Relevant virtues include: courage, respect, civil discourse, honor, justice, moderation, perseverance, and responsibility. Constitutional principles include: inalienable rights, freedom of speech and assembly, private property, rule of law, and equality.
4. Accept reasoned responses based on the current events articles that students provide.

## Handout I: Woodrow Wilson and the Negro Question, 1912 & 1914

### Review Questions

1. The “Negro question” was, “To what extent was the United States serious about protecting life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for blacks?” Wilson’s promise was, “they may count upon me for absolute fair dealing and for everything by which I could assist in advancing the interests of their race in the United States.”
2. Trotter asks President Wilson to keep his promises regarding “fair dealing”: “to issue an executive order against any and all segregation of government employees because of race and color...”

3. Relevant virtues are: civil discourse, courage, honor, justice, perseverance, respect, responsibility. Relevant constitutional principles are: due process, equality, inalienable rights, and separation of powers.
4. Accept reasoned responses based on student selection of passages.

## Handout J: Walter White, “The Eruption of Tulsa,” *Nation*, June 29, 1921 (Excerpts)

### Review Questions

1. The event that sparked the conflict in Tulsa was that a young white woman, Sarah Page, accused Dick Rowland, a black man, of stumbling over her foot.
2. Timeline:
  - Monday, May 31: Dick Rowland stumbled as he got on the elevator of the Drexel Building, where the only restroom available to him under Jim Crow laws was on the building’s top floor. Sarah Page accused Rowland of assaulting her, but declined to press charges.
  - Tuesday, June 1: The story of the alleged assault was published in the local afternoon newspaper, prompting plans in the white community to lynch Rowland. Rowland was arrested and taken into custody. A group of 400 whites assembled at the jail, threatening to seize and lynch Rowland. A group of 100 blacks assembled at the jail to try to protect Rowland. As the blacks started to leave at the sheriff’s request, a shot was fired, starting fighting between the two groups that lasted until midnight.
  - Wednesday, June 2: By 5 a.m. a white mob of more than 10,000 had attacked Little Africa (the Greenwood area), resulting in the complete destruction and burning of the wealthiest black community in America.
  - Wednesday through Saturday: The Salvation Army fed several dozen Negroes who labored as grave-diggers and buried the dead.
  - At least an estimated 300 people, black and white, were killed, and thousands of black families were homeless and jobless. Damages were estimated at more than \$1.5 million (over 20 million in 2016 dollars).
  - June 29: Walter White, the leader of the NAACP, published the results of his investigation of the riot in *Nation* magazine.
3. According to White, the underlying causes of racial tension in Tulsa were
  - Prosperity in the black community caused resentment among whites.
  - Blacks in Tulsa denounced Jim Crow laws.
  - Corruption in the city’s government for the previous 14 years.

4. Relevant virtues include: courage, honor, justice, moderation, respect, responsibility. Constitutional principles include: due process, equality, inalienable rights, private property, rule of law.
5. According to White, the “lesson in the Tulsa affair” is that Negroes will not always be meek and passive. They are willing to give their lives to protect their homes and neighbors. White ominously speculates, “Perhaps America is waiting for a nationwide Tulsa to wake her. Who knows?”