



LESSON 3

African Americans in the Gilded Age

OVERVIEW

Constitutional amendments were ratified during and after the Civil War to protect the natural and civil rights of African Americans. Despite these legal protections, the condition of African Americans significantly worsened in the last few decades of the nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth century, the promise of emancipation and Reconstruction went largely unfulfilled and was even reversed in the lives of African Americans. Southern blacks suffered from horrific violence, political disfranchisement, economic discrimination, and legal segregation. Ironically, the new wave of racial discrimination that was introduced was part of an attempt to bring harmony between the races and order to American society.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will trace and evaluate efforts to achieve equality and protect the natural rights of blacks during the period following the Civil War.
- Students will analyze primary source documents and respond to a document-based question concerning efforts to achieve racial equality.
- Students will apply critical thinking skills to compare and evaluate proposals aimed at protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for blacks in America.
- Students will participate in informed civil discourse aimed at solving problems related to controversial issues.
- Students will analyze documents and events to understand constitutional principles and essential virtues necessary for civil society.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Rise, Brothers! Come, let us possess this land. Never say, ‘Let well enough alone.’ Cease to console yourselves with adages that numb the moral sense. Be discontented. Be dissatisfied. ‘Sweat and grunt’ under present conditions. Be as restless as the tempestuous billows on the boundless sea. Let your discontent break mountain-high against the wall of prejudice, and swamp it to the very foundation. Then we shall not have to plead for justice nor on bended knee crave mercy; for we shall be men. Then and not until then will liberty in its highest sense be the boast of our Republic...” **John Hope, “We are Struggling for Equality,” 1896**

RECOMMENDED TIME

120 minutes

MATERIALS LIST

- **Handout A: Background Essay: African Americans in the Gilded Age**
- **Handout B: Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law” 1893 (Excerpts)**
- **Handout C: Booker T. Washington: “The Atlanta Exposition Address” 1895 (Excerpts)**
- **Handout D: John Hope “We Are Struggling for Equality” 1896 (Excerpts)**
- **Handout E: John Marshall Harlan, Dissent from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) (Excerpts)**
- **Handout F: W.E.B. DuBois, “The Talented Tenth,” 1903 (Excerpts)**
- **Handout G: W.E.B. DuBois: “Advice to a Black Schoolgirl” 1905**
- **Handout H: Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles 1905 (Excerpts)**

- **Handout I: Woodrow Wilson and the Negro Question, 1912 & 1914**
- **Handout J: Walter White, “The Eruption of Tulsa,” *Nation*, June 29, 1921 (Excerpts)**
- **Handout K: Constitutional Principles and Essential Virtues**
- **Handout L: Documents Organizer**

CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES

- Checks and balances
- Due process
- Equality
- Federalism
- Freedom of contract
- Freedom of speech, press, & assembly
- Inalienable rights
- Limited government
- Private property
- Rule of law
- Separation of powers

ESSENTIAL VIRTUES

- Civil discourse
- Courage
- Honor
- Justice
- Moderation
- Perseverance
- Respect
- Responsibility

STANDARDS

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

- 1) Thematic Standards
 - II. Time, Continuity, and Change
 - VI. Power, Authority, and Governance
 - VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption

VIII. Science, Technology, and Society

X. Civic Ideals and Practices

- 2) Disciplinary Standards

1. History

3. Civics and Government

4. Economics

Center for Civic Education

- 9-12 Content Standards

V. What are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?

UCLA Department of History (NCHS)

- US History Content Standards

United States Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870 – 1900)

United States Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890 – 1930)

KEY TERMS

- Emancipation
- Disfranchisement
- Segregation
- Thirteenth Amendment
- Fourteenth Amendment
- Fifteenth Amendment
- Freedmen’s Bureau
- Civil Rights Act, 1875
- Sharecropping
- Peonage
- Lynching
- Reconstruction
- Poll tax
- Literacy test
- Grandfather clauses
- *Civil Rights Cases* (1883)
- Jim Crow
- *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)
- Progressive Era
- Social Darwinism
- Eugenics
- Boycott
- Tuskegee Institute
- *Up from Slavery*
- Atlanta Exposition, 1895
- *Souls of Black Folk*
- Niagara Movement
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Spanish-American War
- World War I
- Tyranny
- Great Migration
- Harlem Renaissance
- Civil Rights Movement

Lesson Plan

Background Reading » 15 minutes at home; 15 minutes class time

- A. Distribute and assign for homework the background essay, **Handout A: African Americans in the Gilded Age**.
- B. In class, lead a brief discussion to clarify any misunderstandings and have students share their responses to the review questions.
- C. Point out **Handout K: Constitutional Principles and Essential Virtues**. Review questions found throughout the lesson call for students to analyze documents regarding principles and virtues; this graphic organizer will be a useful tool for these discussions.
- D. Write the **Key Question** on the board so that students may refer to it throughout the lesson:

Which, if any, of the varying approaches advocated by black leaders during the period from 1865-1920 do you believe was the most likely to achieve equality and lead to protection of the rights of blacks? To what extent and in what ways did conditions for American blacks change in the era?

Activity » A: 15 minutes; B: 30 minutes; C: 15 minutes

- A. Divide the class into three Study Groups of equal size. Though the number of documents varies, the number of pages assigned to each group is similar. Tell each group to fill in the parts of **Handout L: Documents Organizer** that coincide with their assigned documents, and that each student will become an expert, responsible for explaining their assigned documents to classmates. The teacher should monitor and move from group to group, helping where needed.
 - Assign Study Group 1 to read and discuss the two documents related to racial violence: **Handout B: Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law,” 1893** and **Handout J: Walter White, “The Eruption of Tulsa,” *Nation*, June 29, 1921**.
 - Assign Study Group 2 to read and discuss the three documents related to education policy: **Handout C: Booker T. Washington: The Atlanta Exposition Address, 1895**; **Handout F: W.E.B. DuBois, *The Talented Tenth*, 1903**, and **Handout G: W.E.B. DuBois: Advice to a Black Schoolgirl, 1905**.
 - Assign Study Group 3 to read and discuss the four documents related to political, economic, and social equality: **Handout D: John Hope “We Are Struggling for Equality” 1896**; **Handout E: John Marshall Harlan, Dissent from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)**; **Handout H: Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles 1905**; and **Handout I: Woodrow Wilson and the Negro Question, 1912 & 1914**.

- B. Jigsaw to new teaching groups so that six students (two from each of the Study groups) are in each of the new groups. Their task in this phase is to share and discuss what they have learned about each document so that all students grasp the bigger picture and can fill in the remainder of the **Handout K: Documents Organizer**. Stress that students are to focus on synthesis and analysis of the documents as a whole, not just to fill in the rows on their documents organizer.
- C. Once all groups have finished the discussion of all documents and completed the documents organizer, then direct them to remain in their Teaching groups to discuss the **Key Question**.

Wrap-up activity: Debrief » *30 minutes*

- A. Conduct a whole-class discussion allowing each of the Teaching groups to share their answers to the **Key Question**.
- B. Ask: What was the proper role and responsibility of government in protecting the rights of blacks during this era? What mistakes and shortcomings can be instructive to us today? What virtues and constitutional principles are most relevant to achievement of civil society in which all persons can enjoy life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness?

Extension activity: Writing and Current Event Connections

- A. Have students write an essay in which they use the documents and their background knowledge to answer the **Key Question**. The writing could be done by individuals, or by groups of students working in teams. Have students exchange papers and apply the class grading rubric to one another’s essays.
- B. Have students collect and share current event articles that are related to the themes, principles, and virtues explored in this lesson.
- C. Have students write position papers as though they are advisors to elected officials today, using what they have learned from this lesson to recommend wise policy to address current events concerns.
- D. To what extent is the John Hope quote relevant in the 21st century?

“Rise, Brothers! Come, let us possess this land. Never say, ‘Let well enough alone.’ Cease to console yourselves with adages that numb the moral sense. Be discontented. Be dissatisfied. ‘Sweat and grunt’ under present conditions. Be as restless as the tempestuous billows on the boundless sea. Let your discontent break mountain-high against the wall of prejudice, and swamp it to the very foundation. Then we shall not have to plead for justice nor on bended knee crave mercy; for we shall be men. Then and not until then will liberty in its highest sense be the boast of our Republic...”

–John Hope, “We are Struggling for Equality,” 1896

Background Essay: African Americans in the Gilded Age

Directions:

Read the essay and answer the review questions at the end.

In the late nineteenth century, the promise of emancipation and Reconstruction went largely unfulfilled and was even reversed in the lives of African Americans. Southern blacks suffered from horrific violence, political disfranchisement, economic discrimination, and legal segregation. Ironically, the new wave of racial discrimination that was introduced was part of an attempt to bring harmony between the races and order to American society.

Constitutional amendments were ratified during and after the war to protect the natural and civil rights of African Americans. 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. In addition, a Freedmen's Bureau was established to help the economic condition of former slaves, and Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1875.

Roadblocks to Equality

Despite these legal protections, the economic condition of African Americans significantly worsened in the last few decades of the nineteenth century. Poor southern black farmers were generally forced into sharecropping whereby they borrowed money to plant a year's crop, using the future crop as collateral on the loan. Often, they owed so much of the resulting crop

that they fell into debt for the following year and eventually into a state of debt peonage. Since 90 percent of African Americans lived in the rural South, most were sharecroppers. The story was not much different as African Americans moved to southern and northern cities. Black women found work as domestic servants and men in urban factories, but they 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.

African Americans throughout the country suffered from violence and intimidation. The most infamous examples of violence were brutal lynchings, or executions without due process, by angry white mobs. These travesties resulted in hangings, burnings, shootings, and mutilations for between 100 and 200 blacks—especially black men falsely accused of raping white women—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.

Although African Americans were elected to Congress and state legislatures during

Reconstruction, and enjoyed the constitutional right to vote, black civil rights were systematically stripped away in a campaign of disfranchisement. One method was to charge a poll tax to vote, which precious few black sharecroppers could afford to pay. Another strategy was the literacy test which few former slaves could pass. Furthermore, the white clerks at courthouses had already decided that any black applicant would fail, regardless of his true reading ability. Since both of those devices at times excluded poor whites as well, grandfather clauses were introduced to exempt from the literacy test anyone whose father or grandfather had the right to vote before the Civil War. Moreover, the Supreme Court declared the 1875 Civil Rights Act guaranteeing equal access to public facilities and transportation to be unconstitutional in the *Civil Rights Cases* (1883) because the law regulated the private discriminatory conduct of individuals rather than government discrimination.

Segregation

One of the most pervasive and visible signs of racism was the rise of informal and legal segregation, or separation of the races. In a wholesale violation of liberty and equality, southern state legislatures passed “Jim Crow” segregation laws that denied African Americans equal access to public facilities such as hotels, restaurants, parks, and swimming pools. Southern schools and public transportation had vastly inferior “separate but equal” facilities that left the black minority subject to unjust majority rule. Housing covenants and other devices kept blacks in separate neighborhoods from whites. African Americans in the North also suffered informal residential segregation and economic discrimination in jobs.

In one of its more infamous decisions, the Supreme Court ruled that segregation statutes were legal in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). In *Plessy*, 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.”

Progressive and Race Relations

One of the great ironies of the series of reforms instituted in the early twentieth century known as the Progressive Era was that segregation and racism were deeply enshrined in the movement. Progressives were a group of reformers who believed that the industrialized, urbanized United States of the nineteenth century had outgrown its eighteenth-century Constitution. That Constitution did not give government, especially the federal government, enough power to deal with unprecedented problems. Many Progressives embraced Social Darwinism and eugenics which was part of the most advanced science and social science taught in universities and scientific circles. Social Darwinism ranked various groups, which its proponents considered “races,” according to certain characteristics and labelled Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic peoples as superior and Southeastern Europeans, Jews, Asians, Hispanics, and Africans as inferior races. Therefore, there was a supposed scientific basis for segregation as the “higher” races ruled the “lower.” Moreover, Progressives generally endorsed segregation as a means of achieving their central goal of social order and harmony between the races. There were notable exceptions,

such as Jane Addams, black Progressives such as W.E.B. DuBois, and the Progressives of both races who founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), but Progressive ideology contributed to the growth of segregation.

Progressive Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson generally supported the segregationist order. While Roosevelt courageously invited African-American leader Booker T. Washington to dinner in the White House and condemned lynching, he discharged 170 black soldiers because of a race riot in Brownsville, Texas in 1906. Wilson had perhaps a worse record on civil rights as his administration fired many black federal employees and segregated federal departments.

Black Leadership

Several black leaders advanced the cause of black civil rights and helped organize African Americans to defend their interests through self-help. The highly-educated journalist, Ida B. Wells, launched a crusade against lynching by exposing the savage practice. She also challenged segregation by refusing to change her seat on a train because it was in an area reserved for white women. Other African Americans unsuccessfully boycotted segregated streetcars in urban areas but utilized a method that would prove successful in the mid-twentieth century.

A debate took shape between two African-American leaders, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. Washington was a former slave who founded the Tuskegee Institute for blacks in the 1880s and wrote *Up from Slavery*. He 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. At the 1895 Atlanta Exposition, Washington delivered an address that posited, “In the long run it is the race or individual that exercises the most patience, forbearance, and self-control in the midst of trying conditions that wins...the respect of the world.”

DuBois, on the other hand, was a Harvard and Berlin-educated intellectual who 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. He and other black leaders organized the Niagara Movement that fought segregation, lynching, and disfranchisement. In 1909 the movement’s leaders founded the NAACP, which fought for black equality and initiated a decades-long legal struggle to end segregation. DuBois edited its journal named *The Crisis* and wrote about issues affecting African Americans. He had the simple wish to “make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face.”

Wartime Changes

American participation in the Spanish-American War and World War I initiated a dramatic change in the lives of African Americans and in the demography of American society. In both wars, black soldiers were relegated to segregated units

and generally assigned to menial jobs rather than front-line combat. However, black soldiers had opportunities to fight in the charges against the Spanish in Cuba and against the Germans in the trenches of France. They demonstrated that they were just as courageous as white men even as they fought for a country that excluded them from its democracy. Moreover, travel to the North and overseas showed thousands of African Americans the possibility of freedom and equality that would be reinforced in World War II while fighting tyranny abroad.

Wartime America witnessed rapid change in the lives of African Americans especially in the rural South. 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. Blacks resisted segregation when it was instituted and continued to organize to challenge its threat to liberty and equality in America.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What constitutional protections did the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments give African Americans?
2. What economic conditions did African Americans face in the south and north in the late nineteenth century?
3. What kinds of violence did African Americans suffer during the late nineteenth century?
4. Despite the amendments to the Constitution protecting the rights of African Americans, what discriminatory devices systematically took away these rights?
5. What was the ruling in the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) case? Did the case result in the advance or reversal of the rights of African Americans? Explain your answer.
6. Did African Americans make gains or suffer setbacks to their rights during the Progressive Era? Explain your answer.
7. Compare and contrast the means and goals of achieving black equality for Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.
8. How did World War I and the Great Migration change the lives of African Americans?

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

Background: Born in 1862 to enslaved parents, Ida B. Wells worked her way through Rust College and then worked for civil rights as a teacher, writer, co-owner of a newspaper, investigative journalist, and speaker. She was also a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and she worked tirelessly to expose the evils of lynching.

“Lynch Law,” says the *Virginia Lancet*, “as known by that appellation, had its origin in 1780 in a combination of citizens of Pittsylvania County, Virginia, entered into for the purpose of suppressing a trained band of horse thieves and counterfeiters whose well concocted schemes had bidden defiance to the ordinary laws of the land, and whose success encouraged and emboldened them in their outrages upon the community. Col. Wm. Lynch drafted the constitution for this combination of citizens, and hence ‘Lynch Law’ has ever since been the name given to the summary infliction of punishment by private and unauthorized citizens.”

This law continues in force to-day in some of the oldest states of the Union, where courts of justice have long been established, whose laws are executed by white Americans. It ... is brought to bear mainly, against the Negro. The first fifteen years of his freedom he was murdered by masked mobs for trying to vote. Public opinion having made lynching for that cause unpopular, a new reason is given to justify the murders of the past 15 years. The Negro was first charged with attempting to rule white people, and hundreds were murdered on that pretended supposition. He is now charged with assaulting or attempting to assault white women. This charge, as false as it is foul, robs us of the

sympathy of the world and is blasting the race’s good name.

The men who make these charges encourage or lead the mobs which do the lynching. They belong to the race which holds Negro life cheap, which owns the telegraph wires, newspapers, and all other communication with the outside world. They write the reports which justify lynching by painting the Negro as black as possible, and those reports are accepted by the press associations and the world without question or investigation. The mob spirit had increased with alarming frequency and violence. Over a thousand black men, women and children have been thus sacrificed the past ten years. Masks have long since been thrown aside and the lynchings of the present day take place in broad daylight. The sheriffs, police, and state officials stand by and see the work done well. The coroner’s jury is often formed among those who took part in the lynching and a verdict, “Death at the hands of parties unknown to the jury” is rendered. As the number of lynchings have increased, so has the cruelty and barbarism of the lynchers. Three human beings were burned alive in civilized America during the first six months of this year (1893). Over one hundred have been lynched in this half year. They were hanged, then cut, shot and burned.

The following table published by the *Chicago Tribune* January, 1892, is submitted for thoughtful consideration.

Negroes Murdered by Mobs

1882	52
1883	39
1884	53
1885	77
1886	73
1887	70
1888	72
1889	95
1890	100
1891	169
Total	800

Of this number, charges against those lynched are shown below.

269	rape
253	murder
44	robbery
37	incendiarism
4	burglary
27	race prejudice
13	quarreling with white men
10	making threats
7	rioting
5	miscegenation
32	no reason given
701	Total

This table shows (1) that only one-third of nearly a thousand murdered black persons have been even charged with the crime of outrage [rape]. This crime is only so punished when white

women accuse black men, which accusation is never proven. The same crime committed by Negroes against Negroes, or by white men against black women is ignored even in the law courts.

(2) That nearly as many were lynched for murder as for the above crime, which the world believes is the cause of all the lynchings. The world affects to believe that white womanhood and childhood, surrounded by their lawful protectors, are not safe in the neighborhood of the black man, who protected and cared for them during the four years of civil war. The husbands, fathers and brothers of those white women were away for four years, fighting to keep the Negro in slavery, yet not one case of assault has ever been reported!

(3) That “robbery, incendiarism, race prejudice, quarreling with white men, making threats, rioting, miscegenation (marrying a white person), and burglary,” are capital offences punishable by death when committed by a black against a white person. Nearly as many blacks were lynched for these charges (and unproven) as for the crime of rape.

(4) That for nearly fifty of these lynchings no reason is given. There is no demand for reasons, or need of concealment for what no one is held responsible. The simple word of any white person against a Negro is sufficient to get a crowd of white men to lynch a Negro. Investigation as to the guilt or innocence of the accused is never made. Under these conditions, white men have only to blacken their faces, commit crimes against the peace of the community, accuse some Negro, or rest till he is killed by a mob. Will Lewis, an 18 year old Negro youth was lynched at Tullahoma, Tennessee, August, 1891, for being “drunk and saucy to white folks.”

In 1892 there were 241 persons lynched. The entire number is divided among [26 of 44] states.

Of this number 160 were of Negro descent. Four of them were lynched in New York, Ohio and Kansas; the remainder were murdered in the south...

[The next pages of the pamphlet detail the lynchings of thirteen black individuals, four of them women.]

No more appropriate close for this chapter can be given than an editorial quotation from that most consistent and outspoken journal the Inter-Ocean. Commenting on the many barbarous lynchings of these two months (June and July) in its issue of August 5th, 1893, it says:

“So long as it is known that there is one charge against a man which calls for no investigation before taking his life there will be mean men seeking revenge ready to make that charge. Such a condition would soon destroy all law. It would not be tolerated for a day by white men. But the Negroes have been so patient under all their trials that men who no longer feel that

they can safely shoot a Negro for attempting to exercise his right as a citizen at the polls are ready to trump up any other charge that will give them the excuse for their crime. It is a singular coincidence that as public sentiment has been hurled against political murders there has been a corresponding increase in lynchings on the charge of attacking white women. The lynchings are conducted in much the same way that they were by the Ku Klux Klan when Negroes were mobbed for attempting to vote. The one great difference is in the cause which the mob assigns for its action.

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... No one wants to shield a fiend guilty of these brutal attacks upon unprotected women. But the Negro has as good a right to a fair trial as the white man, and the South will not be free from these horrible crimes of mob law so long as the better classes of citizens try to find excuse for recognizing Judge Lynch.”

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What conclusions can you draw regarding the numbers shown in the two tables?
2. Ida B. Wells states that the total number of lynchings in 1892 was 241. What trend do you notice regarding the number of lynchings year-to-year?
3. What are the main goals of this article?
4. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are relevant in considering the tragedy of lynching?
5. What are the most powerful or important passages in the article?

Booker T. Washington: The Atlanta Exposition Address, 1895 (Excerpts)

Background: Born a slave, Booker T. Washington (1856 – 1915), spent his childhood working in salt mines and coal mines. While a student at Hampton Institute, he paid his expenses by working there as a janitor. After later working as a teacher, he was named principal of Tuskegee Institute. When he arrived at Tuskegee in 1881, he discovered that the school had no land, buildings, nor money, other than the Alabama legislature’s having enacted an appropriation for staff salaries to establish a school for Blacks. With borrowed money, Washington bought an abandoned plantation and built a brick-making factory. Students at the school made bricks for buildings on the campus and for sale to others, and within a few years the school was self-sustaining and providing education for over 400 students. After thirty-four years under Washington’s leadership, Tuskegee was a respected institution with 1500 students. All students mastered basic academics, hygiene, manners, and character development. Boys studied skilled trades such as carpentry and printing, in addition to farming and dairying. Girls studied cooking and sewing.

In 1895, Washington was invited to address a white audience at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta. Washington’s speech at the Atlanta Exposition, which came to be called the “Atlanta Compromise,” counseled fellow African-Americans to work hard and be patient, developing friendly relationships with their white neighbors and earning their respect.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Board of Directors and Citizens:

One-third of the population of the South is of the Negro race. ... in no way have the value and manhood of the American Negro been more fittingly and generously recognized than by the managers of this magnificent Exposition at every stage of its progress. It is a recognition that will do more to cement the friendship of the two races than any occurrence since the dawn of our freedom...

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, “Water, water; we die of thirst!” The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” A second time the signal, “Water, water; send us water!” ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came

up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River.

To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbor, I would say: “Cast down your bucket where you are”—cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions... No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.

To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race, “Cast down your bucket where you are.” Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides... While doing this, you can be sure in the future, as in the past, that you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen... In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress...

Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third [of] its intelligence and progress; we shall contribute one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to advance the body politic...

The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing. No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized. It is important and right that all privileges of the law be ours, but it is vastly more important that we be prepared for the exercise of these privileges. 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.

In conclusion, may I repeat that nothing in thirty years has given us more hope and encouragement, and drawn us so near to you of the white race, as this opportunity offered by the Exposition; ... yet far above and beyond material benefits will be that higher good, that, let us pray God, will come, in a blotting out of sectional differences and racial animosities and suspicions, in a determination to administer absolute justice, in a willing obedience among all classes to the mandates of law. This, coupled with our material prosperity, will bring into our beloved South a new heaven and a new earth.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are Booker T. Washington's main ideas in these passages?
2. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the document?
3. Why do you think Washington's address came to be called the Atlanta Compromise?
4. With what passages do you most agree? Disagree? Be prepared to explain your reactions to the document.
5. Explain Washington's reasoning in the paragraph that begins, "Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull against you the load downward..."

John Hope “We Are Struggling for Equality,” 1896 (Excerpts)

Background: In 1896, John Hope was a professor of classics and sciences at Roger Williams University in Nashville, Tennessee. He heard Booker T. Washington’s speech advising accommodation and was convinced that Washington’s counsel did not go far enough in standing up for equality. Hope made the speech below to a black debating society. He later became one of the founders of the Niagara Movement and the National Association for Advancement of Colored People. In 1906, Hope became the first black president of Atlanta Baptist College.

If we are not striving for equality, in heaven’s name for what are we living? I regard it as cowardly and dishonest for any of our colored men to tell white people that we are not struggling for equality. If money, education, and honesty will not bring to me as much privilege, as much equality as they bring to any American citizen, then they are to me a curse, and not a blessing. God forbid that we should get the implements with which to fashion our freedom, and then be too lazy or pusillanimous to fashion it. Let us not fool ourselves nor be fooled by others. If we cannot do what other free men do, then we are not free. Yes, my friends, I want equality. Nothing less. I want all that my God-given powers will enable me to get, then why not equality? Now, catch your breath, for I am going to use an adjective: I am going to say we demand social equality. In this republic we shall be less than free men, if we have a whit less than

that which thrift, education and honor afford other free men. If equality, political, economic and social, the boon of other men in this great country of ours, *of ours*, then equality, political, economic and social, is what we demand. Why build a wall to keep me out? I am no wild beast, nor am I an unclean thing.

Rise, Brothers! Come, let us possess this land. Never say, “Let well enough alone.” Cease to console yourselves with adages that numb the moral sense. Be discontented. Be dissatisfied. “Sweat and grunt” under present conditions. Be as restless as the tempestuous billows on the boundless sea. Let your discontent break mountain-high against the wall of prejudice, and swamp it to the very foundation. Then we shall not have to plead for justice nor on bended knee crave mercy; for we shall be men. Then and not until then will liberty in its highest sense be the boast of our Republic...

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are John Hope's main ideas in this speech?
2. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the document?
3. Explain his reasoning and compare these two statements:
“If money, education, and honesty will not bring to me as much privilege, as much equality as they bring to any American citizen, then they are to me a curse, and not a blessing.”
“Now, catch your breath, for I am going to use an adjective: I am going to say we demand social equality. In this republic we shall be less than free men, if we have a whit less than that which thrift, education and honor afford other free men.”
4. With what passages do you most agree? Disagree? What methods of achieving equality does Hope seem to advocate? Be prepared to explain your reactions to the document.
5. Compare and contrast the approaches of Booker T. Washington and John Hope.

John Marshall Harlan, Dissent from *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896 (Excerpts)

Background: In 1896 the Supreme Court decided a case in which Homer Plessy challenged Louisiana’s Jim Crow law requiring separate railroad passenger cars for African Americans. Plessy was a light-skinned octoroon, or one-eighth African-American. Though he could have passed as white, he made sure that the conductor knew his racial heritage when he refused to sit in the Jim Crow car. In a 7-1 decision authored by Justice Henry B. Brown, the Supreme Court’s majority upheld the Louisiana law, which required that all railroads operating in the state provide “equal but separate accommodations.” Basing its reasoning on the separate-but-equal doctrine, the Court gave a stamp of approval to all similar state laws. Justice Brown stated that the Fourteenth Amendment on its face established absolute equality for the races before the law. But Brown noted that “in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races unsatisfactory to either.” In other words, segregation did not violate the Constitution as long as the facilities provided for blacks were equal. Of course, they were rarely equal, but the courts were oblivious to such details during the Jim Crow years. Justice John Marshall Harlan was the lone dissenter in Plessy’s case, offering forceful and principled opposition.

...In respect of civil rights common to all citizens, the Constitution of the United States does not, I think, permit any public authority to know the race of those entitled to be protected in the enjoyment of such rights... I deny that any legislative body or judicial tribunal may have regard to the race of citizens when the civil rights of those citizens are involved. Indeed, such legislation as that here in question is inconsistent not only with that equality of rights which pertains to citizenship, National and State, but with the personal liberty enjoyed by everyone within the United States...

The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is in prestige, in achievements, in education, in wealth and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time if it remains true to its great heritage and holds fast to the principles of constitutional liberty. But in view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. 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. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful. The law regards man as man, and takes no account of his surroundings or of his color when his civil rights as guaranteed by the supreme law of the land are involved. It is therefore to be regretted that this high tribunal, the final expositor of the fundamental law of the land, has reached the conclusion that it is competent for a State to regulate the enjoyment by citizens of their civil rights solely upon the basis of race...

In my opinion, the judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite as pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott Case. It was adjudged in that case that the descendants of Africans who were imported into this country and sold as slaves were not included nor intended to be included under the word "citizens" in the Constitution, and could not claim any of the rights and privileges which that instrument provided for and secured to citizens of the United States; that, at the time of the adoption of the Constitution, they were considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjugated by the

dominant race, and, whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority, and had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and the government might choose to grant them...

The arbitrary separation of citizens on the basis of race while they are on a public highway is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality before the law established by the Constitution. It cannot be justified upon any legal grounds.

If evils will result from the commingling of the two races upon public highways established for the benefit of all, they will be infinitely less than those that will surely come from state legislation regulating the enjoyment of civil rights upon the basis of race. We boast of the freedom enjoyed by our people above all other peoples. But it is difficult to reconcile that boast with a state of the law which, practically, puts the brand of servitude and degradation upon a large class of our fellow citizens, our equals before the law. The thin disguise of "equal" accommodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead anyone, nor atone for the wrong this day done.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are Justice Harlan's main ideas in these passages?
2. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the document?
3. With what passages do you most agree? Disagree? Be prepared to explain your reactions to the document.

W.E.B. DuBois, The Talented Tenth, 1903

Background: William Edward Burghardt “W. E. B.” Du Bois (1868-1963) was born in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and excelled in his community’s public schools. Encouraged by his teachers to pursue academics, DuBois earned bachelor’s degrees from both Fisk University and Harvard University. He engaged in post-graduate studies at the University of Berlin and Humboldt University, and later became the first African-American to earn a Ph.D. at Harvard. He believed that Booker T. Washington’s focus on technical and vocational education for blacks did not go far enough, and in this address eight years after Washington’s “Atlanta Compromise” speech, DuBois explains his approach to education for blacks.

The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races... If we make money the object of man-training, we shall develop money-makers but not necessarily men; if we make technical skill the object of education, we may possess artisans but not, in nature, men. Men we shall have only as we make manhood the object of the work of the schools—intelligence, broad sympathy, knowledge of the world that was and is, and of the relation of men to it—this is the curriculum of that Higher Education which must underlie true life...

It is the fashion of to-day to ... say that with freedom Negro leadership should have begun at the plow and not in the Senate—a foolish and mischievous lie; two hundred and fifty years that black serf toiled at the plow and yet that toiling was in vain till the Senate passed the war amendments; and two hundred and fifty

years more the half-free serf of to-day may toil at his plow, but unless he have political rights and righteously guarded civic status, he will still remain the poverty-stricken and ignorant plaything of rascals, that he now is. This all sane men know even if they dare not say it...

All men cannot go to college but some men must; every isolated group or nation must have its yeast, must have for the talented few centers of training where men are not so mystified and befuddled by the hard and necessary toil of earning a living, as to have no aims higher than their bellies, and no God greater than Gold. This is true training, and thus in the beginning were the favored sons of the freedmen trained... And so they did begin; they founded colleges, and up from the colleges shot normal [teacher-preparation] schools, and out from the normal schools went teachers, and around the normal teachers clustered other teachers to teach the public schools...

[The college-bred Negro] is, as he ought to be, the group leader, the man who sets the ideals of the community where he lives, directs its thoughts and heads its social movements. It

need hardly be argued that the Negro people need social leadership more than most groups...

It has, however, been in the furnishing of teachers that the Negro college has found its peculiar function. Few persons realize how vast a work, how mighty a revolution has been thus accomplished. To furnish five millions and more of ignorant people with teachers of their own race and blood, in one generation, was not only a very difficult undertaking, but very important one, in that, it placed before the eyes of almost every Negro child an attainable ideal. It brought the masses of the blacks in contact with modern civilization, made black men the leaders of their communities and trainers of the new generation. In this work college-bred Negroes were first teachers, and then teachers of teachers. And here it is that the broad culture of college work has been of peculiar value. Knowledge of life and its wider meaning, has been the point of the Negro's deepest ignorance, and the sending out of teachers whose training has not been simply for bread winning, but also for human culture, has been of inestimable value in the training of these men...

The main question, so far as the Southern Negro is concerned, is: What under the present circumstance, must a system of education do in order to raise the Negro as quickly as possible in the scale of civilization? The answer to this question seems to me clear: It must strengthen the Negro's character, increase his knowledge and teach him to earn a living. Now it goes without saying that it is hard to do all these things simultaneously or suddenly and that at the same time it will not do to give all the attention to one and neglect the others; we could give black boys trades, but that alone will not civilize a race of ex-slaves; we might simply increase their knowledge of the world,

but this would not necessarily make them wish to use this knowledge honestly; we might seek to strengthen character and purpose, but to what end if this people have nothing to eat or to wear? A system of education is not one thing, nor does it have a single definite object, nor is it a mere matter of schools. Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house walls, which molds and develops men... There must be teachers, and teachers of teachers, and to attempt to establish any sort of a system of common and industrial school training, without first (and I say first advisedly) without first providing for the higher training of the very best teachers, is simply throwing your money to the winds. School houses do not teach themselves – piles of brick and mortar and machinery do not send out men. 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, whether they be black or white, Greek, Russian or American...

I would not deny, or for a moment seem to deny, the paramount necessity of teaching the Negro to work, and to work steadily and skillfully; or seem to depreciate in the slightest degree the important part industrial schools must play in the accomplishment of these ends, but I do say, and insist upon it, that it is industrialism drunk with its vision of success, to imagine that its own work can be accomplished without providing for the training of broadly cultured men and women to teach its own teachers, and to teach the teachers of the public schools...

I am an earnest advocate of manual training and trade teaching for black boys, and for white boys, too. I believe that next to the founding of Negro colleges the most valuable addition

to Negro education since the war, has been industrial training for black boys. Nevertheless, I insist that the object of all true education is not to make men carpenters, it is to make carpenters men; there are two means of making the carpenter a man, each equally important: the first is to give the group and community in which he works, liberally trained teachers and leaders to teach him and his family what life means; the second is to give him sufficient intelligence and technical skill to make him an efficient workman; the first object demands the Negro college and college-bred men—not a quantity of such colleges, but a few of excellent quality; not too many college-bred men, but enough to leaven the lump, to inspire the masses, to raise the Talented Tenth to leadership; the second object demands a good system of common

schools, well-taught, conveniently located and properly equipped...

Men of America, the problem is plain before you. 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. Education and work are the levers to uplift a people. Work alone will not do it unless inspired by the right ideals and guided by intelligence. Education must not simply teach work—it must teach Life. The Talented Tenth of the Negro race must be made leaders of thought and missionaries of culture among their people. No others can do this work and Negro colleges must train men for it. The Negro race, like all other races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast the backgrounds of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.
2. What are DuBois's main ideas in these passages?
3. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the document?
4. With what passages do you most agree? Disagree? How does this document relate to the other documents in this lesson? Be prepared to explain your reactions to the document.

W.E.B. DuBois: Letter to a Black Schoolgirl, 1905

Background: DuBois received a letter from a teacher concerned that one of her very bright students was not applying her best efforts to education. The girl protested that studying was a waste of time because, as a black woman, she would have few opportunities to use her knowledge. His reply is excerpted below.

I wonder if you will let a stranger say a word to you about yourself? I have heard that you are a young woman of some ability but that you are neglecting your schoolwork because you have become hopeless of trying to do anything in the world. I am very sorry for this. How any human being whose wonderful fortune it is to live in the 20th century should under ordinarily fair advantages despair of life is almost unbelievable. And if in addition to this that person is, as I am, of Negro lineage with all the hopes and yearnings of hundreds of millions of human souls dependent in some degree on her striving, then her bitterness amounts to a crime.

There are in the United States today tens of thousands of colored girls who would be happy

beyond measure to have the chance of educating themselves that you are neglecting. If you train yourself as you easily can, there are wonderful chances of usefulness before you: You can join the ranks of 15,000 Negro women teachers, of hundreds of nurses and physicians, of the growing number of clerks and stenographers, and above all the host of homemakers. Ignorance is a cure for nothing. Get the very best training possible and the doors of opportunity will fly open before you as they are flying before thousands of your fellows. On the other hand every time a colored person neglects an opportunity, it makes it more difficult for others of the race to get such an opportunity. Do you want to cut off the chances of the boys and girls of tomorrow?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Compare the Talented Tenth address to this letter. How, if at all, does DuBois's advice differ in the two documents?
2. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the document?
3. With what passages do you most agree? Disagree? Be prepared to explain your reactions to the document.

Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles, 1905 (Excerpts)

Background: In July of 1905, W.E.B. DuBois, Monroe Trotter, and other black leaders convened in Buffalo, New York to craft an assertive alternative to the patient accommodation advised by Booker T. Washington. They drew up a position statement for the Niagara Movement, beginning with an acknowledgement of social and economic progress among American blacks in the previous decade. However, they also demanded civil, legal, and social equality and affirmed their determination to engage in peaceful protest against inequality with respect to suffrage, civil liberty, economic opportunity, education, justice in courts, and other social issues.

Color-Line: Any discrimination based simply on race or color is barbarous, we care not how hallowed it be by custom, expediency or prejudice. Differences made on account of ignorance, immorality, or disease are legitimate methods of fighting evil, and against them we have no word of protest; but discriminations based simply and solely on physical peculiarities, place of birth, color of skin, are relics of that unreasoning human savagery of which the world is and ought to be thoroughly ashamed.

“Jim Crow” Cars: We protest against the “Jim Crow” car, since its effect is and must be to make us pay first-class fare for third-class accommodations, render us open to insults and discomfort and to crucify wantonly our manhood, womanhood and self-respect.

Soldiers: We regret that this nation has never seen fit adequately to reward the black soldiers who, in its five wars, have defended their country with their blood, and yet have been systematically denied the promotions which their abilities deserve. And we regard as unjust,

the exclusion of black boys from the military and naval training schools.

War Amendments: We urge upon Congress the enactment of appropriate legislation for securing the proper enforcement of those articles of freedom, the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments of the Constitution of the United States.

Oppression: We repudiate the monstrous doctrine that the oppressor should be the sole authority as to the rights of the oppressed. The Negro race in America stolen, ravished and degraded, struggling up through difficulties and oppression, needs sympathy and receives criticism; needs help and is given hindrance, needs protection and is given mob-violence, needs justice and is given charity, needs leadership and is given cowardice and apology, needs bread and is given a stone. This nation will never stand justified before God until these things are changed.

The Church: Especially are we surprised and astonished at the recent attitude of the church

of Christ—of an increase of a desire to bow to racial prejudice, to narrow the bounds of human brotherhood, and to segregate black men to some outer sanctuary. This is wrong, unchristian and disgraceful to the twentieth century civilization.

Agitation: Of the above grievances we do not hesitate to complain, and to complain loudly and insistently. To ignore, overlook, or apologize for these wrongs is to prove ourselves unworthy of freedom. Persistent manly agitation is the way to liberty, and toward this goal the Niagara Movement has started and asks the cooperation of all men of all races.

Help: At the same time we want to acknowledge with deep thankfulness the help of our fellowmen from the Abolitionist down to those who today still stand for equal opportunity

and who have given and still give of their wealth and of their poverty for our advancement.

Duties: And while we are demanding, and ought to demand, and will continue to demand the rights enumerated above, God forbid that we should ever forget to urge corresponding duties upon our people:

The duty to vote.

The duty to respect the rights of others.

The duty to work.

The duty to obey the laws.

The duty to be clean and orderly.

The duty to send our children to school.

The duty to respect ourselves, even as we respect others.

This statement, complaint and prayer we submit to the American people, and Almighty God.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. According to the Declaration of Principles, what practice would lead to liberty?
2. This excerpt of the Declaration of Principles lists seven duties. Number them 1 – 7 based on the priority you believe Booker T. Washington would have assigned them. Then number them based on your understanding of DuBois’s approach. Be prepared to discuss your rankings with other students.
3. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the document?
4. Find current events articles on topics similar to those addressed in this document and compare the Niagara Movement’s goals to current topics.

Woodrow Wilson and the Negro Question

Background: By 1910, black leaders, frustrated with increasing entrenchment of Jim Crow regulations, disfranchisement, race riots, and the continuing tragedy of lynching, had given up on the Republican Party. The Party of Lincoln had betrayed them by acceding to the white supremacy agenda in the South. Bishop Alexander Walters, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and president of the Afro-American Council, reached out to Democratic presidential candidate Woodrow Wilson in 1912, hoping to increase the political voice of blacks in America. Walters invited Wilson to speak at a meeting of the National Colored Democratic League in New York City, though Wilson declined the invitation. Instead, barely three weeks before the election, Wilson sent a letter for public distribution, explaining his official position on what was called “the Negro question”—to what extent was the United States serious about protecting life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for blacks?

Letter from Woodrow Wilson to Bishop Alexander Walters October 16, 1912 (Excerpts)

My dear Bishop Walters:

...to those who do not know me perhaps it is necessary for me to assure my Colored fellow citizens of my earnest wish to see justice done them in every matter, and not mere grudging justice, but justice executed with liberality and cordial good feeling. Every guarantee of our law, every principle of our constitution, commands this, and our sympathies should also make it easy.

The Colored people of the United States have made extraordinary progress towards self-support and usefulness, and ought to be encouraged in every possible and proper way. My sympathy with them is of long standing, and I want to assure them through you that should I become President of the United States, 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.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

Woodrow Wilson

Walters, Bishop Alexander. Letter from Bishop Walters to Woodrow Wilson, November 16, 1912. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers (MS 312). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries

Trotter’s Protest to President Wilson, November 12, 1914

Background

With Wilson’s victory in the 1912 election, some black leaders had high hopes of a “second emancipation,” expecting Wilson to act in accord with the promised justice and “fair dealing.” They soon discovered that their hopes were misplaced. Rather than moving toward justice

and liberty for blacks, the Wilson administration for the first time implemented segregation in the Post Office and Treasury Departments, as well as in other agencies. The races were to be separated in work stations, dining facilities, restrooms, lockers, and break rooms. William Monroe Trotter, founder and editor of the Boston Guardian, led a delegation of black leaders to meet with the president in 1914. The interview was scheduled for fifteen minutes, but lasted nearly an hour as Wilson and Trotter exchanged heated words. Trotter accused the president of breaking his promises, and Wilson accused Trotter of being combative and disrespectful. Below is an excerpt of Trotter's address in that meeting. Wilson said he would have no further meetings with the NAACP as long as Trotter was their leader.

Trotter's Protest to President Wilson, November 12, 1914.

Only two years ago you were heralded as perhaps the second Lincoln, and now the Afro-American leaders who supported you are hounded as false leaders and traitors to their race. What a change segregation has wrought!...Segregation destroys fellowship and citizenship...

As equal citizens and by virtue of your public promises we are entitled at your hands to freedom from discrimination, restriction, imputation and insult in government employ. Have you a "new freedom" for white Americans and a new slavery for your Afro-American fellow citizens?

God forbid! We have been delegated to ask you to issue an executive order against any and all segregation of government employees because of race and color and to ask whether you will do so. We await your reply, that we may give it to the waiting citizens of the United States of African extraction.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was "the Negro question," and what was Wilson's promise regarding it?
2. What specific action does Trotter ask President Wilson to take?
3. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the documents?
4. With what passages do you most agree? Disagree? Be prepared to explain your reactions to the documents.

Walter White, “The Eruption of Tulsa,” Nation, June 29, 1921 (Excerpts)

Background: In Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Memorial Day, Monday May 31, Dick Rowland approached a public elevator in the Drexel building near his shoe-shine parlor. According to the city’s Jim Crow regulations, the only restroom available to him was on the Drexel’s top floor. As he stepped into the elevator, its operator, seventeen-year-old Sarah Page, screamed, and Rowland ran from the building. At first, Page claimed that Rowland had assaulted her, but she later clarified that he had grabbed her arm to steady himself as he accidentally stumbled over her foot. She declined to press charges. However, the story of the alleged assault was published in the Tulsa Tribune on Tuesday afternoon. Within a short time that evening, plans were underway in the white community to lynch Rowland. The racial tension that characterized many American cities of the era exploded as black men promised to aid law enforcement officers protecting Rowland and white men determined to punish blacks for the offense against a white woman. The rumors and accusations escalated into one of the nation’s worst instances of racial violence. Rowland was arrested in the Greenwood district, where his mother lived. Greenwood, also known as “Black Wall Street,” was the wealthiest black community in the United States, having prospered greatly in the economic boom that followed discovery of oil nearby in 1901. Greenwood was home to black doctors, lawyers, and business owners, encompassing a bank, stylish brick homes, hotels, grocery stores, a theater, department store, churches, two hospitals—all the hallmarks of a thriving, upwardly-mobile, self-sufficient community.

Within less than 24 hours, Greenwood was laid waste and burning, resulting in more than \$1.5 million in damage. Accounts vary, but at least 300 people, black and white, were killed, and thousands of black families were homeless and jobless due to the destruction.

Walter F. White, a blond and blue-eyed man of African-American heritage, had started the Atlanta chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People as a young adult and later became the organization’s national leader. Throughout his career he investigated race riots and worked to end lynchings and other crimes against blacks in America. Shortly after the leveling of Greenwood, White traveled to Tulsa to study the causes and effects of “The Eruption of Tulsa.”

What are the causes of the race riot that occurred in such a place? First, the Negro in Oklahoma has shared in the sudden prosperity that has come to many of his white brothers, and there are some colored men there who are wealthy. This fact has caused a bitter resentment on the part of the lower order of whites, who feel that these colored men, members of an “inferior race,” are exceedingly presumptuous in achieving greater economic prosperity than they who are members of a divinely ordered superior race... [Second] One of the charges made against the colored men in Tulsa is that they were “radical.” Questioning the whites more closely regarding the nature of this radicalism, I found it means that Negroes were uncompromisingly denouncing “Jim-Crow” [railroad] cars, lynching, peonage; in short, were asking that the Federal constitutional guaranties of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” be given regardless of color...

A third cause was the rotten political conditions in Tulsa. A vice ring was in control of the city, allowing open operation of houses of ill fame, of gambling joints, the illegal sale of whiskey, the robbing of banks and stores, with hardly a slight possibility of the arrest of the criminals, and even less of their conviction. For fourteen years Tulsa has been in the absolute control of this element...

[Soon after the newspaper published the story of the alleged assault] the news of the threatened lynching reached the colored settlement where Tulsa’s 15,000 colored citizens lived. Remembering how a white man had been lynched after being taken from the same jail where the colored boy was now confined, they feared that Rowland was in danger. A group of colored men telephoned the sheriff and proffered their services in protecting the jail

from attack. The sheriff told them that they would be called upon if needed. [A white mob of about 400 assembled at the jail, followed by a crowd of about 100 blacks.] The sheriff persuaded [the blacks] to leave. As they complied, a white man attempted to disarm one of the colored men. A shot was fired, and then—in the words of the sheriff—“all hell broke loose.” There was a fusillade of shots from both sides and twelve men fell dead—two of them colored, ten white. The fighting continued until midnight when the colored men, greatly outnumbered, were forced back to their section of the town.

Around five o’clock Wednesday morning the [white] mob, now numbering more than 10,000, made a mass attack on Little Africa. Machine-guns were brought into use; eight aeroplanes were employed to spy on the movements of the Negroes and according to some were used in bombing the colored section...The colored men and women fought gamely in defense of their homes, but the odds were too great... [Attackers] carried cans of oil into Little Africa, and, after looting the homes, set fire to them. Many are the stories of horror told to me—not by colored people—but by white residents. One was ... that of the death of Dr. A. C. Jackson, a colored physician...[considered] “the most able Negro surgeon in America”... A mob attacked Dr. Jackson’s home. He fought in defense of it, his wife and children and himself. An officer of the home guards who knew Dr. Jackson came up at that time and assured him that if he would surrender he would be protected. This Dr. Jackson did. The officer sent him under guard to Convention Hall, where colored people were being placed for protection. En route to the hall, disarmed, Dr. Jackson was shot and killed in cold blood. The officer who had assured Dr. Jackson of protection stated to me, “Dr. Jackson

was an able, clean-cut man. He did only what any red-blooded man would have done under similar circumstances in defending his home. Dr. Jackson was murdered by white ruffians.”

It is highly doubtful if the exact number of casualties will ever be known. The figures originally given in the press estimate the number at 100. The number buried by local undertakers and given out by city officials is ten white and twenty-one colored. For obvious reasons these officials wish to keep the number published as low as possible, but the figures obtained in Tulsa are far higher... O. T. Johnson, commandant of the Tulsa Citadel of the Salvation Army, stated that on Wednesday and Thursday the Salvation Army fed thirty-seven Negroes employed as grave diggers and twenty on Friday and Saturday. During the first two days these men dug 120 graves in each of which a dead Negro was buried. No coffins were used. The bodies were dumped into the holes and covered over with dirt. Added to the number accounted for were numbers of

others—men, women, and children—who were incinerated in the burning houses in the Negro settlement...

What is America going to do after such a horrible carnage—one that for sheer brutality and murderous anarchy cannot be surpassed by any of the crimes now being charged to the Bolsheviki in Russia? How much longer will America allow these pogroms to continue unchecked? There is a lesson in the Tulsa affair for every American who fatuously believes that Negroes will always be the meek and submissive creatures that circumstances have forced them to be during the past three hundred years. Dick Rowland was only an ordinary bootblack with no standing in the community. But when his life was threatened by a mob of whites, every one of the 15,000 Negroes of Tulsa, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, was willing to die to protect Dick Rowland. Perhaps America is waiting for a nationwide Tulsa to wake her. Who knows?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What event sparked the conflict in Tulsa?
2. Construct a brief timeline of the events described.
3. According to White, what were the underlying causes of racial tension there?
4. What virtues and principles of constitutional government are addressed or implied in the documents?
5. What does White say is the “lesson in the Tulsa affair”?

Constitutional Principles and Essential Virtues

Directions:

Use these checklists in your discussion of the examples of race issues in this lesson. In what ways are the principles and virtues demonstrated? In what aspects of the events are they decidedly absent?

Principle	Present	Absent	Explanation
Checks and balances			
Due process			
Equality			
Federalism			
Freedom of contract			

Principle	Present	Absent	Explanation
Freedom of speech, press, & assembly			
Inalienable rights			
Limited government			
Private property			
Rule of law			
Separation of powers			
Others?			

Essential Virtues	Present	Absent	Explanation
Civil discourse			
Courage			
Honor			
Justice			
Moderation			
Perseverance			
Respect			
Responsibility			
Others?			

Documents Organizer

Directions:

Fill in the information indicated in order to compare, contrast, and analyze the documents provided. Then use the documents along with your background knowledge to respond to the **Key Question**.

KEY QUESTION

Which, if any, of the varying approaches advocated by black leaders during the period from 1865-1920 do you believe was the most likely to achieve equality and lead to protection of the rights of blacks? To what extent and in what ways did conditions for American blacks change in the era?

	Audience(s)	Purpose	Main Ideas	Powerful quotes
<p>Handout B: Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law,” 1893 (Excerpts)</p>				
<p>Handout C: Booker T. Washington: The Atlanta Exposition Address, 1895 (Excerpts)</p>				
<p>Handout D: John Hope “We Are Struggling For Equality” 1896 (Excerpts)</p>				

	Audience(s)	Purpose	Main Ideas	Powerful quotes
Handout E: John Marshall Harlan, Dissent from <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i> (1896) (Excerpts)				
Handout F: W.E.B. DuBois, The Talented Tenth, 1903 (Excerpts)				
Handout G: W.E.B. DuBois: Advice to a Black Schoolgirl, 1905 (Excerpts)				
Handout H: Niagara Movement Declaration of Principles 1905 (Excerpts)				

	Audience(s)	Purpose	Main Ideas	Powerful quotes
Handout I: Woodrow Wilson and the Negro Question, 1912 & 1914				
Handout J: Walter White, “The Eruption of Tulsa,” <i>Nation</i> , June 29, 192 (Excerpts)				

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.

- 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.
- 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

- 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?
- 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.
- 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?”

Introductory Essay

The decades after the American Civil War witnessed a vast array of social, economic, technological, cultural, and political changes in the American landscape. These changes transformed the United States from a largely local to a national society. This new society was characterized by a more integrated nation with large institutions and a broad, national outlook.

The economy experienced significant growth during the late nineteenth century that built on the beginnings of the industrial revolution that had begun before the Civil War. The rise of the factory system depended on technological change and new power sources that made the mass production of goods possible. The expansion of the railroad created a national distribution network for the goods. The modern business corporation grew as a response to managing the national production and distribution of goods. The practices of big business came under media and regulatory scrutiny as equal opportunity seemed to shrink. The great wealth of several industrialists was also scrutinized by those who feared their influence and were concerned about growing inequality.

American workers were the backbone of this new industrial economy as they worked with machines to secure the raw materials from the earth and used them to create a finished product. Millions of workers saw great changes in the nature of their work in the factory system. They earned higher wages and enjoyed greater standards of living but sometimes at a great cost due to dangerous, unhealthy conditions. Workers organized into labor unions to meet the growing power of big business. The labor unions

gave workers a sense of solidarity and a greater bargaining position with employers. Waves of strikes and industrial violence convulsed the country, and led to an uncertain future for organized labor.

American farmers were caught between two competing trends in the new industrial economy. The future seemed bright as new western lands were brought under cultivation and new technology allowed farmers to achieve much greater production. However, banks and railroads offered mixed blessings as they often hurt the farmers' economic position. Farmers organized into groups to protect their interests and participate in the growing prosperity of the rapidly industrializing American economy. At the same time, difficult times led many to give up on farming and find work in factories.

American cities became larger throughout the period as the factory system drew millions of workers from the American countryside and tens of millions of immigrants from other countries. The large cities created immense markets that demanded mass-produced goods and agricultural products from American farms. The cities were large, impersonal places for the newcomers and were centers of diversity thanks to the mingling of many different cultures. The urban areas lacked basic services and were often run by corrupt bosses, but the period witnessed the growth of more effective urban government that offered basic services to improve life for millions of people.

The tens of millions of immigrants that came to the United States primarily settled in urban areas and worked in the factories. They came for the opportunities afforded by large, industrial

economies and provided essential low-skill labor. The “new immigrants” were mostly from southeastern Europe, Asia, and Mexico. They had to adapt to a strange new world, and in turn brought with them new ethnicities, languages, religious practices, foods, and cultures. This tension over assimilation led to debates about American values and the Americanization of immigrants. Some native-born Americans wanted to restrict the number of immigrants coming into the country, while others defended the newcomers.

The changes in the economy and society created opportunities and challenges for millions of other Americans. The status and equal rights of women experienced a general, long-term growth. Many women enjoyed new opportunities to become educated and work in society, though these opportunities were still limited when compared with men. The history of women during the late nineteenth century was not monolithic as white, middle-class women often had a very different experience than women who were poor, or from a minority or immigrant background. Because many women entered the workforce, a debate occurred over the kinds and amount of work that women performed, which led to legal protections. The women’s suffrage movement won the biggest success for equal rights in the period with the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, granting women the right to vote.

African Americans did not participate in the growing opportunities and prosperity that other groups in American society did. The long and bloody Civil War had ended with the freeing of African Americans from slavery. This was followed by further gains of constitutional and legal protections, however, many of these rights would soon evaporate. During the late

nineteenth century, African Americans found inequality and racism in the segregation of the South, but they were also victimized by inequality and racism in northern cities in the early twentieth century as they moved there in increasing numbers. Black leaders debated the right path to full equality, civic participation, and economic opportunity in American life.

The changes that affected the American economy and society led to a growth in the federal government. The important issues of the nineteenth century were increasingly contested on the national rather than local levels. Businesses, organized labor, farmers, and interest groups turned to the national government to resolve their disputes. The executive branch saw an expansion of its role and influence as it increased its regulatory power over the many aspects of American life. A widespread reform movement called “progressivism” introduced many reforms that were intended to address the changes in society resulting from the modern industrial economy and society. This increased government’s responsiveness but also dramatically increased the size and powers of the federal government. The national government therefore began to supplant the local and state governments in the minds of many Americans and in the American constitutional system.

The late nineteenth century also ushered in great changes in how the United States interacted with the rest of the world. For the first century of its existence, the United States traded with other countries, acquired territory for continental expansion, and fought in a few major wars. However, the United States was generally neutral in world affairs and focused on its domestic situation. That changed as America entered the world stage as a major global

power. This expansion in world affairs led to an internal debate over international powers and responsibilities. Americans also struggled over the character of its foreign affairs. Debates raged over the growth of American military power and whether Americans had a duty to spread democracy around the world.

The changes in the late nineteenth century were bewildering to most Americans who experienced them. Many debates took place to make sense of the changes and to consider how to respond to them. Americans rarely found easy answers and often conflicted with one another on the different solutions. The vast changes that occurred laid the foundation of modern America. The questions and challenges that they faced are still relevant and are debated by Americans

today in the twenty-first century. Americans continue to discuss the power and regulation of banks and large corporations. Workers grapple with the globalization of the economy, stagnant wages, and changing technology. Farmers still struggle to make an income amid distant markets determining commodity prices while keeping up with changing consumer tastes about organic and locally-sourced food. Headlines are filled with news of African Americans suffering racism and police brutality. Issues related to the equality of women continue to be debated even as women run for president. Smartphones, social media, the internet, and other technologies change our lives, the culture, and the world economy every day. After more than a century since the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, the fundamental challenges of the era still face us today.