



W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963)

I was born during the term of President Andrew Johnson and died the year that Lyndon Johnson became president. I was born and raised in Massachusetts, and graduated in 1888 from Fisk University, a black liberal arts college in Nashville, Tennessee. During the summer, I taught in a rural school and later wrote about my experiences in my book THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK. I outlined my beliefs about helping African Americans in this book.

I have a belief that in order to succeed after slavery, a leadership class of African Americans must be developed. I feel that one in every ten black men in America has the ability and responsibility to become a leader of their race and help guide the rest of the black Americans. The “Talented Tenth” will become leaders through:
1. Continuing their education, 2. Writing books, and 3. Becoming directly involved in social change and civil rights issues. I also believe that leadership can arise from many levels. The common, or grassroots working people also can help.

As an example of my belief in the need for African Americans to further their education, I became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in the subject of history from Harvard University. This indicates African-Americans are intelligent and can study at the most elite institutions in white America. I taught sociology at Atlanta University between 1898 and 1910. I had hoped that social science could help eliminate segregation, but I eventually came to the conclusion that the only effective strategy against racism was agitation. I challenged the dominant ideology of black accommodation as preached and practiced by Booker T. Washington, then the most influential black man in America. Washington urged blacks to accept discrimination for the time being and elevate themselves through hard work and economic gain to win the respect of whites. Feed self today...

Using this education, African-American scholars can write books and research articles that prove our value to the scientific community and white elites. For example, with the publication of THE PHILADELPHIA NEGRO: A SOCIAL STUDY in 1899, the first case study of a black community in the United States, as well as papers on black farmers, businessmen, and black life in Southern communities, I established myself as the first great scholar of black life in America. This will enable us to gain knowledge of our African American society and its role in the American society. In 1903, in my famous book THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK ¹, I charged that Washington's strategy kept the black

man down rather than freed him. This attack crystallized the opposition to Booker T. Washington ² among many black intellectuals, polarizing the leaders of the black community into two wings -- the "conservative" supporters of Washington and his "radical" critics.

My third vision is to agitate for social change. In 1905, I took the lead in founding the Niagara Movement, the forerunner of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People.³ I played a prominent role in the organization's creation and became its director of research and the editor of its magazine, THE CRISIS. I was a major voice of the black community. I criticized President Woodrow Wilson when the president allowed his cabinet members to segregate the federal government. He continued to fight against the demand by many whites that black education be primarily industrial and that black students in the South learn to accept white supremacy.

In conclusion, as a community, we should focus our efforts on providing higher education to the best and brightest in our community in order to develop the leadership capacity among the most able 10 percent of black Americans, whom I call "The Talented Tenth."

Text to be annotated	Type of Annotation	Annotation
Ph.D	Definition	Doctor of Philosophy
agitation	Definition	Speaking out, protesting, calling attention to the situation
segregation	Definition	separation
discrimination	Definition	prejudice
ideology of black accommodation	Historical background	Booker T. Washington believed blacks should accept their role as laborers and servants and earn the respect of whites through hard work in manual tasks
White Supremacy	Historical background	The belief that whites are superior to people of darker skin color in intellect, morals, character, etc.
Woodrow Wilson	Historical Background	The 28 th President of the United States

able 10 percent of black Americans	Historical background	What would be gained if a group focused their resources on advancing the most talented of their group? What advantages would this potentially have?
“when the president allowed his cabinet members to segregate the federal government”	Critical Thinking Question	What do you think was the purpose of Woodrow Wilson segregating the federal government?

¹ www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories_events_souls.html

² <http://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/tuskegee/btwooverview.htm>

³ www.history.com/videos/web-dubois-and-the-niagara-movement