

POST-RECONSTRUCTION, MIGRATION, & URBANIZATION UNIT

Du Bois vs. Washington

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students participate in socratic seminar discussions of excerpted versions of either Du Bois's essay "The Talented Tenth" or Washington's "Atlanta Compromise Speech" in order to better understand each man's beliefs about the best strategy for African Americans to achieve equality at the turn of the century. Students analyze the issues, ideas, and values in each text.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Analyze two primary source documents, "The Talented Tenth" by W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington's Speech given at the Cotton States and International Exposition
- Develop explicit interpretation and discussion skills
- Examine the competing perspectives the two men represent on how African Americans should work for equality

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What were the philosophies of Du Bois and Washington for progress for African Americans?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of each man's philosophies?
- What was the purpose of, and main ideas in each individual's speech?
- How would these men be viewed by whites and African Americans during the progressive era?

KEY CONCEPTS

Democratic Citizenship

Civil Rights

Conflict

Equality

VOCABULARY

philosophy

vocational education

seminar

GROUPING

- Whole Class
- For Day Two, split your class into two groups. Have groups identified prior to class. The Du Bois text is the more difficult to read, so you may want to put students with higher reading and analytical ability in the Du Bois group and those at lower reading levels in the Washington group. Both texts are challenging to interpret but each has a strong voice and is engaging.

MATERIALS

Teacher Resources:

5A Biographies of Du Bois and Washington

5B Socratic Seminar Norms, Phrases & Discussion Tips

Student Handouts:

5.1: Booker T. Washington’s Speech at the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta 1895 (“Atlanta Compromise Speech”) (Modified version also included)

5.2: “The Talented Tenth” Essay by W.E.B. Du Bois 1903 (Modified version also included)

5.3: Washington Seminar Ticket

5.4: Du Bois Seminar Ticket

5.5 Talking Heads

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Conflict	Democratic Citizenship	Historical Inquiry & Historiography	Historical Empathy	Discussion & Deliberation
X	X	X	X	X

INTRODUCTION / HOOK (continued)

Ask:

Is there anything in their backgrounds that provides insights into their possible beliefs about how to gain equality for African Americans?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Remind students that historians seek primary sources to be able to understand historical events. Quickly review and have students identify the situation of African Americans at the turn of the century - especially after all of the promising developments that occurred immediately following the Civil War.

Explain that we are going to begin preparing for tomorrow's Socratic seminar. Explain that a Socratic seminar is a form of discussion where the students critically read and interpret important historical texts, in this case, one by Du Bois and one by Washington.

Say:

Tomorrow you will participate in a seminar on an essay written by W.E.B. Du Bois and a speech given by Booker T. Washington that provide some insights into each man's beliefs about what should be done to help the African American community reach equality. A seminar is a discussion group in which well-informed people talk about an event or an issue in order to understand it more thoroughly, especially the issues, values, and ideas presented in the reading

Although people may have different interpretations or opinions, the purpose of a seminar is not to debate but rather to put together the collective understanding of the group. We can learn from each other as we discuss the issues and our understanding of them. In a seminar there are no right or wrong answers.

✓ Preparation is key to a good seminar. It may be helpful to remind students that this is a difficult lesson to participate in and difficult but important texts to try to understand. Let them know that they are not expected to come up with the one "correct" answer on their own, as there are many different interpretations students may make that can be supported with evidence from the text.

✓ Be sure students understand that they will be listening to the discussion of both speeches during the seminar, both the one they are preparing and also the one the other group is examining. Thus they will be able to compare the two after the seminar.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES (continued)

To be well-informed, you must prepare ahead of time. That means you will need to do some work and come to class with your “ticket,” that is, your preparatory notes on the reading

Usually when we have discussions I lead them, but in a seminar you all are responsible for the discussion. I will only be here to facilitate, to keep things going but not to ask the questions.

Because you will be in charge of the discussion, you will need to prepare very well. If you are not prepared you will have to sit out and not be part of the discussion.

Our seminar will be about the difference in beliefs between Du Bois and Washington. So let’s begin the preparations.

Split the class into two groups and give one group the Washington (5.1) text and one the Du Bois text (5.2). Working with one text at a time, project the text on the screen, smartboard, or overhead and read or have students read each text. Ask students who are assigned to the text you are reading to mark up their copies with questions, identify unfamiliar words, or chart initial reactions. The other group should listen and participate in conversation. **Show the example of your own marked-up text as a model.** Follow each reading with a brief class discussion, including any words that were confusing.

Then ask students to read through the text again on their own or with a partner. After they have finished, hand out the seminar tickets for the two texts (5.3 & 5.4). Review the Seminar Ticket with the students and instruct them to work on filling it out as they read the text again. Remind them that it takes several times to read through a difficult text to start to understand the authors’ intention and message. Encourage them to work with a partner or in small groups. Direct students to complete their preparations for homework.

- ✓ You may want to read parts of the text and pause, asking students for what they understand the message to be in this part of the text.
- ✓ You may need to teach the idea of metaphor if students are not familiar with it.
- ✓ Handouts 5.1B and 5.2B are simplified versions of the speeches. 5.1B uses plain English and 5.2B highlights key text
- ✓ For students who may struggle with the text, you may want to provide the audio file available on the CD in the Project Civis wiki which they can use as they re-read the text.
- ✓ Use the questions in the ticket to help students think about the contents and questions they should be asking themselves as they read and reflect. This is not the time for complete discussion of these questions.
- ✓ Depending on your students’ abilities, you may want to take some time to work on vocabulary before they do their discussion preparations. Or, you may want to take some time right before the discussion to go through difficult terms.

DAY 2: SOCRATIC SEMINAR

INTRODUCTION/HOOK

Create inner and outer circles of desks for the seminar. Direct one group to sit in the inner group and prepare for their discussion and the other group to prepare to take notes on the major ideas addressed - they will need to compare the two texts and the ideas they contain later. You can select which group (Du Bois or Washington) will go first based on your students. The groups will switch mid-way through the lesson and reverse roles.

Ask students to talk with the person next to them as a warm up for the discussion, sharing one of their responses to the questions on the Seminar Ticket as well as some of their vocabulary words.

Focus the Lesson

As a class, discuss what questions would be good seminar questions to help get at the mens' philosophies and construct a list on the board. Limit the number of questions and indicate that these will be helpful if they need prompts to maintain the discussion.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Socratic Seminar

Go over the norms for Socratic Seminar (Teacher Resource 5B). Students in the outside circle should take notes on the discussion and in particular the answers to the main questions on page 2 of their ticket for use in comparing the two mens' beliefs. If this is the students first seminar, you may need to **model or discuss good discussion behaviors and norms explicitly** before starting (e.g., "What does a good discussion look like?").

Pose an opening question. Do not forget to provide wait time. Suggested questions for initiating the discussion (feel free to create your own):

For Washington's Speech:

- What does Washington mean by the metaphor "cast down your bucket where you are"? (line 3)
- What is the purpose of the speech?

✓ Display a large poster with Seminar Norms (5.A) or put up on whiteboard or smartboard and familiarize students with these guidelines.

✓ Students who come unprepared should work on an alternative assignment. Have them track the major themes, tally who talks, or to record the questions asked. Emphasize the purpose for the seminar – to develop good discussion skills and gain a better understanding of the issues, ideas and values of the text.

✓ Remind students that the skills they are developing are authentic for the roles outside of school as citizens.

✓ You may also refer to questions from the Seminar ticket or ask students to discuss the questions they identified.

✓ Refer to the class chart listing norms.

✓ Encourage participants to address the group rather than you.

Washington's Speech (cont.)

- What does Washington envision for the relationship between African Americans and whites? (especially in his use of “separate as the fingers” (line 26))
- How does Washington think African Americans will best work for progress?
- What type of work is Washington encouraging African Americans to train for and do?
- Who is the audience for this speech?
- What is Washington's view of education?

For Du Bois's Essay:

- How does Du Bois think African Americans will best work for progress?
- What does Du Bois envision for the relationship between African American's and whites?
- What does Du Bois mean by the phrase “mistake the means of living for the object of life”? (line 12)
- Who is the audience for this speech?
- What is the purpose of the speech?
- What is Du Bois's view of education?
- What type of work is Du Bois encouraging African Americans to train for and do?

Once the first group reaches a point where the main ideas have been identified from the text, switch groups by having the students on the outside move to the inside circle.

Use the following guidelines for facilitating discussion:

1. When discussion starts to taper off or you feel you have gone far enough on a particular topic, pose another question.
2. Let students lead the direction of the discussion.
3. Invite others to participate if several students are dominating or to help summarize the students' main points.
4. Allow the question to veer away from the question list if the discussion is productive.
5. Seek quality of responses, not quantity. It is not necessary to get through all questions.

✓ Washington is attempting to appeal to and appease white southerners. He does not want to threaten their jobs or social standing. He believes African Americans are best served working in agriculture and manual labor and making slow and steady progress.

✓ Du Bois believes that African Americans need to emulate the majority and establish colleges that will help create an African American educated elite that will then lead the African American community upward. He disagrees with Washington about focus on vocational education.

✓ Use Teacher Resource 5.B for follow up questions

✓ Basic Follow-Up Questions:

- Can you say more about that (or please explain)?
- Where do you see that in the text? (to drive students to use evidence from the text)
- What do other people think about that? (to promote participation)

LEARNING ACTIVITIES (continued)

Once you have reached an acceptable stopping point for the discussion, move on to the discussion debrief. The debrief, in which students share their thoughts on the discussion itself and also set goals for later discussion, is important in helping them to develop discussion skills.

DEBRIEFING

Last Word: Have students turn to a partner for 1-2 minutes and ask them to share any ideas or thoughts they did not get a chance to share.

Discussion Debrief: Ask students the following: How do you think seminar went today? What did we do well? How can we do better next time? Students can pass if they want or if what they have to say has already been said.

Extension Discussion (if time allows):

Re-group students into small mixed groups of 6-8 students, with half from each seminar group. Ask them to come up with a comparison of the two men's philosophies. What did they see that Du Bois and Washington believed in common and what were their differences?

Seminar Response Activity:

Distribute Handout 5.5, Talking Heads. Instruct students to think about the seminar and reflect on each man's ideas about achieving equality for African Americans. They should record the four more important points in the speech bubbles. They may include specific evidence from the discussion and texts in the "Notes" section.

If there is time, have students share their answers in the class the following day, and then ask them to reflect on whether or not this debate is still relevant today.

✓ A good seminar leaves students with more to say on the topic and more ideas to include in the seminar response. Don't expect a neat closure. Hopefully students will continue discussing these ideas on their own.

✓ This could also be done as a whole class wrap up discussion or as an exit ticket or assignment (see below).

✓ Seminar response activities could be completed as class work or homework.