

# Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" and W.E.B. Du Bois's response

## Historical Contextualization and Author's Point of View with your Gale In Context Resources

**Grade Level:** 9-12

**Subject/Content:** U.S. History

**Summary of Lesson:** Students will use *Gale In Context: U.S. History*, *Gale In Context: High School*, or *Gale In Context: Middle School* to read two primary source documents and then analyze those sources after researching the context in which they were written.

**Focus Questions:** What are the key differences in the approaches and strategies employed by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois in their fight for civil rights for African Americans? How did the historical context of post-Civil War America influence the perspectives and strategies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois? What were the criticisms faced by Booker T. Washington in his accommodationist approach to civil rights?

**Resource:** *Gale In Context: U.S. History*, *Gale In Context: High School*, or *Gale In Context: Middle School*

**Time Frame:** 1 hour

**Learning Expectation:** Students will use their close reading skills to analyze two primary sources. Students will provide proper historical context and perspective on the primary sources using research skills and appropriate sources.

### Assessment Types:

**Informal Assessments:** Students will be assessed informally through the introduction discussion and through debrief discussion.

**Formal Assessment:** Students will be assessed through formative assessment questions as they read the primary sources and research Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois.

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### Procedures:

#### Steps/Activities by the Teacher:

- Introduce the idea of Historical Context and Point of View with your students.
- Ask students why understanding Historical Context and Point of View is important to understand historical events or primary sources.
- Facilitate a class discussion on how misunderstanding of Historical Context and Point of View can lead to misrepresentation and misunderstanding of Primary Sources.
- Introduce Civil Rights after the Civil War and two civil rights leaders, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois.
- Pass out or digitally distribute copies of the attached worksheet, Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise", and W.E.B. Du Bois's response in *The Souls of Black Folks*.
- (Optional) Send direct links to the students using the **Get Link** tool in your Gale resource.
- Allow time for students to read the primary sources and research the life of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and events of the late 1800s.

- Debrief after the assignment to clear up any lasting questions over the documents, the Historical Context, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, or the assignment, and revisit the focus question and learning expectations of the lesson.

### Sources:

Bois, W.E.B. Du. "Excerpt from The Souls of Black Folk: 1 (1903)." *The African-American Experience*, Primary Source Media, 1999. American Journey. *Gale In Context: U.S. History*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ2152000536/UHIC?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ2152000536/UHIC?).

"Booker T. Washington." *Gale Middle School Online Collection*, Gale, 2022. *Gale In Context: Middle School*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/JTDZKQ451409430/MSIC?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/JTDZKQ451409430/MSIC?).

"Booker T. Washington." *Gale In Context Online Collection*, Gale, 2020. *Gale In Context: High School*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/LTFOXQ979008959/SUIC?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/LTFOXQ979008959/SUIC?).

"Booker Taliaferro Washington." *Dictionary of American Biography*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936. *Gale In Context: U.S. History*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/BT2310001127/UHIC?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/BT2310001127/UHIC?).

Washington, Booker T. "Excerpt from Up from Slavery: 2 (1901)." *The African-American Experience*, Primary Source Media, 1999. American Journey. *Gale In Context: U.S. History*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ2152000519/UHIC?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/EJ2152000519/UHIC?).

"W.E.B. Du Bois." *Gale In Context Online Collection*, Gale, 2020. *Gale In Context: High School*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/GNJFXW491761401/SUIC?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/GNJFXW491761401/SUIC?).

"W.E.B. Du Bois." *Historic World Leaders*, edited by Anne Commire, Gale, 2023. *Gale In Context: U.S. History*, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/K1616000194/UHIC?](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/K1616000194/UHIC?).

# Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" and W.E.B. Du Bois's response

## Historical Contextualization and Author's Point of View with your Gale In Context Resources

**Directions:** Today's activity focuses on the Civil Rights arguments of both Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois using Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" speech and a response from Du Bois from *The Souls of Black Folks*. Using either *Gale In Context: U.S. History*, *Gale In Context: High School*, or *Gale In Context: Middle School*, search for the primary source document of "Up From Slavery: 2" using the searches below. Once you have found the document, read the Commentary section of the article and the sourcing information, and answer the questions below before continuing.



Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), educator and advisor to U.S. Presidents

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W.E.B. Du Bois, historian, sociologist, and editor

The Library of Congress



**Basic Search:** Booker T. Washington and open the Primary Source from the African American Experience of "Up From Slavery: 2" or

**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: EJ2152000519

1. What did this event/speech become known as?
2. What year was this speech given?
3. What African American leader is mentioned for speaking out against the speech?

**Historical Context:** Research Booker T. Washington to answer the following questions.



**Basic Search:** Booker T. Washington and Read more on the Topic page or  
**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: BT2310001127




**Basic Search:** Booker T. Washington and Read more on the Topic Page or  
**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: LTFXQ979008959




**Basic Search:** Booker T. Washington and Read more on the Topic Page or  
**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: JTDZKQ451409430

4. Washington was born into slavery; how did he gain his freedom?
5. What school did he lead? What kind of fields were taught there?


**Point of View:** Using what you have now read, do an in-depth reading of the speech. During this reading, use the author’s point of view, or perspective, to find a deeper understanding of the speech.



GALE IN CONTEXT  
U.S. HISTORY



GALE IN CONTEXT  
HIGH SCHOOL



GALE IN CONTEXT  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Basic Search:** Booker T. Washington and open the Primary Source from the African American Experience of “Up From Slavery: 2” or

**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: EJ2152000519

6. Washington tells a story about a ship lost at sea. What does Washington want his audience to take from this story?
  
7. In what areas does Washington suggest to “cast down the bucket”?
  
8. Why do you think Washington says the African American community needs to start at the bottom?
  
9. What do you think the statement Washington made to the white community to “cast down their bucket within his race” meant?
  
10. Another infamous quotation from the speech was “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.” Why was this a controversial statement?
  
11. Washington reminded the audience of the size of the African American population in the South, saying it could “constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South; or one-third its intelligence and progress.” Do you think this statement was meant for the white community of the African American community in the audience? Why?
  
12. Washington was criticized for saying that “the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremist folly”. What does this mean?

13. What was the reaction Washington received directly after the speech?

Many had responses to Booker T. Washington's ideas. One of the most prominent responses came from another Civil Rights advocate, W.E.B. Du Bois. Use Gale In Context to learn more about W.E.B. Du Bois before reading his response to Booker T. Washington's speech.



**Basic Search:** W.E.B. Du Bois and Read more on the Topic page **or**  
**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: K1616000194



**Basic Search:** W.E.B. Du Bois and Read more on the Topic Page **or**  
**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: GNJFXW491761401



**Basic Search:** W.E.B. Du Bois and Read the Biography published by Gale **or**  
**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: GNJFXW491761401

Prior to reading the primary source, answer the following questions on W.E.B. Du Bois.

14. Who was older, Du Bois or Washington? Why would this be important?

15. Where did Du Bois get his Doctorate degree?

16. What did Du Bois think would change racism in society?

Now switch to the excerpt from W.E.B. Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folks* to do a close read and answer the following questions.



**Basic Search:** The Souls of Black Folks and open the Primary Source "The Souls of Black Folk: 1 (1903)" **or**

**Advanced Search:** Gale Document Number: EJ2152000536

From the Commentary Section:

17. This chapter is in specific response to a person and an idea. What is it in response to?

18. What movement did Du Bois help found in 1905?

**From the Excerpt:**

19. Du Bois claimed that Washington was concerned about one area. What is it?

20. Du Bois stated that according to Washington, African Americans should give up three things, what three things?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

21. Du Bois acknowledged some of the positives and negatives of Washington's message. What is your overall summary of these positives and negatives?

22. Who does Du Bois blame for the struggles of African Americans?

23. When Du Bois wrote, "we must strive for the rights which the world afforded to men". What rights do you think he had in mind?

**Analysis of Both Men and Readings:**

24. How did Washington and Du Bois differ in their ideas of education for African Americans?

25. What do the arguments and ideas of Du Bois and Washington show about the overall Civil Rights Movement?

**Extension:** Booker T. Washington becomes even more complex when his less public fights get considered. Use the **Biographies** section in Gale In Context of the Booker T. Washington Topic Page to uncover what actions Booker T. Washington was taking in secret. How do you think these actions change his legacy, or do they? Why?

### Answer Key:

1. Atlanta Compromise.
2. 1895.
3. W.E.B. Du Bois.
4. The emancipation proclamation/end of the Civil War.
5. Tuskegee school/institute, industrial classes, farming, cooking, carpentry, and shoemaking.
6. The African American community should seek improvement through industries where they currently are.
7. Agriculture, mechanics, commerce, domestic service.
8. Answer will vary. Possible example: Washington mentioned the community started at the top in politics and that wasn't sustained, he may have thought growth from the bottom up would have been needed to sustain growth or perhaps this is what he thought would be the only acceptable growth within the white community.
9. Answers will vary. Possible example: That the white community should use the African American community as their labor force and not a population he saw as a competitor, like the immigrant community.
10. Answers will vary. Possible example: many linked the quotation to an acceptance of segregation and Jim Crow laws in the United States.
11. It was meant for the white community. Why answers will vary.
12. He didn't demand immediate equality, but instead wanted to focus on (economic) progress.
13. Recognition and congratulations as well as press coverage.
14. Washington was older. Du Bois was born after the Civil War was over and so was slavery.
15. Harvard.
16. Protest by the African American community.
17. Booker T. Washington and gradualism.
18. Niagara Movement.
19. Economics.
20. Political power, insistence on Civil Rights, Higher Education.
21. Answers will vary. Possible example: Washington strives for improvement but falls short of Du Bois's vision and equality.
22. The whole nation.
23. Life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, voting, holding political office, etc.
24. Answers will vary. Possible example: Both strove for equality for African Americans, but Du Bois pushed for immediate equality, Washington accepted gradual progress.
25. Answers will vary. Possible example: The ideas show the complexity of approaches and disagreements on actions to achieve more Civil Rights for African Americans.