

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Handout #1

**Booker T. and W.E.B.  
by Dudley Randall**

\*This poem also outlines  
the beliefs of Booker T.  
and W.E.B.

"It seems to me," said Booker T.,  
"It shows a mighty lot of cheek  
To Study chemistry and Greek  
When Mister Charlie needs a hand  
To hoe the cotton on his land,  
And when Miss Ann looks for a cook,  
Why stick your nose inside a book?"

"I don't agree," said W.E.B.,  
"If I should have the drive to seek  
Knowledge of chemistry or Greek,  
I'll do it. Charles and Miss can look  
Another place for hand or cook.  
Some men rejoice in skill of hand,  
And some in cultivating land,  
But there are others who maintain  
The right to cultivate the brain."

"It seems to me," said Booker T.;  
"That all you folks have missed the boat  
Who shout about the right to vote,  
And spend vain days and sleepless nights  
In uproar over civil rights.  
Just keep your mouths shut, do not grouse,  
But work, and save, and buy a house."

"I don't agree," said W.E.B.,  
"For what can property avail  
If dignity and justice fail.  
Unless you help to make the laws,  
They'll steal your house with trumped-up clause  
A rope's as tight, a fire as hot,  
No matter how much cash you've got.  
Speak soft, and try your little plan,  
But as for me, I'll be a man."  
"It seems to me," said Booker T.—  
"I don't agree," Said W.B.B.

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## Du Bois and Washington on Woman Suffrage

Margaret Murray Washington was the wife of Booker T. Washington and the Dean of Women at Tuskegee Institute, a school founded by her husband.

Suffrage.--Colored women, quite as much as colored men, realize that if there is ever to be equal justice and fair play in the protection in the courts everywhere for all races, then there must be an equal chance for all women as well as men to express their preference through their votes. There are certain things so sure to come our way that time in arguing them is not well spent. It is simply the cause of right which in the end always conquers, no matter how fierce the opposition. Personally woman suffrage has never kept me awake at night, but I am sure before this country is able to take its place amongst the great democratic nations of the earth it has got to come to the place where it is willing to trust its citizens, black as well as white, women as well as men.

--Excerpt from Margaret Murray Washington, "Club Work Among Negro Women," 1895

1. What reason did Margaret Murray Washington give for not actively pursuing the right to vote for women?

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2. What did you think Washington meant when she wrote that woman suffrage had never kept her awake at night?

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W. E. B. Du Bois publicly embraced the cause of woman suffrage after he moved north in 1907.

The signs of awakening womanhood in the world to-day are legion. The best novelists are women. Some of the keenest essayists and graceful writers of verse are women. Women are among the greatest leaders of Social Reforms, and at last in England they are fighting, literally fighting, for their political rights. Of course there are fools a plenty to tell them they don't need the ballot and to feed them the ancient taffy about homes and babies.

-- Excerpt from W.E.B. Du Bois, "Women," *The Horizon* (December 1909)

3. Du Bois claimed women had become leaders in social reform movements. What reform movements did he mean?

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Adella Hunt Logan was a faculty member at Tuskegee Institute and wife of Warren Logan, Washington's close friend and a Tuskegee official.

More and more colored women are studying public questions and civics. As they gain information and have experience in their daily vocations and in their efforts for human betterment they are convinced as many other women have long ago been convinced, that their efforts would be more telling if women had the vote....

Adequate school facilities in city, village and plantation districts greatly concern the black mother. But without a vote she has no voice in educational legislation, and no power to see that her children secure their share of public-school funds....

They know, too, that officers, as a rule, recognize few obligations to voteless citizens....

They must wait while they besiege their legislature. Having no vote they need not be feared or heeded....

Not only is the colored woman awake to reforms that may be hastened by good legislation and wise administration, but where she has the ballot she is reported as using it for the uplift of society and for the advancement of the state....

Colorado has never had a better school than her women have made. Judge Ben Lindsey is as popular with colored women voters as he is with white women voters. The juvenile court over which he presides gives the boys a square deal regardless of color.

--Excerpt from Adella Hunt Logan, "Colored Women as Voters,"  
*The Crisis* (September 1912)

4. Why did Adella Hunt Logan think black women should have the right to vote?

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5. How did Logan prove that women had used their vote to improve society?

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6. Would W. E. B. Du Bois or Booker T. Washington agree more strongly with Logan? Support your answer.

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As the woman suffrage movement gained momentum, Booker T. Washington issued the following statement to the *New York Times*:

I am in favor of every measure that will give to woman, the opportunity to develop to the highest possible extent, her moral, intellectual, and physical nature so that she may make her life as useful to herself and to others as it is possible to make it. I do not, at the present moment, see that this involves the privilege or the duty, as you choose to look upon it, of voting.

The influence of woman is already enormous in this country. She exerts, not merely in the homes, but through the schools and in the press, a powerful and helpful influence upon affairs. It is not clear to me that she would exercise any greater or more beneficent influence upon the world than she now does, if the duty of taking an active part in politics were imposed upon her.

But this is a question concerning which, it seems to me, the women know better than men, and I am willing to leave it to their deliberate judgment.

-- Excerpt from Booker T. Washington, "The Woman Suffrage Movement," *New York Times*, 20 December 1908

7. What two reasons did Booker T. Washington give for not actively supporting the woman suffrage movement?

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