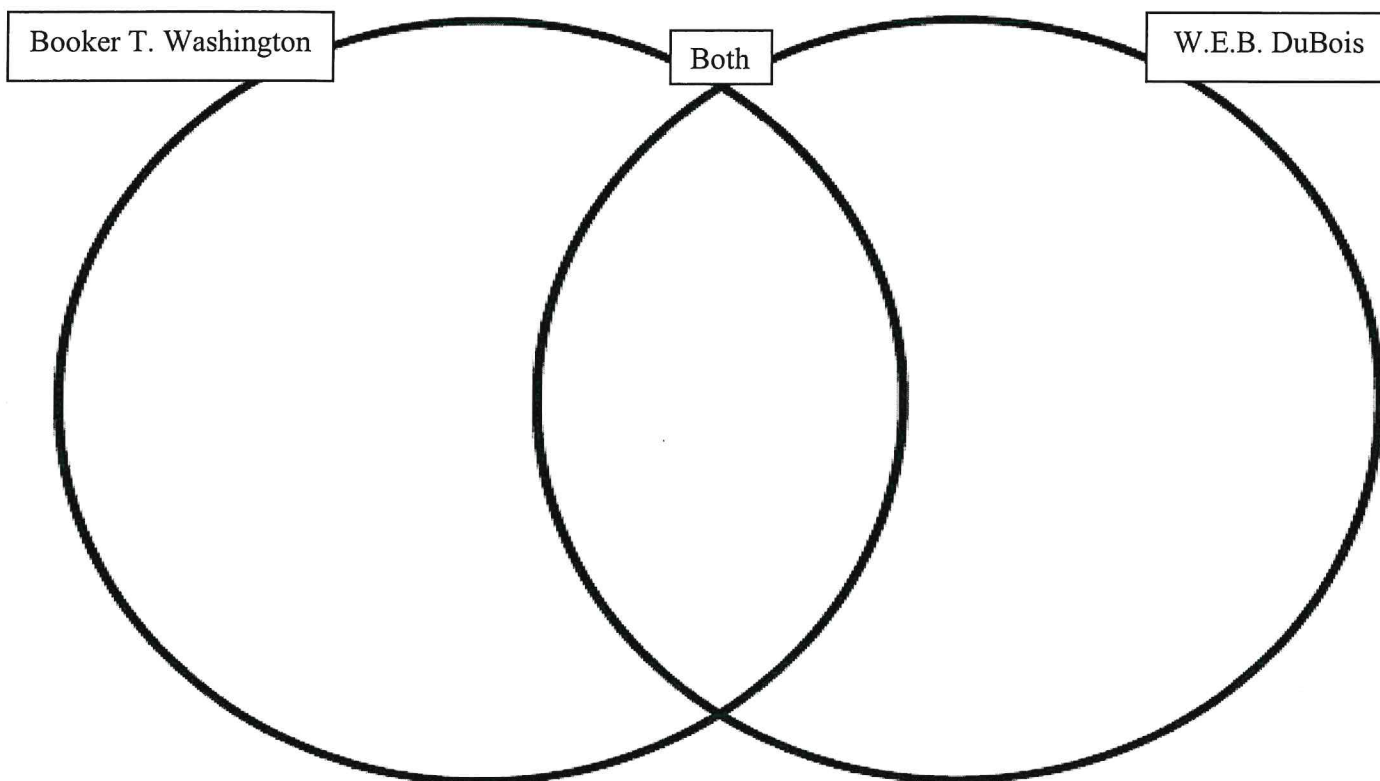


Name \_\_\_\_\_

*Booker T. Washington vs. W.E.B. DuBois*

**Short Answer**

1. Describe Booker T. Washington's philosophy/strategy on gaining Civil Rights for African Americans.
2. Describe W.E.B. DuBois' philosophy/strategy on gaining Civil Rights for African Americans.
3. Washington and DuBois had different strategies but the same goal. Explain which strategy you believe was the better way to achieve their mutual goal.
4. Explain whether you think it was good or bad for the cause of Civil Rights for African Americans to have two different leaders who disagreed?
5. Place a *minimum* of 2 facts from the readings in each available space of the Venn Diagram.



## Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)



Booker T. Washington was born a slave in Virginia, but after the Civil War, moved with his family to Malden, West Virginia. Extreme poverty ruled out regular schooling; at age nine he began working, first in a salt furnace and later in a coal mine. Determined to get an education, he enrolled at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Virginia, working as a janitor to help pay expenses. He graduated in 1875 and returned to Malden, where for two years he taught children in a day school and adults at night.

In 1881 Washington was selected to head a newly established school for blacks in Tuskegee, Alabama, an institution with two small buildings, no equipment, and very little money. Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute became his life's work. At his death 34 years later, it had more than 100 well-equipped buildings, over 1,500 students, nearly 200 teachers teaching 38 trades and professions (job skills), and an endowment of approximately \$2,000,000.

Washington believed that the best interests of black people in the post-Reconstruction era could be realized through education in job skills and farming, and focusing on patience, hard work, and saving money. He urged his fellow blacks, most of whom were poor and illiterate farm laborers, to temporarily abandon their efforts to win full civil rights and political power from whites, and instead to develop their industrial and farming skills so they could attain "economic security" (enough money to live comfortably). Without economic security, their lives would have no stability or hope for improvement, and their children would not have any better opportunities.

Therefore, under Booker T. Washington's plan, blacks would temporarily accept the segregation and discrimination of the white population, but their gradual attainment of wealth and work skills would slowly win the respect and acceptance of the white community. This would break down the divisions between the two races and lead to equal citizenship for blacks in the long run.

Washington developed a following among many African Americans and liberal whites, who viewed him as an honorable and realistic leader. A national controversy erupted when he was the first invited black guest to the White House to discuss race relations with President Theodore Roosevelt in 1901.

Washington lost some of his support in his later years as conditions in the South failed to improve very much. However, he was still popular and respected.

## W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963)



Du Bois was born in the North, in Massachusetts, after the Civil War. He grew up in a neighborhood that allowed him to interact with white and black people. DuBois graduated from Fisk University, a black institution at Nashville, Tennessee, in 1888. In 1895, he became the first black person to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. For more than a decade he devoted himself to studying the condition of blacks in America.

Du Bois believed that in a climate of extreme racism, expressed with such evils as lynching (hangings), sharecropping, disfranchisement (voting tricks such as Literacy Tests), and Jim Crow segregation laws, social change could only be accomplished through blacks achieving the highest possible education while also engaging in protest and confrontation. He urged black Americans to never accept “no” for an answer.

In this view, he clashed with the most influential black leader of the period, Booker T. Washington, who urged blacks to accept discrimination for the time being and elevate themselves through hard work and economic gain. In Dubois’s famous book The Souls of Black Folk, he charged that Washington's strategy, rather than freeing the black man from oppression, would serve only to continue it. DuBois wanted blacks to organize and demand change. His ideas created opposition to Booker T. Washington among many black leaders, dividing the leaders of the black community into two groups—the “conservative” supporters of Washington and the “radical” supporters of Dubois.

Two years later, in 1905, Du Bois took the lead in founding the Niagara Movement, which was dedicated chiefly to attacking the platform of Booker T. Washington. This movement was the direct inspiration for the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People), founded in 1909. Du Bois played a prominent part in the creation of the NAACP and became the association's director of research and editor of its magazine, *The Crisis*. As the editor of *The Crisis*, he encouraged the development of black literature and art and urged his readers to see “Beauty in Black.”

DuBois became more and more radical during the early 1900’s as his frustration over the lack of civil rights for African Americans grew. Before his death, he moved to Africa and renounced his U.S. citizenship.

### Document A: Booker T. Washington (Modified)

*Booker T. Washington was born a slave in 1856 and was nine years old when slavery ended. He became the principal of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a school designed to teach blacks industrial skills. Washington was a skillful politician and speaker, and he won the support of whites in the North and South who donated money to the school. On September 18, 1895, Booker T. Washington spoke before a mostly white audience in Atlanta.*

Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our freedom we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more attractive than starting a dairy farm or garden.

A ship lost at sea for many days passed a friendly ship and sent out a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly ship 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 ship, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are" . . . The captain of the distressed **vessel** (ship), at last **heeding** (listening to) the **injunction** (order), cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water.

To those of my race I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"— cast it down in making friends with the Southern white man, who is your next-door neighbor. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service. . . . 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.

To those of the white race who look to foreign immigrants for the prosperity of the South, 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 **fidelity** (loyalty) and love you have tested. . . . As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past . . . so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach. . . . 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.

**Source:** Excerpt from Booker T. Washington's 'Atlanta Compromise' speech, 1895.

## Document B: W.E.B. DuBois (Modified)

*The most influential public critique of Booker T. Washington came in 1903 when black leader and intellectual W.E.B. DuBois published an essay in his book, The Souls of Black Folk. DuBois rejected Washington's message and instead called for political power, insistence on civil rights, and the higher education of African-American youth. DuBois was born and raised a free man in Massachusetts and was the first African American to earn a PhD from Harvard.*

The most striking thing in the history of the American Negro since 1876 is the rise of Mr. Booker T. Washington. His leadership began at the time when Civil War memories and ideals were rapidly passing; a day of astonishing commercial development was dawning; a sense of doubt and hesitation overtook the freedmen's sons. Mr. Washington came at the psychological moment when whites were a little ashamed of having paid so much attention to Negroes [during Reconstruction], and were concentrating their energy on dollars.

Mr. Washington practically accepts the alleged inferiority of the Negro races. Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. He asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things—

First, political power; Second, insistence on civil rights; Third, higher education of Negro youth,

— and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the **pacifying** (calming down) of the South. As a result of this tender of the **palm-branch** (peace offering), what has been the return? In these years there have occurred:

1. The **disfranchisement** (taking away the right to vote) of the Negro; 2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro; 3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

Mr. Washington's doctrine has tended to make the whites, North and South, shift the burden of the Negro problem to the Negro's shoulders and stand aside as critical **spectators** (onlookers); when in fact the burden belongs to the nation, and the hands of none of us are clean if we do not all work on righting these great wrongs.

**Source:** W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chicago, 1903).