

Booker t washington
the great debate
history essay



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Shhhh, they are about to start the debate! Booker T. Washington felt that African Americans should learn a trade such as fixing cars, carpenter, and etc. W. E. B Dubois on the other hand felt that African Americans should go to school and get a education in the books. For years, these two didn't see eye to eye at all. They both stood strongly for their beliefs. Booker T. Washington and W. E. B Dubois had very different views on African Americans and whether they should learn a trade or go to school and get a education in the books. These two men were very influential towards African Americans in today's society. Both men can from different backgrounds in so many different ways they are one in the same but at the same time they are both unique in their own special ways. They had several disagreements about their political views. They argued for many, many, many years about education, and their political views. Washington and Dubois came from various walks of life. One was a slave and the other was just a young black man from up north who never saw segregation or hatred at all until moving down to the south. They both could never have predicted that they would be major icons in the black communities for many years to come.

Booker T. Washington was born into slavery. His mother was a slave and his father was a white man from a plantation. Most people don't know that Washington went to school it just wasn't as a student but to carry the books of his slave owner's daughter books. Washington and his mother moved to join his step father in Malden, West Virginia. He got a job at a salt mine, he went to work at four in the morning so that he could go to school later on. Booker was soon bought and made into a houseboy by a wealthy white woman who encouraged him to get a education. At the age of 16 ,

Washington walked close to 500 miles to Virginia to enroll in the school for blacks. He knew that if he worked at Hampton institution that would pay for his education. Most kids have to write an essay or have outstanding grades to get accepted into an institution but not Booker T. Washington. Washington had to clean a room to the headmaster's satisfaction to get admitted in Hampton. His admission to Hampton led him down a different path from a life of forced labor for goods. He became an instructor at Hampton, later, he became the principal and guiding force behind Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, which he founded in 1881, he became recognized as the nation's best black educator. "Washington's views on education were representative of the fact that he was not an intellectual, but a man of action. Washington wanted blacks in the south to respect and value the need for industrial education both from a vantage of American and African experience"(http://northbysouth.kenyon.edu/1998/edu/home/btw.htm). W. E. B. Dubois was born February 23, 1868 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. On the other hand Booker T. Washington was born into slavery and his father was a white slave owner. Growing up in the north, Dubois never experienced slavery or anything to that magnitude, he could only go by what he heard and what he read in the newspapers. Washington actually grew up in it and knew what it felt like to work for the white man. Washington was a houseboy for several years, while Dubois was up north enjoy what they called freedom at the time. The slave owner who had Washington working in his home, his wife was the one who encouraged Washington to get his education. In 1872 Washington did just that by enrolling into Hampton Agricultural Institute. When he got the institute at the time they had a principal named Samuel Armstrong who later on turned out to be Washington's role model well he <https://assignbuster.com/booker-t-washington-the-great-debate-history-essay/>

was there. In 1880, Lewis Adams, a black political leader in Macon County, agreed to help two white Democratic Party candidates, William Foster and Arthur Brooks, to win a local election in return for the building of a Negro school in the area. Both men were elected and they then used their influence to secure approval for the building of the Tuskegee Institute. (<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAbooker.htm>). The Tuskegee institute opened July 4, 1888 and Washington was the headmaster of the school when it opened. In a speech in Atlanta in 1895, he stated his conviction that blacks could best gain equality in America by improving their economic situation through education-particularly industrial training-rather than by demanding equal rights. His “Atlanta Compromise” was sharply criticized by other black leaders-including W. E. B. du Bois, who would become Washington’s great intellectual opponent-though many blacks and most whites supported his views.

Dubois got rushed with all the segregation and reality when he came down south to go to Fisk University for college. Dubois was the first African American to receive a Ph. D. from Harvard University in 1896. In 1897 he took a position at Atlanta university, while he was there he conducted several studies of conditions for blacks in America. In 1903 he wrote *The Souls of Black Folk* which gave access to many of his ideas. He founded a program that ended up later being called NAACP.” In the public schools of this town, I was trained from the age of six to 16, and in the town schools, churches, and general social life, I learned my patterns of living. I had, as a child, almost no experience of segregation or color discrimination. My schoolmates were invariably white; I joined quite naturally all games,

excursions, church festivals; recreations like coasting, swimming, hiking and games. I was in and out of the homes of nearly all my mates, and ate and played with them. I was as a boy long unconscious of color discrimination in any obvious and specific way." ([http://www. bolender. com](http://www.bolender.com))

W. E. B Dubois felt that African Americans should not to school and not learn a trade. " The cost of liberty is less than the price of repression"(Dubois). " Mr. Washington withdraws many of the high demands of Negroes as men and American citizens. In other periods of intensified prejudice all the Negro's tendency to self-assertion has been called forth; at this period a policy of submission is advocated. In the history of nearly all other races and peoples the doctrine preached at such crises has been that manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing"(soul of black folk Dubois).. Dubois was a northern who was very book smart and felt that education was the key to getting far in this world. He felt that the color of a person's skin shouldn't dictate how far or how much of a education they should be allowed to receive.(Read more: [http://www. brainyquote. com/quotes/authors/w/w_e_b_du_bois. html#ixzz1KHZQQ6zq](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/w/w_e_b_du_bois.html#ixzz1KHZQQ6zq))

Du Bois had originally believed that social science could provide the knowledge to solve the race problem, he gradually came to the conclusion that in a climate of virulent racism, expressed in such evils as lynching, peonage, disfranchisement, Jim Crow segregation laws, and race riots, social change could be accomplished only through agitation and protest.(

[http://www. biography. com/articles/W. E. B.-Du-Bois-9279924](http://www.biography.com/articles/W.E.B.-Du-Bois-9279924)). He often <https://assignbuster.com/booker-t-washington-the-great-debate-history-essay/>

clashed with Washington who, preaching a philosophy of accommodation, urged blacks to accept discrimination for the time being and elevate themselves through hard work and economic gain, thus winning the respect of the whites. Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house walls, which molds and develops men.(W. E. B DuBois) Dubois felt a totally different way than Washington. He felt that blacks should go to school and get their education. Dubois thought Washington's emphasis on industrial education actually kept African-Americans trapped in lower social and economic classes by suggesting they were best suited to service occupations. Du Bois wanted African-Americans encouraged to succeed in the arts and sciences(www.theholidayzone.com/black/dreading2.html). To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships.(Dubois). Consider a famous Dubois quote from 1908: But if ... the standards of a great Negro college are to be set by schools of lower and different object, whither are the ideals of this University falling? If you find that you cannot give technical courses of college grade, then give high-school courses or kindergarten courses and call them by their right names. There may often be excuse for doing things poorly in this world, but there is never any excuse for calling a poorly done thing, well done.

The times are perilous. A stubborn determination at this time on the part of the Negro race, to uphold its ideals, keep its standards, and unceasingly contend for its rights, means victory; and victory a great deal sooner than any of you imagine. But a course of self-abasement and surrender, of lowering of ideals and neglecting of opportunity — above all, a philosophy of

lying in word or deed for the sake conciliation or personal gain, means indefinite postponement of the true emancipation of the Negro race in America, for the simple reason that such a race is not fit to be freed.

Washington felt that African Americans should learn a trade because he felt that nobody could ever take that away. "Character is power" (Washington).

Washington felt that there was a racial uplift. He felt that if the whites wouldn't back the African Americans up on the education then why get involved and devoted. Washington believed that African-Americans would gain respect from the white community if they had trade skills. He also believed that trade skills were key to economic security. (www.

theholidayzone.com/black/dreading2.html). "You can't hold a man down

without staying down with him", said Washington. "The older I grow, the more I am convinced that there is no education which one can get from

books and costly apparatus that is equal to that which can be gotten from contact with great men and women" (Washington) [http://www. goodreads.](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/84278)

[com/author/quotes/84278](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/84278). Booker_T_Washington. Washington had strong

beliefs and stood by all of them when it came down to education and a man

character. Washington believed that the best interests of black people in the

post-Reconstruction era could be realized through education in the crafts

and industrial skills and the cultivation of the virtues of patience, enterprise,

and thrift. He urged his fellow blacks, most of whom were impoverished and

illiterate farm laborers, to temporarily abandon their efforts to win full civil

rights and political power and instead to cultivate their industrial and farming

skills so as to attain economic security. Blacks would thus accept

segregation and discrimination, but their eventual acquisition of wealth and

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culture would gradually win for them 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 end. In his epochal speech (Sept. 18, 1895) to a racially mixed audience at the Atlanta (Ga.) Exposition, Washington summed up his pragmatic approach in the famous phrase: " In all things that are purely social we can be separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

Washington and Dubois didn't get along because they had many different views on a variety of subjects. I believe that as they had their disagreements, they both had respect for one another no matter how the debates turned out. Booker T. Washington focused on having education for real life jobs and not asking for equality from the whites. He just focused on getting help from the whites and accepting their place as blacks on earth.

WEB Dubois focused on the exact opposite things that of Booker T.

Washington(<http://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20090507135833AAAdGiBe>). Washington believed entirely that he was right on his views and didn't want to be proving wrong. Dubois believed strongly in his beliefs, and he couldn't be told that his beliefs weren't right. " The Negro Race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education then, among Negroes, must first of all deal with the " Talented Tenth." It is the problem of developing the best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the worst"(Dubois). Booker T Washington and W. E. B. Dubois had different views on the Civil Rights movement. Booker's view of it was peaceful and non violent (such as Martin Luther King Jr.) while W. E. B. Du Bois had assertive

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point of view and thought sometimes you need to fight (such as Malcolm X.)

Booker T. Washington also thought that blacks and whites should have the same rights but they should be segregated “ like fingers on the same hand.”

(<http://hennessyhistory.wikispaces.com/Booker+T.+Washington-1>)

My opinion on the whole situation is that they were both right in their own way. It depends on how the person who reads it feels about the whole education picture. The major difference between the two was their political views. Both Du Bois and Washington wanted African-Americans to have the same rights as white Americans. Du Bois encouraged African-Americans to demand equal rights. Washington's view on the other hand, often ignored discrimination. He believed that it was important for blacks to develop good relationships with whites. Washington was afraid that blacks who demanded equal rights would create hatred between themselves and white Americans. Although Dubois wrote many books and articles criticizing Washington's views, I feel that these two brilliant intelligent men could have come together for a much better compromise on their views. Washington wrote articles, and books about his struggles coming up in America during the slavery centuries.

In conclusion, they both had very solid points where they stand on the issue at hand but only can be the winner and the other one has to be the loser.

Don't get me wrong now I could have never picked a side but I was never asked to either so I'm going to stay neutral and not pick sides. I have learned

a lot of new things about both parties that I didn't have any clue about but now I have obtained some more information about the parties, I can really

truly understand where both Washington and Dubois was coming from in <https://assignbuster.com/booker-t-washington-the-great-debate-history-essay/>

their views. Washington and Dubois at the end of all the debates they turned out to play major roles in African Americans getting their freedom. They fought so hard that they're still being mentioned in middle schools and high schools around the world for their debates and various views on a variety of subjects.

Work cited

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