Slavery’s Impact on Racism in the Twentieth Century

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Unit: Slavery and the Civil War

Topic: This lesson reviews slavery and the Reconstruction Amendments and their impact on racism in the early 20th century

Grade Level/Course: 9th Grade US History

Duration: 80 minutes

Focus Question: How did slavery and its effects impact the treatment of African Americans in the early 20th century?

Common Core Alignment, Reading 9: Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington’s Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms speech, King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”), including how they address related themes and concepts.

Maryland State Curriculum Alignment: Expectation 2: Topic A: Indicator 1: Objective G: Analyze African American responses to inequality, such as the Niagara Movement, the establishment of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Urban League, and the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Lesson Objectives (Students will be able to):
1. Examine the hardships suffered by African Americans under slavery and the failure of Reconstruction initiatives for equality.
2. Analyze the impact of slavery and Reconstruction on the treatment of African Americans during the early 20th century.
Roots of a Nation: A Chesapeake Journey
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**Vocabulary:** slavery, Jim Crow laws, share-cropping, tenant farming, Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Plessy v. Ferguson, Reconstruction Amendments

**Materials:** Segments of the autobiography entitled, *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, Documents from Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois, Graphic Organizers (2), access to internet and access to Promethean or SmartBoard.

**Instructional Procedure:**

1. **Warm-up:** Students will read segments of *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass* and write a brief description of slavery in the American South.

2. **Mini-Lecture:**
   - Civil War 1861-1865
   - Reconstruction 1865-1877: many legal advances for African Americans (e.g., 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments; many African Americans elected to office in the South).
   - But in 1876, North pulls its troops out and white-supremacist Democrats take over.
   - **Result:**
     ○ Most African Americans became sharecroppers.
     ○ Laws put in place to prevent African Americans from voting (e.g., poll tax, literacy).
     ○ KKK had support of local officials and terrorized anyone who voted Republican.
     ○ Lynching became a widespread form of terrorism against African Americans, especially those who gained an economic/social foothold.
     ○ Jim Crow segregation: separate=equal upheld in Plessy v. Ferguson (1896).
     ○ Against this historical context, two leaders emerged: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois.

3. **Close Reading:** Hand out Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois documents (originals for honors classes or high flyers, modified for students needing modified reading.) Have students go through each document and use close reading methods to analyze the documents (read it twice, underline/highlight, make notes, etc.)

4. **Graphic Organizer:** Hand out the graphic organizers entitled, “Document A: Booker T. Washington” and “Document B: W.E.B. DuBois.” With students, go through (on Promethean or SmartBoard) and fill out the graphic organizer for Booker T. Washington. DO NOT give them answers, but do help them come up with answers as a class.
5. **Individual Work:** Students will need to fill out the W.E.B. DuBois graphic organizer on their own. Give them 10-15 minutes -- depending on their ability levels.

6. **Working in Pairs:** Have students work with a partner to improve the DuBois graphic organizer.

7. **Whole Class Discussion:** Discuss the questions below to be answered on individual students’ papers.

   - **Booker T. Washington** has been a very controversial figure. Some historians say that he was a sell-out who kissed up to white people; others say he was realistic about the situation in the South, and tried to avoid inciting white hostility. What do you think?
   - What was **W.E.B. DuBois’** critique of Washington? Do you think DuBois makes a good point? Why or why not?
   - Why might some of Washington’s supporters say that DuBois didn’t understand what life was like in the South? Based on what he wrote, do you think DuBois was clueless about what was happening in the South?

**Assessment Activity:** Exit Slip--> Who was a stronger advocate for African Americans, Booker T. Washington or W.E.B. DuBois? Explain your answer using details and examples from the primary source documents used in class today.

**Extension Activity:**

- Have students identify individual examples/quotes from DuBois and Washington that they feel helped African Americans, hindered African Americans or had no effect on African Americans. Give students six index cards (or sticky notes). Students should list one example/quotation on each card (three for DuBois and three for Washington).
- Using two “hula-hoops," make a Venn diagram on the wall (or draw one on a Promethean board).
- Have students take turns placing their index cards on the Venn diagram (helped African Americans, hindered African Americans or had no effect on African Americans) in the appropriate place and explain why they chose that piece.
- Class discussion regarding opinions.