

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



# Ida B. Wells

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Educator, activist.

Ida B. Wells:

Investigative journalist.

“The way to right wrongs

Is to turn the light

Of truth upon them.”

She took up the fight!

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Born into slavery

In July 1862 in Mississippi.

The Emancipation Proclamation was passed six months later.

She and her parents were liberated.

At 16 years old, her parents and little brother passed from yellow fever.

She went to work as a teacher

‘Cause her little siblings needed her.

Wells supported her five siblings,

And at the age of 20, she relocated to Memphis.

There, her activism started when she refused to move  
From her seat on a train. They threw her out, but she sued.  
After that, she fell in love with journalism.  
It didn't take long for her to tackle serious issues.  
First up, the public school system.  
She exposed racial inequities for all to witness.  
As a result, she lost her job as a teacher.  
It turns out this was her newfound freedom.  
This is where her journey begins.  
Ida B. Wells became a full-time journalist  
With the Black-owned Free Speech and Headlight.  
Wells was happy, new career; she was energized.  
But in 1892, a tragedy occurred  
That changed the course of her life  
And left folks unnerved.  
Three Black Memphis grocery-store owners  
Were lynched by a White mob.  
So you know Wells had to make the truth known.

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Lynching refers to murder  
By a mob under the guise of justice  
For a supposed crime—  
A constant threat for southern Black people  
At this time.  
Wells knew those Black grocers  
And knew they were innocent,  
But how can they control where people’s money was spent?  
Business was taken away from White-owned grocery stores,  
So these lynchings, at their core,  
Were to settle a score.  
They didn’t do nothing but be  
Successful Black businessmen.  
Ida didn’t run; she stood up with her pen—  
Wrote all about it  
And called out those White men.  
She began  
To travel throughout the South,  
Investigating over 700 lynchings,  
And what she found was horrific.  
Only a third of the victims were accused of crimes  
And none of these victims received a trial.  
When she revealed her findings,  
Her newspaper office was destroyed by a White mob.  
That was foul,  
So she went up north and doubled down on her efforts,  
Gathering more data to further report.  
She even wrote books and went on an international tour

To talk about lynching and the great American horror.

So let's remember Wells as a trailblazing hero

Who risked her life to expose many evils.