

Name _____

Date _____

W.E.B. Du Bois

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Among W.E.B. Du Bois's many contributions to Black political theory and activism, one of the most enduring is as a founding member of the NAACP, alongside other Black civil rights leaders like Ida B. Wells. As an intellectual and writer, Du Bois helmed **The Crisis**, a monthly journal published by the NAACP that covered topics in Black American life, political theory, and advocacy. In particular, Du Bois published stories about lynchings—the coordinated vigilante executions of Black people throughout the American South. He criticized the practice and demanded stricter laws to prevent them. The journal also featured stories about labor unions, segregation, and voting rights. Today, the NAACP remains a leading organization in Black American rights.

While serving as editor of **The Crisis**, which of these topics did W.E.B. Du Bois publish stories about?

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| A. Lynchings | B. Voting rights |
| C. Black political theory | D. All of the above |

2. W.E.B. Du Bois was not shy about his political theories, going so far as to publicly contradict other Black intellectuals within the movement for civil rights. One notable example is his clash with Booker T. Washington. While Washington believed Black Americans should secure rights incrementally, writing that a certain level of discrimination is to be expected so long as the movement was making slow progress, Du Bois strongly disagreed. Du Bois believed progress could and should happen quickly, and that no amount of discrimination was acceptable. This, as well as Du Bois's belief in socialist politics, put him at odds with some in the civil rights movement, but also earned him a reputation as a truly radical thinker.

Based on the passage, which of these is true of W.E.B. Du Bois's political views?

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| A. He believed Black Americans should view discrimination as a temporary problem that would eventually disappear on its own. | B. He believed in slow progress and compromise, and that some amount of inequity was acceptable if it amounted to long-term change. |
| C. He advocated for immediate action, believing that no amount of discrimination or inequality should be tolerated. | D. He was a political moderate, advocating for better rights for African Americans with civil debate and campaigns for public office. |

3. The most enduring of W.E.B. Du Bois's sociopolitical theories is the idea of double consciousness. In this theory, Du Bois explains the conflict Black Americans face of fitting into White society while maintaining their own specific cultural identity. He argues that Black Americans face a spiritual contradiction—that to be “Black” and “American” are two fundamentally opposed ideas. For Black people, Du Bois wrote, the United States is “a world which yields [Black people] no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world.” In his view, Black Americans are only given the opportunity to view the world through the lens of White oppression, and that achieving a view of self-determination is essential to securing equal rights.

What is the central idea behind W.E.B. Du Bois's theory of double consciousness?

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| A. Being Black and being American are opposing ideas, due to the discrimination inherent to White American society. | B. Black Americans must choose between their cultural heritage and American identity. |
| C. The only way to reconcile Black identity is to unite people of African descent from all over the world under one cause. | D. None of the above |