

Lesson Plan for *Ladder for Booker T. Washington*, 1996 by Martin Puryear (p.88)
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Grade Level - Middle and secondary grades; U.S. History, civil rights and personal goals

Objective – The objective of the lesson is to relate civil rights to personal goals.

Guiding Question:

“In relation to personal goals and civil rights, what is Martin Puryear trying to reveal to the observer when using a ladder which is finely crafted but narrowing?”

Background Information on Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois

Booker T. Washington was born into slavery, and attended and taught at the Hampton Institute in Virginia. Later, he founded the Tuskegee Institute which trained freedmen for jobs in farming and industry. Washington did not favor public protests but believed that African Americans should first work at getting educations and jobs and then try to win other rights.

A contemporary of Washington was W.E.B. DuBois who earned a doctorate from Harvard University. He believed that jobs as farm workers or factory workers were not enough. Freedmen should aspire to become teachers, lawyers and professional people. They should demand their rights now, but in a peaceful yet firm manner. (See additional information on page 88 of the *Picturing America*, Teacher Resource Book.)

Lesson Plan/Activities

1. Discuss the rights of freedmen during Reconstruction, the role of the Jim Crow Laws, and the goals of Booker T. Washington for freedmen after the Civil War.
2. Read the poem *Booker T. and W.E. B.* (see attachment) and discuss the different ideas of Booker T. and W.E. B.
3. What were the goals of Washington? Why did Booker T. emphasize those goals? What are goals of W.E.B?
4. Think about your personal goals and what you can do to achieve the goals.
5. Students complete the rungs of the ladder (see attachment) by writing words or phrases which express ways to achieve their goals.
6. Discuss the civil rights of freedmen during Reconstruction. How would those civil rights impact your ability to achieve your goals? How are civil rights different today?

7. Class discussion

*What goals were chosen?

*What words were written on the ladder rungs and why?

*How do your goals relate to the goals and civil rights which Booker T. Washington wanted for freedmen during Reconstruction?

Assessment – Students write an essay comparing/contrasting their steps to achieve their goals to those of Booker T. Washington.

Vocabulary

Jim Crow Laws – laws passed in the South after the Civil War which were meant to segregate whites and African Americans. The name Jim Crow came from a popular song that made fun of African Americans.

(examples of Jim Crow laws: separate railroad cars, parks, streetcars, schools, entrances to work areas; poll tax, literacy test, grandfather clause before voting)

Booker T. and W.E.B.
(Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois)

Written by Dudley Randall (1914 -)

"It seems to me," said Booker T.,
"It shows a mighty lot of cheek
To study chemistry and Greek
When Mister Charlie needs a hand
To hoe the cotton on his land,
And when Miss Ann looks for a cook,
Why stick your nose inside a book?"

"I don't agree," said W.E.B.
"If I should have the drive to seek
Knowledge of chemistry or Greek,
I'll do it, Charles and Miss can look
Another place for hand or cook.
Some men rejoice in skill of hand,
And some in cultivating land,
But there are others who maintain
The right to cultivate the brain."

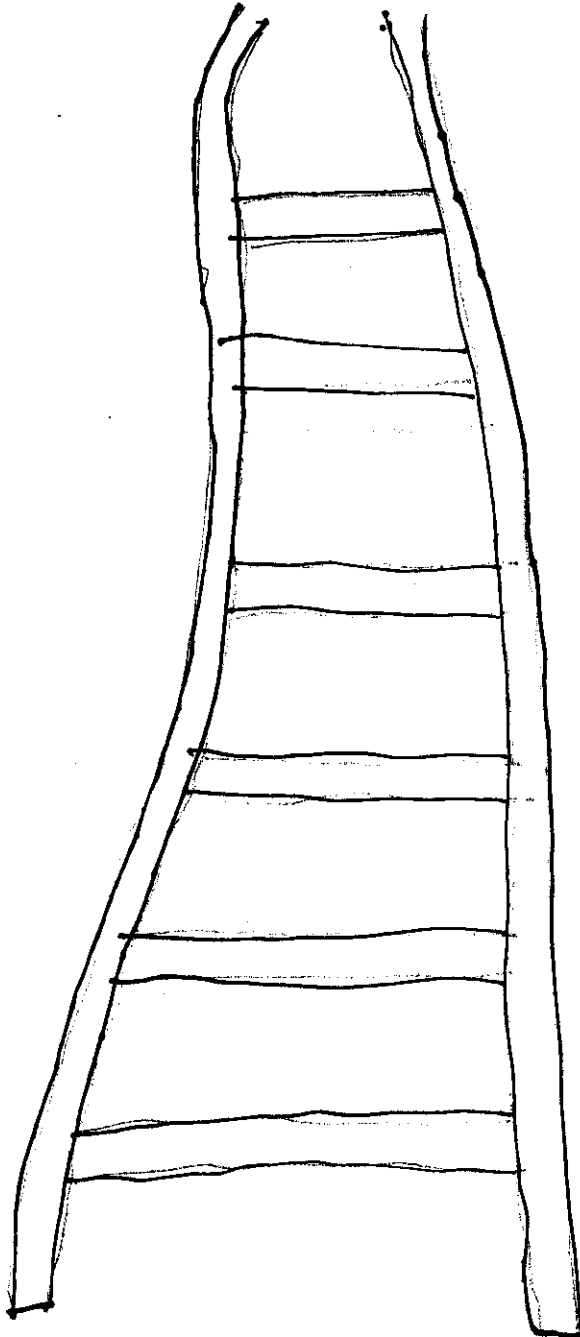
"It seems to me," said Booker T.,
"That all you folks have missed the boat
Who shout about the right to vote,
And spend vain days and sleepless nights
In uproar over civil rights.
Just keep your mouths shut, do not grouse,
But work, and save, and buy a house."

"I don't agree," said W.E.B.
"For what can property avail
If dignity and justice fail?
Unless you help to make the laws,
They'll steal your house with trumped-up clause.
A rope's as tight, a fire as hot,
No matter how much cash you've got.
Speak soft, and try your little plan,
But as for me, I'll be a man."

"It seems to me," said Booker T. -

I don't agree,"
Said W.E.B.

A Ladder To Success



Adapted from
Ladder for Booker T. Washington, 1996
By Martin Puryear