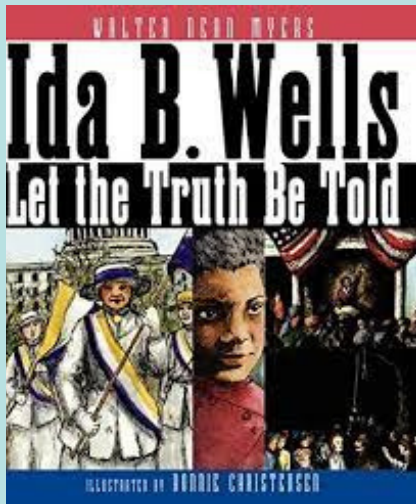


Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary

TEACHER'S GUIDE

UTK Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature

City of Knoxville Suffrage Seed Fund • East Tennessee Historical Society • Knox County Schools



ABOUT THE BOOK

Genre: **Nonfiction Picture Book Biography**
Grade Level: **2-5**
Age range: **7-10 years**
Lexile: **900L**
Publisher: **Amistad, 2008**

Content Specific Vocabulary

Amendment: (n) a minor change or addition designed to improve a text, piece of legislation

Boycott: (v) refuse to buy or handle (goods) as a punishment or protest

Lynching: (n) a form of mob violence

Mob: (n) a large crowd of people, especially one that is disorderly and intent on causing trouble or violence ★

Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth Be Told

Written by Walter Dean Myers Illustrated by Bonnie Christensen

Synopsis

Ida B. Wells worked bravely as an activist, educator, writer, journalist, suffragette, and pioneering voice against the horrors of lynching. An inspiration for generations of civil rights crusaders, Wells' own words are used throughout this picture book biography (which is based on Ida B. Well's autobiography, *The Crusade for Justice*) to introduce young readers to this leader. Ida used fierce determination and the power of the pen to educate the world about the unequal treatment of African Americans in the United States. In this award-winning book, New York Times bestselling author Walter Dean Myers tells the story of this legendary figure, which blends harmoniously with the historically detailed watercolor paintings of illustrator Bonnie Christensen.

Tennessee Social Studies Standards and Practices

Standard 5.09

Analyze the major goals, struggles, and achievements of the Progressive Era, including: Prohibition (18th Amendment), women's suffrage (19th Amendment), and the lack of child labor laws.

Essential Questions:

What were the major goals, struggles and achievements of the women's suffrage movement? What did suffragists hope to achieve? What obstacles stood in their way? What are some milestones in the movement?

Sub-questions:

- **How did Ida B. Wells' work lead her to join Susan B. Anthony in the cause of suffrage?**
 - Ida's work as an activist against the crime of lynching positioned her as a "crusader for justice" in Susan B. Anthony's eyes. (p. 26) The two women corresponded but ultimately, Ida realized she was not going to have the support of many white suffragists for Black women's suffrage. Ida realized she would need to take up the cause of suffrage as a critical issue for Black women. She founded the Alpha Suffrage Club, the first Black suffrage organization, in 1913 in Chicago, Illinois. See another book in this kit "Finish the Fight: The Brave and Revolutionary Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote" to learn more about "how bias nearly ruined the suffrage movement," (pp. 13-18, Finish the Fight).



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After Reading Extension Activities

Ida in Her Own Words

At the end of the book is a collection of quotations by Ida B. Wells. Choose one of the quotations and write a scene based on it. For example, you could write a scene of Ida and her mother attending school together or a scene between Ida and Susan B. Anthony in which Ida defends her choice to get married. You can choose how to write your scene; it can be written like a scene in a short story or like a scene in a play.

Going to the Front of the Line

Follow this link to the National Park Service's "Suffrage in 60 Seconds" video about Ida B. Wells: <https://bit.ly/3xO2Dtq>. How was Ida B. Wells treated by some of the white suffragists at the Women's Suffrage Procession? How did she respond to this treatment? What does her response say about her personality?

Winning the Pulitzer

In May 2020, Ida B. Wells was awarded a posthumous (after her death) Pulitzer Prize for journalism. Using what you learned from reading "Ida B. Wells: Let the Truth Be Told," explain why you think the Pulitzer Prize committee decided to give her this award.

Standards and EQ's continued

- **What obstacles did Ida face?**
 - Throughout her life, Ida faced many obstacles such as the early loss of both of her parents as well as the responsibility of becoming the head of her household at the same time. She faced prejudice due to her race when the railroad wouldn't let her sit in the white ladies' coach of the train. Ida sued the railroad over this, and even though Judge Pierce ruled in Ida's favor, the decision was later overturned. Ida lost several friends to lynch mobs, had her offices destroyed due to her writings, and was eventually forced to leave her home in Memphis. Even though she fought for suffrage for ALL women, Ida (and other African American women) were asked to separate themselves from their white peers in the women's suffrage procession in 1913.
- **What major achievements did Ida receive in her fight for women's right to vote?**
 - Ida founded the first organization in the State of Illinois for Black women called the Alpha Suffrage Club, which played a critical role for Ida B. Wells in the 1913 Woman's Suffrage Procession.

Teaching with Primary Sources

- **Ida Sues the Railroad:** <https://bit.ly/3gWVvR1>
 - On September 15th, 1883, twenty-year-old school teacher Ida B. Wells purchased a ticket for a trip by train from Memphis to Woodstock (ten miles north of Memphis), where she was teaching at a public school. She chose a seat in the rear car with white ladies and gentlemen but was forcibly removed and told to move to the forward car, where smoking and drinking were allowed and where Black and white passengers rode together. She refused and sought damages in a challenge to Tennessee's 1882 statute, which ordered common carriers to provide accommodations equal in all respects in comfort and convenience to the first-class cars on the train for non-white passengers. The case, in which she was represented by prominent Memphis attorney, Thomas Frank Cassels, a free Black man who had served in the 42nd Tennessee General Assembly (1881-1883), was appealed to the Tennessee Supreme Court in April 1885. The Court found for the Railroad Company, reversing the earlier decision by the Circuit Court of Shelby County. Visit this website to see the legal brief filed by Greer & Adams and T.F. Cassels on behalf of Ida B. Wells, and sections 19-23 of transcribed testimony regarding the case before the Tennessee Supreme Court in April 1885.
- **Ida B. Wells and the Alpha Suffrage Club:** <https://bit.ly/35M2U3L>
 - Ida B. Wells established the Alpha Suffrage Club (ASC) in Illinois—the first Black suffrage organization. Within five months of the formation of the ASC, Illinois granted women the right to vote. Use this link to see the first issues of The Alpha Suffrage Record, published by the Alpha Suffrage Club. Through this newsletter, members of the ASC educated the community about candidates and local issues appearing on ballots.



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Find a more comprehensive curriculum guide with additional instructional activities, interdisciplinary projects, and supplemental materials here: <https://ccyal.utk.edu/lit-kits/womens-suffrage-lit-kit/>

