

2024



AP[®] African American Studies

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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Short-Answer Question 1

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“We claim for ourselves every single right that belongs to a freeborn American.... The battle we wage is not for ourselves alone but for all true Americans....

Our demands are clear and unequivocal. First, we would vote; with the right to vote goes everything....

We want discrimination in public accommodation to cease. Separation in railway and street cars, based simply on race and color, is unAmerican, undemocratic....

We want the Constitution of the country enforced.... We want the Fourteenth Amendment carried out to the letter and every state disfranchised in Congress which attempts to disfranchise its rightful voters. We want the Fifteenth Amendment enforced and no state allowed to base its franchise simply on color....

We want our children trained as intelligent human beings should be, and we will fight for all time against any proposal to educate black boys and girls simply as servants and underlings, or simply for the use of other people. They have a right to know, to think, to aspire....

Justice and humanity must prevail.”

Source: W.E.B. Du Bois, Niagara Movement Speech, 1906

1. Using the excerpt, respond to parts A, B, C, and D.
 - A. Describe the broader historical context that compelled Du Bois to make the speech in the excerpt.
 - B. Using a specific example, explain one way that the federal government’s failure to enforce the Fourteenth or Fifteenth amendment impacted the lives of African Americans.
 - C. Describe one specific way that a leader or group, other than Du Bois, advocated for the fulfillment of rights for African Americans in the second half of the twentieth century.
 - D. Using a specific example, explain how one of Du Bois’s demands for justice for African Americans was legally fulfilled in the century that followed his speech.

Question 1: Text-Based Source**4 points**

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- (A) Describe the broader historical context that compelled Du Bois to make the speech in the excerpt. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- W.E.B. Du Bois delivered this speech during a period when many states in the United States were enacting segregation laws and implementing discriminatory policies against African Americans.
- During this period, white supremacist groups used violence and intimidation to maintain power and ensure that African American men did not exercise their right to vote.
- At the time of this speech, the "separate but equal" doctrine was established by the Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision in 1896, which legalized racial segregation in the United States.

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- (B) Using a specific example, explain one way that the federal government's failure to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments impacted the lives of African Americans. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- During the nadir white mobs committed acts of violence against African Americans attempting to exercise their rights. The federal government's failure to enforce the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment meant that African Americans were left without protections.
 - The federal government's failure to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment resulted in states implementing measures like poll taxes and literacy tests that prevented African Americans from voting.
 - States passed Jim Crow laws as a result of the federal government's failure to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments which resulted in segregation and unequal access to public facilities for African Americans.
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- (C) Describe one specific way that a leader or group, other than Du Bois, advocated for the fulfillment of rights for African Americans in the second half of the twentieth century. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a civil rights leader who advocated for the rights of African Americans. He collaborated with organizations, activists, and used non-violent resistance, leading marches to protest unfair conditions.
- Malcolm X was a prominent leader who advocated for the fulfillment of rights for African Americans. He promoted self-determination and the use of radical measures when necessary to resist oppression.
- The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) launched legal campaigns to fight discrimination and racial violence against African Americans.
- The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was an organization of students who organized sit-ins to desegregate public accommodations.

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- (D) Using a specific example, explain how one of Du Bois's demands for justice for African Americans was legally fulfilled in the century that followed his speech. 1 point

Examples that earn this point include the following:

- The Supreme Court, in *Brown v. Board of Education*, ruled that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. This decision marked a significant step towards ensuring African Americans have equal access to public education, fulfilling Du Bois's call for African American students' right to an education.
- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 fulfilled Du Bois's demand to end discrimination in public accommodations. It made it illegal to discriminate against people based on race, color, and religion, fulfilling a key aspect of Du Bois's call for civil rights and equal treatment.
- With the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Du Bois's demand for political rights, specifically the right to vote, was addressed. This legislation prohibited discriminatory practices such as literacy tests and poll taxes, ensuring greater access to the voting process for African Americans.

Total for question 1

4 points

A. Du Bois's claim was made in the context of the end of reconstruction and the subsequent adoption of Jim Crow laws in the South. Cases like *Plessy v. Ferguson* set into place the “separate but equal” doctrine that Du Bois refers to in his mention of separate railway cars. The Slaughterhouse cases set a legal precedent that allowed the 14th and 15th amendments to be applied more loosely at the state's discretion. This repeal of federal enforcement of the reconstruction amendments led to a backslide in progress for Black Americans, especially in the South, who were now subject to racial violence and discrimination from local authorities as well.

B. Despite the passage of the 15th amendment, which gave all men the right to vote, Black disenfranchisement in Southern states was incredibly high. The federal government had little role in enforcing the amendments, mostly leaving the job up to state legislatures (many of which were dominated by ex-confederates and open white supremacists). As a result, Black men faced violence and intimidation when they attempted to vote, and were not protected by local authorities (who often also encouraged this violence). More covert forms of discrimination such as poll taxes and literacy tests were vague enough to not violate the 14th amendment, but were leveraged specifically towards Black men through loopholes like the grandfather clause that made them not applicable to poor whites.

C. The NAACP advocated for the fulfillment of African American rights during the second half of the 20th century by embracing nonviolent protest and integrationist strategies. Leaders within the organization such as Dr. King and A. Phillip Randolph led the movement in a direction that embraced nonviolence and interracial solidarity. This can be seen with the March on Washington, sit ins, and Freedom Rides that were participated in by both Black and white activists.

D. Du Bois's last demand for education was fulfilled in the century following his speech in the *Brown v Board* decision. He asserts that Black students should not be educated as servants, which was part of the rationale on the case that ruled segregation in schools unconstitutional (overturning the separate but equal doctrine that had been previously established). A legal recognition that segregation was not equal because it taught Black students to think of themselves as less than, was an important step in justice that Du Bois advocated for.

A. The broader historical context that compelled Du Bois to make the speech was from segregation during the Jim Crow laws. African Americans were still given a heavy disadvantage at economic growth and basic human rights even after the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments were passed and WEB Du Bois was demanding change.

B. One way that the federal government's failure to enforce the 13,14th and 15th Amendment impacted the lives of African Americans and is still very present today is mass incarceration. The amendment specifically states that slavery shall be abolished unless as punishment for crime. Slavery is still legal in the United States today as long as a crime has been committed.

C. One specific group that advocated for the fulfillment of the rights of African Americans was the Black Panther Party. They had strong beliefs of self-defense and equal opportunity for Black people. Many of them were armed and were willing to risk their lives for the movement.

D. One specific example explaining how one of Du Bois demands for justice for African Americans was legally fulfilled was the passing of Brown V. Board of Education where Black children were allowed to attend desegregated schools.

As of Du Bois giving his speech, the most recent event that had occurred was the establishment of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendment. The 13th amendment had outlawed slavery in whole, save for being used as punishment. The 14th had granted all men equal liberties and social equality. The 15th amendment had granted all men of any race the right to vote. Because the government had failed to enforce the 15th amendment, many states had been able to find ways around the law, using methods such as the grandfather clause- which stated that if a person's grandfather was able to vote, then they would be allowed as well- and voting taxes- which made already economically struggling African Americans pay for the ability to use poll boxes. It made it harder for African Americans to be heard when it came to their representation in politics. Martin Luther King was a leader of the organization SNLC, which played a large part in advocating for civil rights in the later half of the 21st century. Even though it was not him who was able to create this change, it was Martin Luther King who was able to get his dream of equal voting passed into legal system. It had established and revised law of the 15th amendment, stating that men of any color would be allowed to vote without the need for literacy tests or taxes.

Question 1 – Commentaries

Sample Identifier: 1A

Score: 4

- The response earned 1 point for explicitly describing the broader historical context of Du Bois's speech as an indictment of the separate-but-equal decision rendered by the Supreme Court. The response also states how the “repeal of federal enforcement of the reconstruction amendments led to a backslide in progress for Black Americans, especially in the South.”
- The response earned 1 point for sufficiently explaining the obstacles encountered by Black men when they attempted to exercise their suffrage rights. The response explains how even after the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, states used “ ... more covert forms of discrimination such as poll taxes and literacy tests” to disenfranchise Black male voters.
- This response earned 1 point for accurately describing the actions of nonviolent protest taken by civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and A. Philip Randolph to secure civil liberties and rights for African Americans.
- This response earned 1 point for referring to the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 as a fulfillment of Du Bois’s advocacy for justice and access to equal education.

Sample Identifier: 1B

Score: 3

- The response earned 1 point for accurately describing the broader historical context of the Jim Crow era that compelled Du Bois to make the speech. The response describes how African Americans were heavily disadvantaged economically and socially due to the laws that codified segregation of the races.
- The response did not earn the point for Part B because it did not effectively provide an example of the federal government's failure to enforce either the 14th or 15th Amendments. Instead, the response focuses on the current issue of mass incarceration. The description does not successfully connect this contemporary problem to the government's failure to enforce the 14th and 15th Amendments.
- The response earned 1 point for describing the actions taken by the Black Panther Party to protect the rights of Black citizens using self-defense and ideals of equal opportunity as foundational tenets of their platform.
- The response earned 1 point for D because it points to *Brown v. Board of Education* as a specific example of how Du Bois’s demands for justice for African Americans was fulfilled, and it briefly mentions that this allowed for desegregated schools. While the explanation is not extensive, the response does enough to connect the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision to desegregation and one of Du Bois's demands for justice.

Sample Identifier: 1C**Score: 2**

- The response earned 1 point for part A for correctly describing the broader historical context of Du Bois's speech when it cites, "As of Du Bois giving his speech, the most recent event that had occurred was the establishment of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendment. The 13th amendment had outlawed slavery in whole, save for being used as punishment. The 14th had granted all men equal liberties and social equality. The 15th amendment had granted all men of any race the right to vote."
- The response earned 1 point for Part B for describing one specific example of how the federal government failed to enforce the 15th Amendment when it cites, "The 15th amendment had granted all men of any race the right to vote. Because the government had failed to enforce the 15th amendment, many states had been able to find ways around the law, using methods such as the grandfather clause- which stated that if a person's grandfather was able to vote, then they would be allowed as well- and voting taxes- which made already economically struggling African Americans pay for the ability to use poll boxes. It made it harder for African Americans to be heard when it came to their representation in politics."
- The response did not earn a point for Part C. Although it does cite the civil rights leader Martin Luther King, it does not correctly describe a way he advocated for civil rights.
- The response did not earn a point for Part D because it does not explain one specific example of how Du Bois's demands for justice were fulfilled in the century that followed.