**Booker T. and W.E.B.**

BY [DUDLEY RANDALL](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/dudley-randall)

“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.

Comparison Chart

Directions: After reading the poem and the quotes, complete the chart below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Claim – how does this person feel about segregation? | Support/Evidence – what did this person say to support the claim? Provide at least 3 pieces of evidence |
| W.E.B. Dubois |  |  |
| Booker T. Washington |  |  |

On a separate sheet of paper or the back answer the following prompts in paragraph format:

Who do you agree with more? Why? Do you think African Americans at the time would agree with you? Why or why not?

Remember – no first person (Start out with … has a better claim/argument), indented paragraphs and at least three pieces of evidence to support your statement.

**W.E.B. DuBois Quotes:**

“Daily **the Negro is coming** more and more **to look upon law and justice** not as protecting safeguards, but **as sources of humiliation and oppression**.  **The laws are made by men** **who have little interest in him**; they are executed by men who have absolutely **no motive for treating the black people with courtesy or consideration**; and, finally**, the accused law-breaker is tried, not by his peers, but too often by men who would rather punish ten innocent Negroes than let one guilty one escape**.”

“**Work, culture, liberty**,--all these we need, not singly but together, not successively but together, each growing and aiding each, and all striving toward…the ideal of human brotherhood...the ideal of fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro…to the greater ideals of the American Republic.”

“By every **civilized** and **peaceful** method we must **strive for the rights** which the world accords to men...‘We hold these truths to be self-evident: That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ ”

**Booker T. Washington Quotes:**

“Ignorant and inexperienced, it is not strange that in the first years of our new life [during Reconstruction] we began at the top instead of at the bottom; that a seat in Congress or the state legislature was more sought than real estate or industrial skill; that the political convention…had more attractions than starting a dairy farm.”

“No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. **It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top.**

“**The wisest among my race understand that…social equality is the extremist folly**, and that progress…must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing…the opportunity to earn a dollar in a factory is worth more than the opportunity to spend a dollar in an opera-house.”