

Teacher's Worksheet Answer Key For Video: Ida B. Wells, A Passion for Justice

1. What was childhood and family life like for Ida Wells? Born in slavery in 1862 Mississippi. Father was son of white master and slave mother; mother sold into slavery in Mississippi-beaten by slave owners. Ida's parents got married again after war, family commitment. Ida went to school with her mother.
2. Why were many black former slaves unable to read? It was illegal to teach slaves? Ida's family saw education as a way to learn all they could. She read newspapers to her father.
3. What was the first crisis Ida faced? What happened to her parents? Her siblings? Family hit by yellow fever; Ida's mother and father both died. She was oldest and her family was going to be split up. Ida took over. Got a teaching job.
4. Why did Ida go to the big city? What were the conditions like in Memphis? Get a better paying job teaching. Many blacks moved for same reason.
5. What laws did the southern states pass that created a new order? What was the effect on the progress of African-Americans?
6. What political action did Wells take to get her story out? What organizations helped her? What meaning did she find for her life? She wrote a series of articles. The black churches and newspapers picked up on it. Her work in writing the column gave her life meaning
7. What personal qualities made Wells popular? What issues did she focus on in her writing? She was effective and very bright. She wrote about issues she experienced as a child.
8. Describe Ida's friend that was killed. Who was one of the lynchers? They were good, strong and kind people who didn't deserve to die. One of the lynchers was a judge.
9. How did Wells retaliate? What issues did she speak out about? What questions was she forced to ask herself? Why were her words so inflammatory? She wrote a series of articles about racial justice. She was forced to ask herself if she was ready to stand up for her own beliefs. She urged many to leave Memphis and go west. She helped to create a Midwest migration of blacks.
10. What did Ida do after staying in Memphis? What did she urge people to do? What strategy did she use?



She continued her writing and organized a boycott aimed at the trolley system. She used her political clout and ability to articulate injustice to help create support for her cause.

11. What reasons were given for lynching of African-American men? What did Wells find out about these charges? What injustice did she speak out about the most?

Nonpayment of a debt, insulting whites, even testifying in court and the killing white men and white women. Wells investigated and found out they were false charges. She said that white men could fall in love with Negro women but white women were not supposed to do the same.

12. What was the African-American Woman's Club movement? Why was it so powerful? *It was a powerful group of black women who spoke out against injustice. It took the first stand against lynching and raised money for Ida to investigate.*

13. Who was Frederick Douglass? What did he think of Ida's work? Why was Wells' work so highly regarded? *The most prominent black leader of the time. He admired her work and felt she was very effective for speaking.*

14. What efforts does Wells make for promoting the rights of women? *She spoke out against all segregation including women's suffrage.*

15. Why did Wells criticize the actions of Susan B Anthony? *Wells criticized her for not inviting Frederick Douglass to a suffrage meeting because she didn't want to alienate the southern women.*

16. What made Ida so powerful and so feared? *She wasn't afraid to tell people what she thought, even the President of the United States.*

17. Why do you think historians call Wells, "Everything we value in American heroes?" Why was so little ever known about her?

She saw injustice and spoke out against it. She praised hard work and courage and worked to instill black pride. History was still written by whites.

