



IDA B. WELLS

GRADES K-5

Ida B. Wells: Pen Mightier than the Sword

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7P8it6lXnE>

Educators, Parents or Guardians: You may use the following discussion questions and activities to enhance your students' learning experience before and after viewing Deeper Than Read's *Ida B. Wells: Pen Mightier than the Sword*.

Video Preview Questions: Asking the following questions will prepare students to be alert for details and view the video more critically.

- The title of this video includes the phrase "pen mightier than the sword." What does this phrase mean? Do you agree that the pen is mightier than the sword? Why? Finally, what does this title hint about the story you are about to watch?
- As the video will explain, Ida B. Wells was born to enslaved parents in Mississippi in 1862 during the Civil War. She grew up as a child in the South following the war. Based on what you know about this time in history, what types of challenges do you think Ida B. Wells faced growing up in Mississippi?

Video Follow-Up Questions: The following questions help clarify and deepen students' understanding of topics addressed in the video and also allow for personal responses to the life of Ida B. Wells.

Vocabulary Follow-Up

- The video states that, unlike their parents, Ida and her siblings received a formal education. What is a *sibling*? What is a *formal education*?
- Ida B. Wells became a part owner and *editor* of a newspaper in Memphis, Tennessee. What is the job of an *editor*? How does this differ from the role of a *journalist*? [Note: Ida B. Wells was both an editor and a journalist.]

Ida B. Wells

- Why did Ida start to take care of her family at the age of 16? Describe what this must have been like for her. How do you think you would respond if you were in her situation?
- Why did Ida become so angry about the death of her friend, Thomas Moss?
- What changes happened in Memphis as a result of Thomas Moss' death and Ida B. Wells' writing about it?
- What is lynching? How did it change after African Americans were freed from slavery in the United States? Why did it change?
- What did Ida B. Wells discover when she began investigating the facts of lynchings in America?

- How did Ida B. Wells' investigative reporting about lynchings in America change people's views about lynching?

Video Follow-Up Activities: Consider selecting one or more of the following activities to extend students' understanding of topics related to the life of Ida B. Wells. You may choose to assign an activity to individuals, partners, or a small group.

- **Investigative Journalism** – Ida B. Wells used investigative reporting skills to learn and report about lynchings in America. Research to learn more about investigative journalism and how it differs from other types of journalism. Explain why investigative journalism is important. Share your research findings in either a brief oral or written report.
- **False News** – Ida B. Wells discovered that newspapers were reporting false information about lynchings. Today we have many more news sources than just newspapers. Research to learn ways to distinguish real news from fake or biased news in these various news sources. Give a brief presentation to an audience that describes ways to find good news sources.
- **Diseases of the 19th Century America** – Yellow fever killed several members of Ida B. Wells' family. Research to learn about common diseases in the United States in the 19th century (1800s) and how the diseases were treated. Create a poster to display your findings.
- **Truth** – Ida B. Wells used her love of journalism to uncover and write about the truth regarding issues and events that were reported dishonestly. Select an art medium and create a work of art that expresses a passionate commitment to truth.

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