

## Advocating For Equal Rights: Ida B. Wells' Responsibility To Expose Injustice

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Website

Website word count: 1200

Process paper word count: 500

For our National History Day project, we chose to focus on Ida B. Wells because of her work advocating for civil rights and women's suffrage. Wells was a fearless journalist who dedicated her life to fighting injustice, particularly the lynchings of African Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her work is tied to the theme "Rights and Responsibilities," because she campaigned for equal rights for African Americans and women and also took on the responsibility of challenging societal norms and questioning powerful people, despite putting herself in danger in the process.

We conducted research using a variety of sources such as websites and databases, books, and interviews. One source that helped us tremendously was the webpage, *Ida B. Wells: a Chicago Stories Special*. It provided us with detailed background, quotes, photos, and crucial information that helped shape our website. In addition, we organized interviews with people who held connections with Ida B. Wells. An interview we held was with an investigative journalist, Nikole Hannah-Jones, who founded the Ida. B. Wells Society, and Dan Duster, Ida B. Well's great-grandson.

Our topic is important because it emphasizes the need to confront the harsh realities of history, while also honoring those who dedicated their lives to fighting injustice. It reminds us that waiting for change to happen on its own is not productive. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. states in his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, "Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed." Throughout her career, Ida B. Wells was often told her ideas were too radical and that she should wait for change to come. She fiercely rejected this idea, dedicating herself to exposing the truth and demanding immediate action. Today, Wells' legacy remains crucial as racial and gender inequality remains an issue.

We created our project using the website builder provided by National History Day. When selecting our category, we chose a website because it allowed us to present information in a visually engaging and well-organized manner. As we built our site, we utilized the available tools to structure our content effectively. To enhance our presentation, we incorporated photos and newspaper clippings, which helped bring our project to life. Additionally, Ida B. Wells' passion for journalism inspired us to use newspapers as our background, reflecting her identity as a dedicated journalist and activist.

Our thesis statement is, “Ida B. Wells was an activist who fought for civil rights and equality in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As an investigative journalist, Wells highlighted the United States government's failure to fulfill its responsibility to protect its citizens. She was a crucial figure in the anti-lynching movement, advocated for women’s suffrage, and fought for educational equality for all races.” Through our project, we hope to show that Ida B. Wells was a brave, trailblazing force in the fight against injustice. We want others to know that advocating for rights is not always easy, but is necessary for progress to be made.