The Gift Of Black Folk: The Negroes In The Making Of America

W. E. B Du Bois

In the "Forethought" of The Souls of Black Folk, Du Bois provides an overview of the organization of the essays in this book. Teachers can follow Du Bois’s guidance for assigning groups of chapters from the text, as the themes of each chapter often overlap or build on each other. It startled the nation to hear a Negro advocating such a programme after many decades of bitter complaint; it startled and won the applause of the South, it interested and won the admiration of the North; and after confused murmur of protest, it silenced if it did not convert the Negroes themselves (p. 41).
Du Bois wrote The Souls of Black Folk (1903), in which he pointed out that it was up to whites and blacks jointly to solve the problems created by the denial of civil rights to blacks. In 1905 Du Bois became a major figure in the Niagara Movement, a crusading effort to end discrimination. The organization collapsed, but it prepared the way for the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), in which Du Bois played a major role. In 1910 he became editor of the NAACP magazine, a position he held for more than 20 years. Du Bois returned to Atlanta Univers