

## BOOK REVIEW SAMPLE

### Step 1

*The Souls Of Black Folk*, W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois wrote this book in order to show readers the striving in the souls of black people. He wants readers to feel the pain, achievements, and losses of blacks. “Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal dyspeptic blundering with light-hearted but determined negro humility?”

### Step 2

The theme of the book is the division of blacks and whites, similar to a sociological study. It describes the history of blacks through slavery, abolition, share cropping, education, and politics. Du Bois introduces his theory of “the negro problem”, which boils down to “What does America do with all of these newly freed black people?” The book also touches down on double consciousness, which is looking at things from black and American views at the same time. Throughout history, humans have always tried to find ways to be better than each other. Race is a perfect example, because it is not a real thing, it was created by society. Race just creates a hierarchy, where usually the people with more European features are viewed higher than all other races.

### Step 3

Du Bois does a great job of describing things in detail. He can pull you into a story and make you feel the pain and confusion of others. He is not afraid of showing others true emotions and tragedies, which is needed in order to get society to see the truth. He talks of people who look content, but aren’t truly happy because they don’t have much hope. Du Bois is also great at showing his own emotion without affecting the true history. It is obvious that he wants not only blacks, but also poor people to have a more fair chance at life, happiness, and education.

### Step 4

The first 7 chapters explain the lifestyle of the confederate states. The color-line is introduced, as well as the story of abolition. Du Bois then familiarizes the reader with institutions such as the Freedmen’s aid societies. The societies helped newly freed slaves

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and poor white people. Black leadership emerged, and Du Bois lets the reader see both sides of it. Booker T Washington was a famous black leader that urged blacks to surrender to whites, in terms of voting rights. Economics also plays a huge part. Blacks were often given land, but later it was taken away from them. Some blacks would have to work many generations to attain land because the rent was so high and unfair for them. Du Bois talks of a man who worked for 45 years and still had nothing to show for it.

### **Step 5**

I am very interested in this book because of the vivid detail. I have also learned things about black history that I never learned in my high school years, such as the meaning behind “40 acres and a mule”. I always knew how hard life was for blacks during that time period, but I never knew there were so many setbacks. I never learned about the famous black leaders and politicians, so it was refreshing to read such in depth stories of them. I was amazed to read that even some Native Americans weren’t

especially fond of blacks and didn’t like blacks living in their territory. The primary emotion from reading this book was upset. The book is so descriptive that I actually feel the pain of people struggling in it. I don’t get the feeling that Du Bois hates white people, or any people. He was honest about everyone and just told history the way it was. Although he was black, I didn’t feel any bias, I just felt that he truly wanted to get the true history available to his readers.

### **Step 6**

The history in this book can really relate to the issues of immigration reform going on in the country right now. Du Bois said people would often say they know excellent colored men, which is a way of beating around the bush on race issues. I believe Mexicans are going through that right now. Some people are more verbal about the issue and some won’t outright say it, but a lot of people are thinking, “What do we do with all of these Mexicans coming into America?” Other races are coming into our country as well, but the focus seems to be on Mexicans. Those two issues are so closely related that it’s almost ironic that it is happening again. It would benefit our country to take a look at

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history before we make the mistake of going too far with this issue. The chapters also show institutional racism, which is definitely present to this day. Although blacks don't always encounter blatant racism, people often wonder if things that people have done to them were purely based on skin color.

### **Step 7**

*The Souls Of Black Folk* shows us the history of not only black folk, but of our nation. We should use this book as a lesson for the future, so we don't make the same mistakes as the past. We should learn not to ignore ethnicity and cultural differences, but to respect and embrace them. I completely agree with his ideas on education, that it shouldn't be available just to make money in a career, but that it is necessary because all humans are curious about the world around them.