

Essay 2

The Literature of the Reconstruction period and of the Turn of the 20th Century

Directions: Using the essay format we have discussed, respond to one of the prompts below. Be sure to refer to a minimum of two assigned reading selections to support any arguments. Full credit will be given **only** to those essays that clearly address the prompt and that incorporate correctly-cited textual evidence.

1) Why was Charles Chesnutt's short story "The Wife of His Youth" (1899) necessary for his primarily Black readership during the post-Reconstruction era?

2) Conduct an internet search about Plato's "Allegory of the Cave". In what ways might W. E. B. DuBois's short story "Of the Coming of John" (1903) serve as a similar allegory for Black readers during the post-Reconstruction period?

3) Whose position most successfully charted the "way forward" for Black Americans at the turn of the twentieth century -- Booker T. Washington's or W. E. B. DuBois's? Explain.

4) The PBS documentary "Slavery by Another Name" (2012) details the strategies former southern slaveholders employed against Black men and women during the Reconstruction period. Consider a few specific ways that contemporary law enforcement and justice system practices mirror those of the Reconstruction era.