

# Ida B. Wells

## Let the Truth Be Told

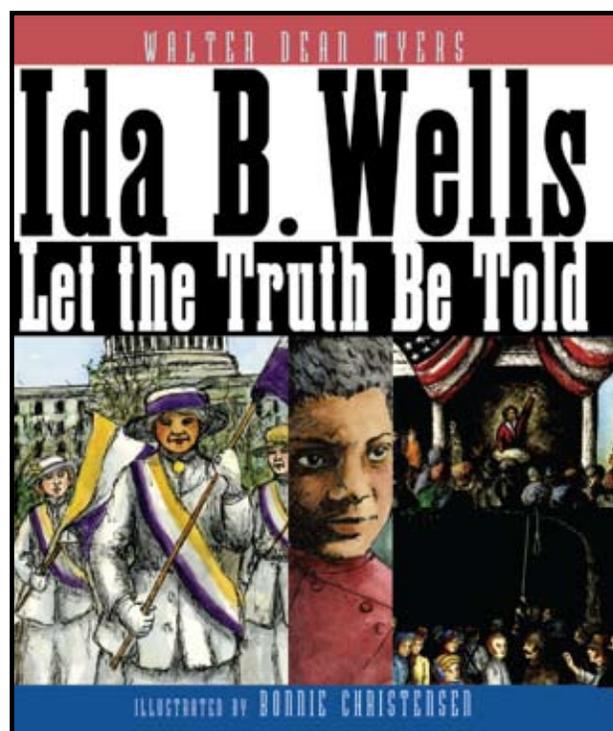
By Walter Dean Myers

Illustrated by Bonnie Christensen

### TEACHING GUIDE

★ “An important and inspiring book.”

—*School Library Journal*  
(starred review)



### ABOUT THE BOOK

Ida B. Wells stood for freedom and equality for all people, long before those ideas became accepted nationwide. Risking her own safety and well-being, she wrote newspaper columns and gave speeches that directed attention to the unfair and cruel treatment of African Americans during the late 1800s and early 1900s. She strived to eradicate lynching, defeat school segregation, and promote women's voting rights. Walter Dean Myers and Bonnie Christensen have combined an engaging historical narrative with emotive illustrations and time-period quotes to offer a rich ground for discussion and exploration with young readers.

# Ida B. Wells Let the Truth Be Told

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

- 1. Ida B. Wells.** Who was Ida B. Wells? Is it important for people to know about Ida B. Wells? Why or why not? Why do you think Walter Dean Myers and Bonnie Christensen created a book about her?
- 2. Family.** What was Ida B. Wells's family like when she was young? Why do you think her father made sure his children attended school? Why do you think Ida decided to take care of her brothers and sisters after her parents died?
- 3. Activism.** Was Ida B. Wells an activist? Why or why not? Ida spoke out against the fact that "the rest of America has remained silent" about lynching (page 25). What is wrong with remaining silent? What is the difference between a bystander and an activist? What is your opinion about being "respectable" versus fighting for justice (page 29)? Is it possible to do both? Why or why not?
- 4. Race and Equality.** Why weren't African Americans treated fairly and equally when Ida B. Wells was alive? Why did she work so hard to end lynching? If Ida B. Wells were alive today, do you think she would see changes in how African Americans are treated in our country? Explain.



## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- 1. Raise Your Voice.** Encourage the class to shift from being bystanders to being activists and allies when they see a peer being treated poorly. Brainstorm a list of situations in which people are teased, bullied, or otherwise suffer socially. Using volunteers, stage role-plays of sample situations involving an aggressor, a target, and bystanders. Gather suggestions from the group about what the bystanders could do and then have the role-plays incorporate these ideas. A given scenario may play out in multiple ways.
- 2. Know More.** Assign pairs or small groups of children to research various people, events, or subjects included in *Ida B. Wells*, such as Frederick Douglass, lynching, yellow fever, or the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Have students organize the results of their research into displays that can be shared with the class.
- 3. Who Was Ida B. Wells?** Design and paint a mural depicting Ida B. Wells and important aspects of her life and work. Display the mural for everyone in the school to see.



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Teaching guide created by Emily Linsay, teacher at the Bank Street School for Children, New York City.