

Expanding Public Education

BEFORE YOU READ

In this section, you will read about the growth of public education in America.

TERMS AND NAMES

Booker T. Washington Prominent African-American educator

Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute School headed by Booker T. Washington

W.E.B. Du Bois First African American to receive Ph.D from Harvard

Niagara Movement Insisted that blacks should seek a liberal arts education

AS YOU READ

Use this diagram to take notes on the changes made to America's educational institutions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

INSTITUTION	CHANGES
<i>elementary school</i>	<i>mandatory school attendance</i>
<i>high school</i>	
<i>college</i>	

Expanding Public Education

How did education change in the late 1800s?

During the late 1800s, reformers tried to improve public education. At that time, most children in the United States received little education. Many children did not even attend school. Those who did left after only four years.

Eventually, the situation began to improve. Between 1865 and 1895, 31 states passed laws requiring children from 8 to 14 years-old to attend school for at least three months out of every year. By 1900, almost three-quarters of American children between those ages attended school. Schools taught reading, writing, and arithmetic.

By the turn of the century, the number of schools had increased greatly. The number of kindergartens grew from 200 in 1880 to 3,000 in 1900. The number of high schools increased even more. In 1878 there were 800 high schools in the United States. By 1898, that number had grown to 5,500.

The high-school *curriculum* also expanded. It included courses in science, civics, home economics, history, and literature. Many people realized that the new industrial age needed people who had technical and managerial skills. As a result, high schools also included courses such as drafting and bookkeeping. This prepared students for industrial and office jobs.

The growth of public education mainly affected the nation's white communities. During the late

1880s, only 34 percent of African-American children attended elementary school. Fewer than one percent attended high school.

Unlike African Americans, immigrants attended schools in large numbers. Some immigrant parents hoped that school would “Americanize” their children.

Many adult immigrants also went to school. They attended night classes to learn American culture and English. Some employers offered daytime programs to Americanize their workers.

1. Provide two examples of how public education changed in the late 1800s.

Expanding Higher Education

What changes did colleges make?

At the turn of the century, only about 2 percent of Americans attended college. Most college students came from middle-class or wealthy families. Colleges prepared well-to-do young men for successful careers in business.

Between 1880 and 1900, more than 150 new colleges were founded in the United States. From 1880 to 1920, the number of students enrolled in college *quadrupled*.

During this time, colleges added more subjects. Before, many universities had taught only classical subjects such as Greek and Latin. Now they began teaching more modern subjects. In response to the needs of expanding big business, the research university emerged offering courses in modern languages, physical sciences, and the new disciplines of psychology and sociology. Professional schools in law and medicine were established. Many private colleges and universities began requiring entrance exams, while some state universities required only a high school diploma for admission.

Thousands of freed African Americans began attending college in greater numbers after the Civil War. With the help of the Freedmen’s Bureau and

other groups, blacks founded Howard, Atlanta, and Fisk Universities between 1865 and 1868. Still, blacks were excluded from many private institutions. Financially, it was difficult for private donors to support or educate enough black college graduates to meet the needs of their communities. In 1900, only about 4 percent of all African Americans were in attendance at colleges or professional schools.

Booker T. Washington founded the **Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute**. Washington believed that racism would end when blacks acquired useful labor skills and were valuable to society. Washington taught those skills at Tuskegee. **W. E. B. Du Bois** was a black educator who disagreed with Washington. Du Bois had been the first black to get a doctorate from Harvard. Du Bois founded the **Niagara Movement** which insisted that blacks should seek a liberal arts education.

2. Name two ways in which colleges changed during the late 1800s.
