

Read the eighth paragraph in Chapter 1 of W. E. B. DuBois's "Of Our Spiritual Strivings", from "The first decade was merely a prolongation" to "leading to heights high enough to overlook life."

1. Based on your analysis in previous lessons and the historical events researched for homework, to what does "[t]he first decade" refer?
2. How does Du Bois connect the first sentence of paragraph 8 to the end of paragraph 7? What does this idea demonstrate about African Americans' experience of freedom?
3. What makes the search for freedom "vain"?
4. How does the metaphor of "the headless host" further develop "the vain search for freedom"?
5. Why does "the bewildered serf" have "no new watchword beyond the old cry for freedom"?
6. What is the impact of Du Bois's use of the phrase "bewildered serf"?
7. What connection does Du Bois establish between "gaining and perfecting ... liberty" and "powerful means"?
8. Compare the two ways in which Du Bois describes "the ballot" in the sentence beginning "The ballot, which before he had."

9. How does Du Bois's description of liberty as "partially endowed" further develop his point of view?
10. What effect does Du Bois create through the questions that he asks in this excerpt?
11. How does the idea of "vot[ing] themselves into the kingdom" further develop the idea of "gaining and perfecting ... liberty"?
12. Why were former slaves "weary, wondering, but still inspired"?
13. What is the "new vision" and why does it replace the "dream of political power" (par. 8)?
14. How does the imagery of a "pillar of fire" refine the idea of "the ideal of 'book-learning'" (par. 8)?
15. What words and phrases explain why African Americans considered education an "ideal to guide the unguided" (par. 8)?
16. How does the "the ideal of 'book-learning'" refine the idea of "gaining and perfecting ... liberty" (par. 8)?
17. What is the impact of the figurative language that Du Bois uses to describe the "ideal of 'book-learning'" (par. 8)?
18. How does the word *seemed* impact the meaning of the phrase "seemed to have been discovered" (par. 8)?

19. How does the image of “the highway of Emancipation” (par. 8) develop the metaphor of “the mountain path to Canaan” (par. 8)?

20. How does Du Bois’s description of “the advance guard” (par. 9) clarify the meaning of the word *toiled*? What does this description suggest about the experience of “book-learning” (par. 8)?

21. What other details in the text develop the metaphor and the experience of “book-learning” (par. 8)?