

## Resource Sheet #23

### Town Meeting

Directions: Your instructor will give your team two characters that you must represent in your town meeting from the list below. With a partner (or partners if your groups are larger than four people) you must complete the worksheet below:

- 1) Decide whether your person would want African Americans to move North or not
- 2) Develop arguments to support your position
- 3) Develop a personal history for your character based on the short description below
- 4) Try to anticipate some of the people who will argue against you and develop arguments of your own to prove them wrong

### **Town Meeting Participants:**

1. **Joe:** He's a white activist in the North who is against Jim Crow laws in the South and has worked to help African Americans move north.
2. **Fred:** He's a white recruiter for a major factory in the North. His job is to try to find workers for his company's steel plants in Pittsburgh.
3. **Asa:** He's a 45 year old African American from Mississippi who moved north for five years to Chicago but ended up coming back home because he couldn't find a job for good money. He also desperately missed his family and had a hard time adjusting to life so far from home.
4. **Elsa Mae:** Her church, the Bethlehem Baptist Association, has worked to help fellow African Americans move north – they believe that everyone should have the opportunity for education and freedom from the Jim Crow laws of the South.
5. **Marion:** Her brother, Ralph, moved north to New York for work in 1914, but did not have a good experience. He had difficulty finding work, was always paid less at the shipyards than white men doing the same job, and was forced to eat in a separate, much dirtier lunch room at the factory.
6. **Florette:** In the race riots of 1919 her husband was killed by white workers angry over the competition for low wage jobs. She returned home to Missouri with her five children because she couldn't find work in the North.
7. **Ezra:** He appreciates that his family moved north from Georgia. It allowed him to learn how to read and write at schools in Chicago and he never would have had that opportunity in the South.
8. **John:** He is a teenager who works for a dairy in Chicago. Twice he's had to go out on strike to argue for fair pay. He likes that he has the opportunity to argue for fair wages, but it has been hard to make ends meet, especially with the loss in income during the times that they are striking.

9. **Henrietta:** She has found good work as a housekeeper in Philadelphia, but does not like that her two young daughters have also had to work because she does not make enough to feed the family on just her wages. Even though they have the opportunity to go to school, she just can't afford to send them.
10. **Tom:** He has worked as a sharecropper on the same plantation where his parents were slaves for his entire life. He has enough to eat, a good community of friends and family and a roof over his head. Not only can he not imagine choosing to leave all that to move north, he's also scared for everyone who says that they want to go. He's heard that the whites in the South are so angry about all the workers leaving that they'll lynch anyone they catch.
11. **Lauralei:** Her father moved north in 1914, got a good job at a diner and managed to work over the years to buy the diner from its white owner. Now she works in the diner helping her father and the diner has become a central gathering place for the African American community in Pittsburgh.
12. **Charles:** He is a floor manager at a clothing manufacturing plant in Cleveland. His company needed workers and they sent recruiters south to ask African Americans to move north to work. The African Americans who came to work in the factory work hard and are excellent employees; however, he still does not like the fact that white and Black workers share the same lunchroom and bathroom facilities. He was raised to believe that people who are different should not mix together. Besides, it makes his job harder because he has to make sure there are no arguments or fights and with everyone in the same space that is really difficult.
13. **Everett:** His father has owned a plantation for his entire life. He believes that the African American workers on his family farm have been treated fairly. His father will even call in the town doctor for a Black family if someone is really sick. He is worried that his family's plantation will have to close down if so many sharecroppers from the plantation keep moving north – there won't be anyone to bring in the harvest!
14. **Margaret:** She's a factory worker in Chicago in a clothing factory and has begun to see many more African Americans being hired by her company. While she has nothing against African Americans, she definitely believes that they should have stayed in the South – she's scared of having to work with people who are so different. She's heard that they are lazy workers and that they steal from their co-workers. She's heard her husband and brothers talk about how Blacks aren't welcome in their town and she's afraid someone will get hurt. It is better if everyone just stays put and doesn't try to mix together!
15. **Sadie:** She moved to Philadelphia with her three young boys after her husband was lynched for allegedly having a relationship with a white woman. She is working as a housemaid for a wealthy family and has her mother and father with her to help her care for her three boys while she is at work. She is extremely pleased that her boys will be able to get a good education and also loves that they will be freed from the harsh

segregation that she experienced for her whole life. They won't have to move off the sidewalk to let white people pass nor be called "boy" even when they are grown men.

	<b>Is your character for or against moving North?</b>	<b>What are this character's arguments?</b>	<b>What is your character's personal history?</b>	<b>Who might most disagree with this character? What arguments will you respond with to prove that they are wrong?</b>
<b>Character 1</b>				

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<b>Character 2</b>				