

Name: _____ Class: _____

George Washington Carver

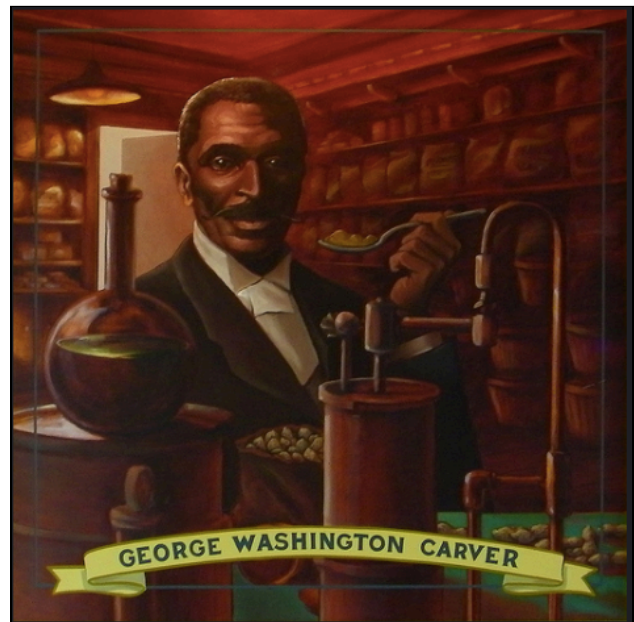
By Barbara Radner
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George Washington Carver was an African American scientist and inventor who spent a great deal of his life studying plants. He was also a leader in the environmentalism movement, which encouraged people to respect nature. He has been widely praised for his achievements and his perseverance during a period of extreme discrimination against African Americans. As you read, take notes on the characteristics that defined Carver's personality.

- [1] George Washington Carver lived from 1864 to 1943. When he was young, Carver enjoyed art, but he couldn't afford paint. Instead, he used blackberry juice. He used the hair from a horse's tail as his paintbrush. He even studied art when he was in college, but he also studied plant life.

It's a good thing that he did. He spent much of his life helping people by showing them better ways to farm. His ideas have improved the lives of farmers in many countries around the world.

Booker T. Washington¹ was a very important and famous African-American educator. He invited Carver to teach at Tuskegee Institute,² a college in Alabama. Carver was in charge of farm research. He taught students how to farm. He also worked with southern farmers on their land. In the southern part of the United States, most farmers had grown cotton for so many years that the soil had worn out. Carver showed them how to improve the land.



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Carver said the farmers should plant peanuts. Peanuts would enrich the soil. Farmers asked who would buy so many peanuts if they planted them. Carver answered by finding more than 300 new ways to use peanuts. Farmers could feed the vines to farm animals. They could use the hulls³ for fertilizer. Carver even found a way to make paper from the peanut shells. He also found new ways to use soybeans and sweet potatoes.

- [5] When Carver died, he left his money to help people to keep working on farm research. Today, people from many countries come to the George Washington Carver Foundation at the Tuskegee Institute. There they learn better ways of farming. The ideas he taught are still important.

1. Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) was an American educator, author, speaker, and advisor to several United States presidents. As a leader in the African American community, he discussed the discrimination that black people faced after slavery ended.
2. The Tuskegee Institute is a private, historically black university located in Tuskegee, Alabama. It was established by Booker T. Washington.
3. the outer covering of the peanut

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best identifies the central idea of this article? [RI.2]
 - A. Carver's inventions forced people to eat peanuts, soybeans, and sweet potatoes.
 - B. Carver was a creative problem solver who improved American farming.
 - C. Carver mainly wanted to help southern farmers make more money.
 - D. Carver was an artist who is best remembered for donating money to farmers.

2. PART B: Which phrase from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RI.1]
 - A. "When he was young, Carver enjoyed art, but he couldn't afford paint. Instead, he used blackberry juice." (Paragraph 1)
 - B. "He spent much of his life helping people by showing them better ways to farm." (Paragraph 2)
 - C. "In the southern part of the United States, most farmers had grown cotton for so many years that the soil had worn out." (Paragraph 3)
 - D. "He also found new ways to use soybeans and sweet potatoes." (Paragraph 4)

3. Which statement best describes what led Carver to discover 300 uses for peanuts? [RI.5]
 - A. Carver wanted farmers to plant more peanuts to improve their soil.
 - B. Carver created the peanut from other plants and wanted to encourage people to buy it.
 - C. Carver wanted to prove that he was creative to people who did not take him seriously.
 - D. Carver thought that farmers would make more money from selling peanuts than cotton.

4. What is the author's main purpose in writing this article? [RI.6]
 - A. to inform readers about the history of farming in America
 - B. to inspire readers with a story about achieving great success
 - C. to tell readers about the many different ways that farmers can and should grow peanuts
 - D. to give readers an overview of African Americans' greatest inventions

5. How does the author describe the relationship between Carver and the southern farmers? Cite evidence from the text in your response. [RI.3]

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. Think of a time when you overcame adversity or made an effort to do something someone had told you that you would not be able to do. How did it make you feel to succeed? How did the people who doubted you affect your motivation to succeed?
2. In the context of this article, why do people succeed? What personality traits allow them to succeed? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.
3. In your opinion, is it important to continue to study farming and improve the land? Why or why not? Explain your answer by citing evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.