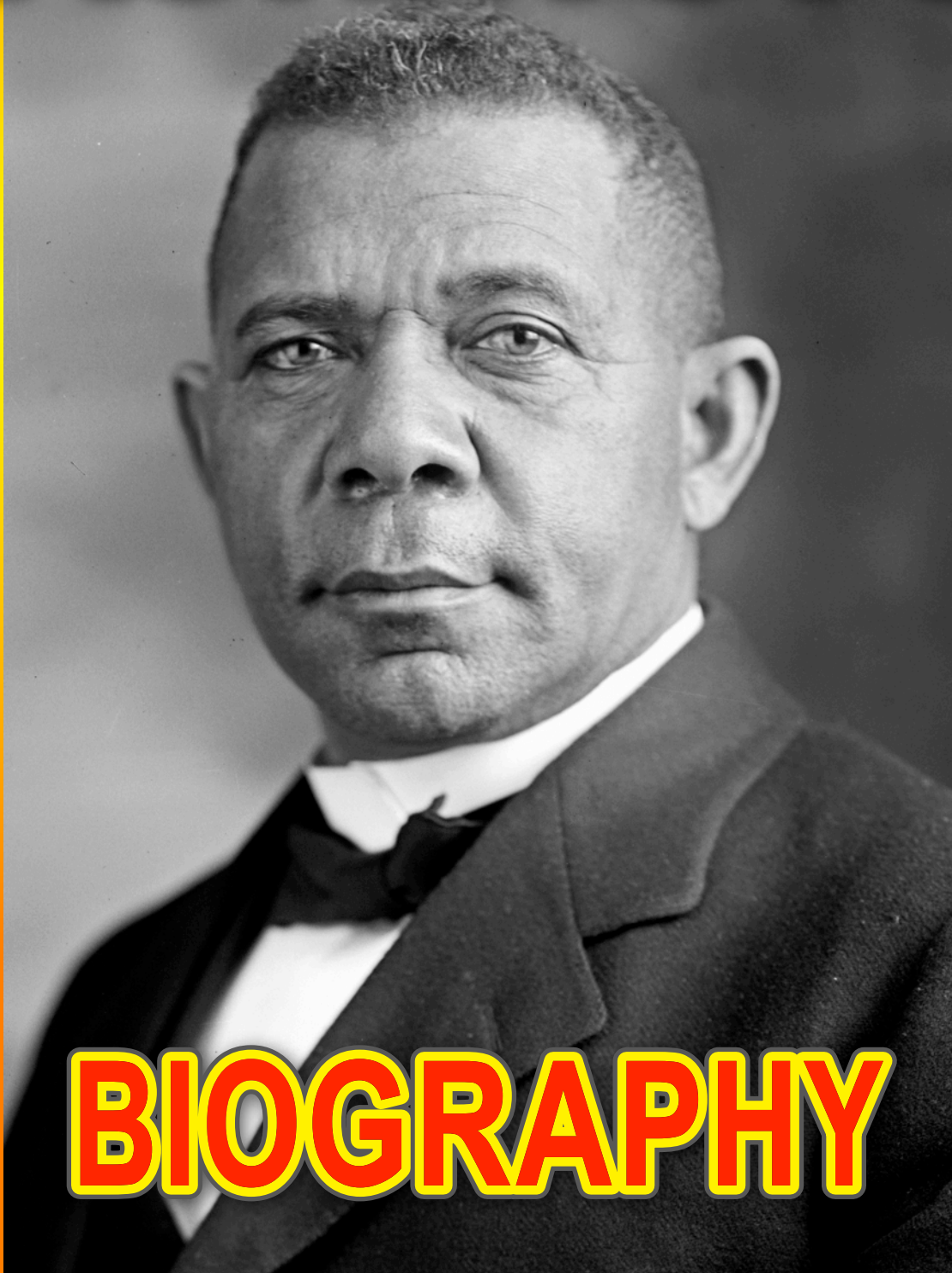


BOOKER T. WASHINGTON



BIOGRAPHY

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

Booker T. Washington was born as a slave on a Virginian plantation on April 5, 1856. As a boy he carried sacks of grain from the plantation to the mill. He wanted to learn and be educated, but he was not allowed to go to school as a slave.

After the Civil War, Washington moved to West Virginia. He could not afford to go to school, and he had to work instead. But his mother realized he wanted to learn, so she bought him some books so that he could teach himself to read in what little spare time he had.

When the time came to leave home, Washington walked for 500 miles to get to Hampton Normal Agricultural Institute, Virginia, where he hoped to get an education. At first he paid for his school fees by working as the school janitor, but then the school principal was impressed by Washington and gave him a scholarship.

After graduating in 1875, Washington taught there for a while, before going to Alabama to set up and run a school for black people, which is now called the Tuskegee University. He remained in charge there until he died aged 59.

Washington put all his effort into raising money for the school, and increasing its reputation. He made a curriculum that emphasized character and hard work as well as knowledge. This was all at a time when black and white people were still treated unequally, and Washington wanted his students to work hard to overcome that prejudice and still be successful in the community.

Over the years, Washington made speeches about civil rights and how black people could get on in society. One famous speech given in Atlanta, Georgia, was known as the 'Atlanta Compromise'. He emphasized acceptance and progress in economic terms, but was less outspoken about voting rights, which some African-American people thought was a problem.

As well as being an important leader in the black community, Washington was also invited to advise presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt on issues of race and freedom. In 1901, he published an autobiography called 'Up from Slavery'. Washington died in 1915.

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'plantation'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'plantation' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'plantation'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'plantation'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'plantation' means.

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: allowed	permitted

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Later on, Washington set up and ran a school in Alabama, now known as the Tuskegee University.

Washington also became an important leader in the African-American community.

Booker T. Washington was born a slave in Virginia.

Presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt invited Washington to advise them on issues of race.

Washington made speeches to encourage African-Americans to work hard to overcome the prejudice they faced.

In the end, Washington got a scholarship at a school in Virginia.

As a child, Washington wanted an education, but could not afford one even after he had been freed from slavery.

Get to the facts

1 Where was Booker T. Washington a slave?

2 What did Washington work as to pay for school fees?

3 In which state did Washington set up a school?

4 What did Washington give speeches about?

5 Which president did Washington advise?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

School mission statement

Imagine you are setting up a school. Write your school's mission statement. It should say what the school stands for, and what you want it to achieve.

Below is a plain text version for printing:

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For example:

Key word – allowed Synonym – permitted

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