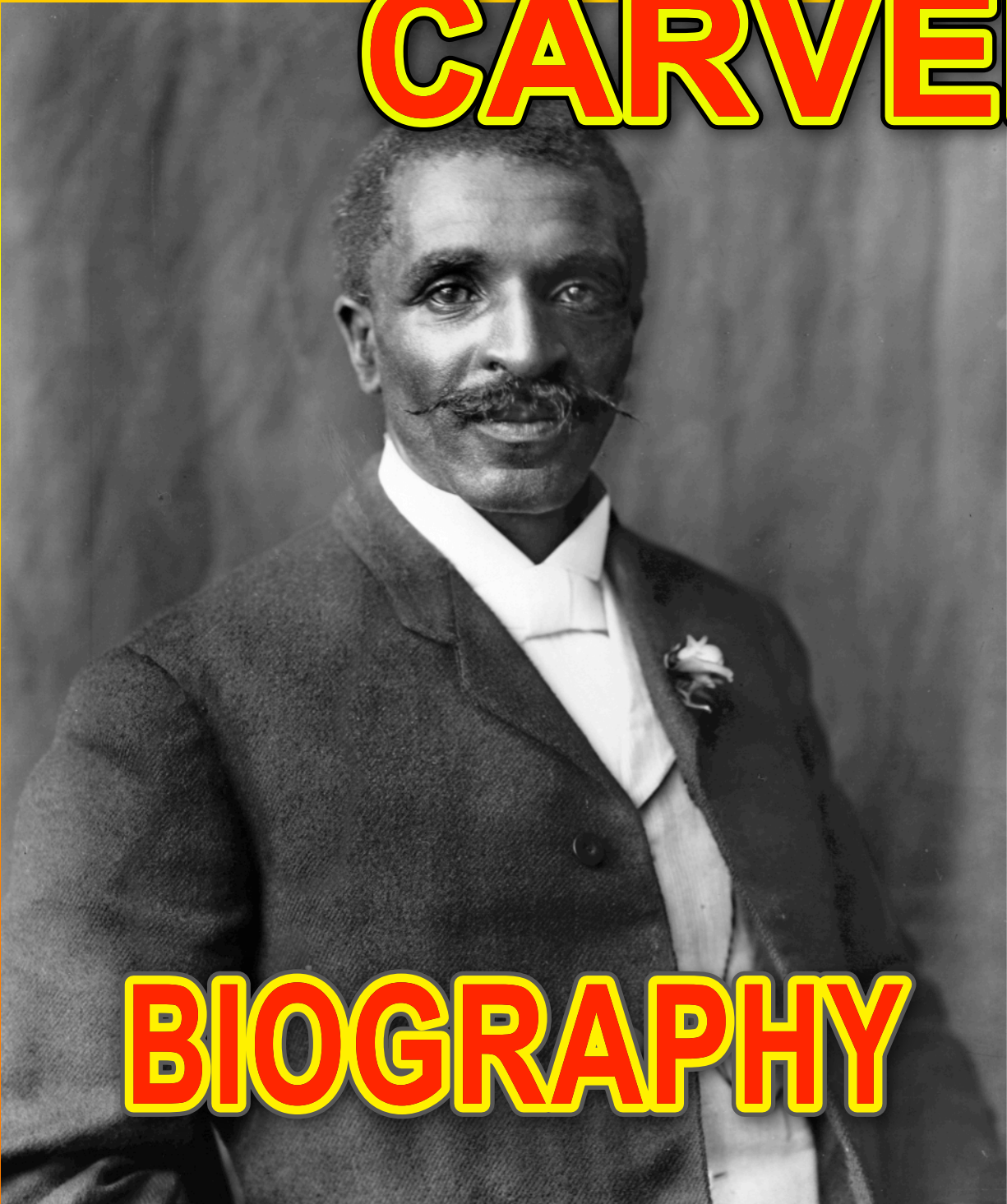


GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER



BIOGRAPHY

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George Washington Carver's parents were slaves to belonging the Carver family in Diamond, Missouri. When still a baby, George and his family were kidnapped by farmers from Arkansas, and then sold in Kentucky. George was returned to the Carvers in Missouri, but his mother and sister were not.

In 1865, slavery was abolished in Missouri. The Carvers, Moses and Susan, adopted George and his brother as their own children. Susan Carver educated them at home because schools still did not take on black pupils.

George Carver later went to a school for black children to continue his education. He was fascinated by biology, geology, art and music. He studied art in Iowa, where he developed his skills at drawing natural features, especially plants.

Carver then studied botany at Iowa State Agricultural College, where he earned his degree and stayed on for further study. He was the first black student at the college. Carver came to the attention of Booker T. Washington who ran the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, and offered Carver the position of head of the agricultural department there.

Under Carver, the agricultural department flourished and became nationally well-regarded. Carver researched farming methods that would help southern sharecroppers grow crops in difficult conditions. To help farmers directly, Carver created a mobile classroom that he could bring to farms.

Carver's speciality was peanuts, and the many uses he could put them to. Carver developed new products, such as plastics and dyes from his research. His agricultural work and research improved the lives of many ordinary farmers, and it influenced Congress and even President Theodore Roosevelt himself, as well as prominent figures abroad.

Carver became a well-known figure, and he gave speeches all over the country about how to improve agriculture, and about issues of race and prejudice.

On January 5, 1943, Carver fell down the stairs at home and died. He was buried in the grounds of the Tuskegee Institute, along with Booker T. Washington. The same year, the president dedicated a monument to honor him where he had grown up in Missouri. In 1977, Carver was added to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans.

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 'fascinated'.

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

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

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

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'fascinated' 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: flourished	thrived

Sequencing

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

Booker T. Washington made Carver head of the agricultural department at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

When slavery ended, Carver was adopted by the family who had owned him.

Carver's research improved the lives of many farmers.

While at school Carver became interested in biology, especially plants.

George Washington Carver was born a slave in Missouri.

There Carver did important research on how to improve agriculture, and how to use peanuts for all sorts of purposes.

Carver went on to study agriculture.

Get to the facts

1 What did Carver study at agricultural college?

2 Where did Carver become head of agriculture?

3 What did Carver bring to farms?

4 What was Carver's speciality?

5 Which president did Carver influence?

Make a story...

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

Mobile classroom

Imagine you are a farmer struggling to grow crops. One day George Washington Carver comes to your farm in his mobile classroom... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'fascinated'.
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- c Write a new sentence using the word 'fascinated'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – flourished Synonym – thrived

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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