



George Washington Carver National Monument

Grade 2, Lesson 1:

The Life of George Washington Carver –

Biography Cards

Instructional Time:

Film and Discussion 30-45 minutes;

Preview

In this lesson, students will learn about the life of George Washington Carver. They will watch a brief video that covers the highlights of his life. They will learn about people who helped Carver as he struggled to obtain an education. They will also see how his education helped him become a scientist and an educator whose work helped many people, especially poor farmers in the South.

Objectives

Students will

- List at least three key facts about the life of George Washington Carver.
- Describe the ways that seven individuals helped Carver achieve his goals.

Standards

Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.2.4a

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.4

Missouri State Standards

MO.R.3.A

MO.R.3.C.a-e

RI.6.B.2.a



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Materials You Will Need to Teach This Lesson

- The video, *George Washington Carver: A Man of Character*. (Found in the “Resources” folder for this lesson.)
- One copy of the following biography cards: Moses Carver, Susan Carver, Stephen Frost, Andrew Watkins, Mariah Watkins, Etta Budd, Booker T. Washington, Dr. John Milholland, and Helen Milholland. (Found in the “Resources” folder for this lesson.)
- Computer with a presentation device to show the Biography Cards one by one.
- One slip of paper (or adhesive name tag) bearing the name of one of the people on the biography cards for each student in your class. (Several students may end up with the same name.)
- Safety pins. (If you are using slips of paper.)

Lesson Plan

1. View the video *George Washington Carver: A Man of Character* with your students. Discuss the following key points about George Washington Carver’s life:

- a. He was born into slavery. Yet he grew up to be one of the best-known scientists, educators and African American role models of his country.
- b. From a very early age, he “thirsted for an education.”

Q. What do you think Carver meant when he said he “thirsted” for an education? Does that mean he had a small desire for an education? Or that he had an average desire to learn? Or a great desire?

Q. Can you find examples from the video of some ways Carver pursued his dream of an education? (List these on the board.)

- i. He moved from home to Neosho to find a school he could attend.
 - ii. He left Neosho for Fort Scott to find better schools.
 - iii. He supported himself by cooking and doing other jobs so he could go to school.
 - iv. After one college refused to admit him because of his race, he moved and attended another college.
- c. Although slavery had ended, African Americans still faced many difficulties in achieving equal opportunities after the Civil War.

Q. What were some of the challenges Carver faced in getting an education because he was African American?



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- i. He was not allowed to attend the local school because of racial segregation. He had to move from home to Neosho to find a school he was allowed to attend.
 - ii. Even after being admitted to Highland College, he was not allowed to enroll because of his race.
 - iii. At Iowa State, he was not allowed to live in a dormitory with other students because of racism.
 - d. Throughout his life, Carver made friends with people who helped him pursue his dream of an education.
 - Q. What were some of the ways that people helped George Washington Carver as he kept trying to obtain an education?*
 - Q. What might have happened if these individuals had not been there to help Carver?*
 - e. When he became an educator, Carver in turn shared his knowledge about agriculture with thousands of poor farmers.
 - Q. Do you think Carver's desire to help others was shaped by his own life experience when so many people helped him?*
 - f. After his death the George Washington Carver National Monument was created at his birthplace in Diamond, MO. This was the first national park to honor an African American.
 - Q. How many national parks honoring African Americans can you name?*
2. Display, one by one on your presentation device, the nine biography cards of people who had an impact on the life of George Washington Carver: Moses Carver, Susan Carver, Stephen Frost, Andrew Watkins, Mariah Watkins, Etta Budd, Booker T. Washington, Dr. John Milholland, and Helen Milholland. Read these cards with your students.
3. Divide students into nine groups and give each group one of the biography cards and have them review the card they were given. Have the groups present information about the person they read about to the rest of the class. Have students generate questions that should be answered by each presentation. These might include:
 - a. When in Carver's life did you know him?
 - b. How did you help George Washington Carver?
 - c. Why were you important in his life?



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4. After all groups have presented, tell students they are going to play the game “Who Am I?” Pin or tape a slip of paper bearing the name of one of these individuals on the back of each student. (Several students may have the same name on their back.) They must try to guess who they are by asking others questions. However, they can ask *only* questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no.” (Am I a woman? Did I know George Washington Carver when he lived in Missouri?) Gradually, students will obtain enough information that they can guess which person they are. (NOTE: You may divide the class into groups of nine so that Etta Budd does not ask questions of Etta Budd. Some classes may enjoy the challenge of knowing that they could encounter someone else who is wearing the same name!)
5. When everyone in the class has made a guess, have students form small groups based on who they are. (Mariah Watkins in one corner, Stephen Frosts in another, for example.) Have these small groups select the most important way that each individual helped George Washington Carver.

Q. What are some of the similarities among the ways that people helped George Washington Carver?

Q. Do you think Carver could have achieved everything he did without the help of others?

Assessment

Have students draw a sketch or a picture showing one of these individuals helping George Washington Carver. Have them include a caption to describe what help that person is providing.

Extending the Lesson

Have students create and perform a skit. Involve two or more of the characters on the biography cards. Have each tell why he or she made the biggest difference in Carver’s life.