

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 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 **brilliant** ideas have improved the lives of farmers in many countries around the world. He was an **agricultural** pioneer. He was the first person to figure out some better ways to farm.

Booker T. Washington was a very important and famous African-American educator. He invited Carver to teach at Tuskegee Institute, a college in Alabama. Carver was in charge of farming **research**. He would learn new things about farming. He would share what he learned through his study. He would be able to write and teach about his **insights** into botany.

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.

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 hulls 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.

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. He has left a great legacy.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

1. What does **afford** mean in the passage?

- a. He did not have much money.
- b. He wanted to paint.
- c. He needed paint.
- d. He invented.

2. What does **agricultural** mean in the passage?

- a. people
- b. teaching
- c. farming
- d. peanuts

3. What does **brilliant** mean in the passage?

- a. teaching
- b. ideas
- c. smart
- d. different

4. What does **research** mean in the passage?

- a. teaching
- b. discovering
- c. sharing
- d. agriculture

5. *Write your own answer to this question.*

What does **insights** mean in the passage?

Questions developed for Chicago Public Schools by CUE, 2009.

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: *You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.*

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	a	c	c	b

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

5. Insight means ideas someone gets from learning.

Skill: Infer Meaning of Word from Context 5th Grade Assessment

Historical Fiction: His First Dollar

Source: Public Domain/Gutenberg

After he became President, Lincoln told his Secretary of State the following story of the first dollar he ever had for his own:

Seward, he said, did you ever hear how I earned my first dollar? No, replied Seward. Well, I was about eighteen years of age . . . and had constructed a flatboat. . . . A **steamer** was going down the river. We have, you know, no wharves on the western streams, and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings they had to go out in a boat, the **steamer** stopping and taking them on board. I was **contemplating** my new boat, and wondering whether I could make it stronger or improve it in any part, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages, and looking at the different boats, singled out mine, and asked: 'Who owns this?'

I answered modestly, 'I do.'

'Will you,' said one of them, 'take us and our trunks out to the **steamer**?''

'Certainly,' said I. I was very glad to have a chance of earning something, and supposed that they would give me a couple of **bits**.' The trunks were put in my boat, the passengers seated themselves on them, and I **sculled** them out to the **steamer**. They got on board, and I lifted the trunks and put them on deck. The **steamer** was moving away when I called out:

'You have forgotten to pay me.'

Each of them took from his pocket a silver half-dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money. You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important **incident** in my life at that time. I could scarcely credit that I, a poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day—that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time.

Directions: Choose the best answer for each question

6. What does **steamer** mean in the passage?

- a. something hot
- b. a large boat
- c. a trunk
- d. a river

7. What does **contemplating** mean in the passage?

- a. admiring
- b. wondering
- c. thinking about
- d. looking at

8. What does **bits** mean in the passage?

- a. money
- b. presents
- c. small
- d. trunks

9. What does **sculled** mean in the passage?

- a. seated
- b. credit
- c. passenger
- d. moved

10. Write your own answer to this question.

What does **incident** mean in the passage?

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Answers: You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	6	7	8	9
Answer	b	c	a	d

Question 10 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.

10. Event or thing that happened.