

Grade 2 History-Social Science Inquiry Lesson

George Washington Carver: An American Hero

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Overview: Students will participate in an inquiry lesson about George Washington Carver that is also structured like a performance task. Students will engage with three sources about George Washington Carver and then write an opinion piece with supporting evidence. This is part of a bigger unit on *people who make a difference* centered on the essential question, “What makes a hero a hero?” Students and the teacher will have already defined a hero (in their own words)

Hero

- A person who is brave or shows courage
- A person who help others (make a difference)
- A person who does something important

Examples

- Famous Heroes: Rosa Parks, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln
- Everyday Heroes: Firefighters, doctors
- Fictional Heroes: Superman, Ms. Rumphius

Standards: CA History-Social Science Standards

2.5 Students understand the importance of individual action and character and explain how heroes from long ago and the recent past have made a difference in others' lives (e.g., from biographies of Abraham Lincoln, Louis Pasteur, Sitting Bull, George Washington Carver, Marie Curie, Albert Einstein, Golda Meir, Jackie Robinson, Sally Ride).

Selected Standards ELA/Literacy Common Core State Standards (Grade 2)

Reading Informational Text

- RI.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding about key details in a text.
- RI.2.2. Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.
- RI.2.6 Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
- RI.2.8 Describe how reasons support specific points the author makes in a text. RI.1.9 Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic.
- RI.2.10 By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 2–3 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Speaking and Listening

- SL.2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about *grade 2 topics and texts* with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- SL.2.2 Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

Writing

- W.2.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., *because, and, also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- W.2.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).
- W.2.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

Goals/Objectives:

Historical Investigation Questions: Why is George Washington Carver considered a hero?

Time Required: Three or Four--30 minute sessions

Materials Required:

- Library of Congress Sources:
 - Photograph of Portrait of George Washington Carver:
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2006675175/>
 - Photograph of statue of George Washington Carver
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010637389/>

Suggested Texts/Sources (You may substitute another book or video clip)

- You Tube Video Clip (George Washington Carver for Kids):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggUl20GR7Fw>
- Informational Picture Book: *George Washington Carver* by Lynea Bowdish
- Informational Picture Book: *George Washington Carver* by Martha E. H. Rustad
- Informational Picture Book: *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver* by Aliko (You Tube video of someone reading the book is also available:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXmVNpgymhw>)

Other Sources

- You Tube Video Clip (George Washington Carver Story Famous Inventor for Black History Month): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URZGm1iyspM>
- Informational Picture Book: *National Geographic Readers: George Washington Carver* (Level 1 Reader) by Jazyka Kitson

Part A: Background Knowledge/Setting Context

1. Project or show the picture of the statue of George Washington Carver. Ask the students what the picture shows and what details they notice. Then ask, "Why are statues and paintings made of some people?"
2. Discuss the idea that famous people and people who did something important sometimes have paintings and statues made about them. They also have buildings, schools, airports, and streets named after them. If your school is named after a famous person, you may ask why a school or street is named after that person...
Tell the students that the statue is of a man named Dr. George Washington Carver. Many people think that he was an important man or a hero and that he has schools, a ship, and a theatre named after him
3. Ask the students:
 - What do you already know about Dr. Carver?
 - What do you want to know about him?
4. Say: We are going to investigate the following question. "Why is George Washington Carver considered a hero? We are going to read a number of sources (or texts) to find out what are some of the reasons he is considered a hero.

Part B: Building Knowledge

Source #1

1. Read the first source *George Washington Carver (First Biographies)*.
2. Stop to pair-share and discuss the information as you read.
3. After reading, ask the students to consider the criteria for a hero, using the graphic organizer below. **Say:** Let's think about what we just read about Dr. Carver. Was there any evidence in this book that showed that George Washington Carver had courage? Record the information and the source on the chart.
 - You may need to do some thinking aloud and scaffolding. For example, he started out very poor and a slave but he worked hard to go to school and get educated. I think this showed a lot of courage.
 - You may reread the book and have the students stop you when they hear "evidence."

Showed Courage	Helped Others	Did Something Important
What evidence is there that George Washington Carver showed courage?	What evidence is there that George Washington Carver helped others?	What evidence is there that George Washington Carver did something important?

Source#2

1. Repeat with the second source

Source#3

1. Watch the third source (video clip)
2. Watch the clip twice, asking the student to listen for additional information about George Washington Carver and for any evidence that he showed courage, helped others, or did something important.
3. After watching the video clip, ask the students to share evidence from the video that fits into one of the categories on the graphic organizer.

Part C: Discussion and Writing

Writing Prompt:

In your opinion, what are some of the most important reasons that George Washington Carver is considered a hero?

Getting Ready to Discuss

1. Ask the students, now that they have investigated Dr. Carver's life—to return to the historical investigation question: **Why is George Washington Carver considered a hero?** You may review the definition of a hero that you have generated as part of the unit and go back to the class generated graphic organizer.
2. Ask the students to think about what were some of the most important reasons why Dr. Carver was considered a hero. Ask the students to write their idea on a post-it note to prepare to talk with a small group.

Sample Sentence Starters for the Discussion

- In my opinion, one of the most important reasons that George Washington Carver is a hero is _____.
 - I think that because _____.
 - In the book, it said _____.
 - My evidence is _____.
3. Ask the students to share with a partner and then you can share out with the class.
 4. **Writing:** Using the graphic organizer and sentence starters as a support, write an opinion piece on Dr. Carver. Depending on your students, you may differentiate the writing

Option 1: Ask each student to write about one reason and give evidence. The writing can be compiled into class book. You can then do a shared writing to create an introduction and conclusion for the book and students can illustrate the pages.

Option 2: Opinion Paragraph Essay

Option 3: Multi Paragraph Essay (Shared Writing or Independent Writing): You may use or adapt the attached writing graphic organizer, which mirrors the class chart to create the essay.

Opinion Writing (Paragraph)

Writing Prompt: In your opinion, what are some of the most important reasons that George Washington Carver is considered a hero?

Introduction: Give some background knowledge about Dr. Carver (Introduce him to your readers--Who was he? Where was he born?)

Opinion: George Washington Carver is considered a hero because _____

Details & Evidence (should support your opinion and show how he is a hero)

Conclusion: _____

Opinion Writing (Multi-paragraph)

Writing Prompt: In your opinion, what are some of the most important reasons that George Washington Carver is considered a hero?

Introduction: Give some background knowledge about Dr. Carver (Introduce him to your readers: Who was he? Where was he born?)

Thesis: George Washington Carver is considered a hero because he showed courage, helped others, and did some important things.

Paragraph 1

Main Point:

One reason Dr. George Washington Carver is a hero is because he showed courage.

Details/Evidence (Give details of how he showed courage)

Paragraph 2

Main Point: _____

Details/Evidence

Paragraph 3

Main Point: _____

Details/Evidence

Conclusion

Restate Thesis: _____

Sum up your thoughts
