

The Beginning of a *FAMOUS* Hero™

Student Interaction Sheet



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Abigail Adams

1. Abigail Adams wrote hundreds of letters sharing information about life during her time in history. Write about a special letter you have received or written.

Born: November 22, 1744
Province of Massachusetts Bay
Died: October 28, 1818 (Age 73)
Massachusetts, USA

2. To whom do you like to write letters? What kinds of things do you tell them when you write?

3. Abigail Adams HELPED soldiers who came nearby her farm. How does your family HELP to care for other people? How do YOU HELP to care for other people?

4. How do you think Abigail Adams must have felt when she became the wife of a President and then the mother of a President?

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Jane Addams

1. Write a few words about a situation you may have seen where the people did not have very good living conditions. How do you think they could be HELPED?

Born: September 6, 1860

Cedarville, Illinois

Died: May 21, 1935 (Age 75)

Chicago, Illinois

2. How do you think Jane Addams' loving and caring family caused her to want to HELP those in need?

3. Describe what you imagine Jane's Hull House may have looked like after she fixed it up for the children and their mothers to visit?

4. Why do you think the President of the United States call Jane Addams "America's most useful citizen?"

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Louisa May Alcott

1. How do you think growing up in a house full of love and laughter may have HELPED Louisa May Alcott become a great storyteller?

Born: November 29, 1832
Germantown, Pennsylvania
Died: March 6, 1888 (Age 55)
Boston, Massachusetts

2. She and her sisters loved to put on plays for neighbor children. What do you and your brothers and sisters enjoy doing together?

3. Louisa May Alcott first began writing stories to HELP her family have more money. Tell about some things that you do to HELP your family in other ways.

4. Her book, *Little Women* is still popular today and has even been made into movies. Write a few words about your favorite book? Do you think it would make a good movie?

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Neil Armstrong

1. Neil Armstrong was in the first grade when he went on his first airplane ride. Have you ridden in an airplane? If so, did you like it? Write about it!

Born: August 5, 1930
Wapakoneta, Ohio
Died: August 25, 2012 (Age 82)
Cincinnati, Ohio

2. Neil did his share of family work when he was young. What do you do to HELP your family around the house and yard?

3. Building model airplanes was Neil Armstrong's hobby when he was growing up. What is your favorite hobby? Write about it.

4. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first man ever to walk on the moon! Can you imagine what he might have been thinking as he took those steps? Write your thoughts.

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Clara Barton

1. Clara Barton loved riding horses when she was a child. What is something you have loved to do since you were very young?

Born: December 25, 1821
North Oxford, Massachusetts
Died: April 12, 1912 (Age 90)
Glen Echo, Maryland

2. Have you ever HELPED someone in your family when they were sick or hurt? Who was it and what did you do for them?

3. Why do you think her brother's doctor called Clara a "natural nurse?"

4. Tell about when you have seen (maybe on television) people being HELPED by the American Red Cross.

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Gail Borden

1. Gail Borden enjoyed HELPING his father work. What do you like to do in order to HELP a parent or grandparent?

Born: November 9, 1801
Norwich, New York
Died: January 11, 1874 (Age 72)
Borden, Texas

2. Gail Borden became a teacher because he wanted to HELP students learn to read, write, and work math problems. Tell about when you have HELPED one of your friends understand some of his or her school work better.

3. Gail Borden discovered a new way to HELP children have milk even without refrigerators. Tell about an idea you have to make life better for other people.

4. After Gail Borden became wealthy because of his useful inventions, he shared his money with others to build schools and churches for poor people. If you were very rich, how would you like to use your money to HELP others? How do you HELP others now?

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Louis Braille

1. Have you ever known someone who was blind? Tell about him or her. Did you (or do you) do anything to HELP him or her?

Born: January 4, 1809
Coupvray, France
Died: January 6, 1852 (Age 43)
Paris, France

2. How do you think you would feel if you could not see to read?

3. Louis Braille was determined to find a way to HELP blind people read. What idea have you had that would HELP other people?

4. Where have you seen some of the Braille alphabet written?

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Admiral Richard Byrd

1. Richard Byrd traveled by himself around the world before he was even 13-years-old! Do you like to travel? If so, write about your favorite trip.

Born: October 25, 1888

Winchester, Virginia

Died: March 11, 1957 (Age 68)

Boston, Massachusetts

2. Admiral Richard Byrd was the first person to fly over the North Pole. How would you describe the conditions at the North Pole that would have made his flight difficult?

3. Admiral Byrd's story says that "he flew over the North Pole and into the history books on May 9th, 1926." Explain what is meant by "he flew into the history books."

4. Admiral Richard Byrd is even better known for his accomplishments of exploring the South Pole and the continent of Antarctica, giving the world much information about that frozen continent. What special things would you like to accomplish during your life?

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Beverly Cleary

1. Tell about one special friend you have who really only lives in a book.

Born: April 12, 1916
McMinnville, Oregon
Died: March 25, 2021 (Age 104)
Carmel-by-the-Sea, California

2. Have you read any books by Beverly Cleary? Tell about your favorite.

3. How do you think Beverly Cleary's love of reading HELPED her become a famous writer?

4. Beverly Cleary said that her character Ramona Quimby is the most like she was as a child. What kind of character would you create that would be most like you?

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William Colgate

1. When William Colgate was only 16-years-old, he had to leave home because his parents couldn't afford to take care of him anymore. How do you think he might have felt about that at that time?

Born: January 25, 1783
Hollingbourne, England
Died: March 25, 1857 (Age 74)
New York City, New York

2. William's mother had told him to earn his way by working hard and by being honest in his business dealings. How do you think this HELPED William Colgate become successful?

3. It took William Colgate five years to make his soap and candle making business successful. Why do you think he did not give up during that time?

4. Today, 200 years later, William Colgate's company, the first great soap making company in the United States, is called Colgate-Palmolive. List some products that your family uses with that name on them.

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Jacques Cousteau

1. Jacques Cousteau loved spending time on the beach near his home when he was a child. Tell about a time when you were on a beach and how you liked it.

Born: June 11, 1910

Gironde, France

Died: June 25, 1997 (Age 87)

Paris, France

2. Water, machines, and movie cameras were Jacques Cousteau's favorite things. How did he use those three things to eventually HELP the world?

3. What are some of your favorite things? How do you think you might use them some day to HELP other people?

4. Jacques Cousteau was the first to show people the beauty of the ocean and the importance of taking care of it. What is one way that you think people can HELP take care of the ocean?

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Charles Dickens

1. Charles Dickens' family had been so poor that his father was put in prison for not being able to pay his bills. How do you think that made young Charles feel?

Born: February 7, 1812
Hampshire, England
Died: June 9, 1870 (58 years old)
Kent, England

2. When the family inherited some money, Charles father was able to pay his bills, get out of prison, and send his son to school to get an education. Charles knew that education was very important for anyone who did not want to live in poverty. How do you think his family's experiences affected the way Charles applied himself in school?

3. Charles Dickens used his writing ability to HELP poor people who were treated unfairly through both his newspaper reporting and the books he wrote. How can you use your talents to HELP others?

4. How can you improve your attitude toward the importance of education so that you can HELP make the world a better place someday?

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Henry Ford

1. As a child, Henry Ford was curious about a lot of things! What are some things you are curious about? What do you do about your curiosity?

Born: July 30, 1863
Greenfield, Michigan
Died: April 7, 1947 (Age 83)
Dearborn, Michigan

2. Has your curiosity ever gotten you into trouble? Tell about it.

3. It HELPED Henry Ford a lot in his career that he loved math in school. What is your favorite subject in school, and how do you think it will HELP you in your work someday?

4. A lot of things besides cars are made on the assembly lines that Henry Ford taught the world how to use. What do you think some of those things might be?

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Benjamin Franklin

Born: January 17, 1706
Boston, Massachusetts
Died: April 17, 1790 (Age 84)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

1. Benjamin Franklin started the very first public library. He started the first fire department, and made the first bifocal glasses. Have you or someone you know been greatly HELPED by one of these things Benjamin Franklin gave us? Tell how.

2. Benjamin began being a HERO as a small boy HELPING his family in many ways. List some things you do to HELP your family to make life better for them.

3. Benjamin worked very hard on his handwriting, and he became an excellent reader. How do you think these skills might HELP you to become a HERO?

4. Would you like to become wealthy as Benjamin Franklin did so you could HELP other people even more? How do you think you would use your money to HELP others?

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Sam Houston

Born: March 2, 1793
Rockbridge County, Virginia
Died: July 26, 1863 (Age 70)
Huntsville, Texas

1. When Samuel wasn't having to work hard at his family's wilderness home, he loved to read. What is your favorite thing to do in your free time, and how do you think it HELPS you?

2. Sam Houston became friends with the Cherokee Indians who lived across the river from his home. He actually went to live with his friends for a while. Do you think you would enjoy an adventure like that? Why?

3. When Sam was 19-years-old, he joined the army and HELPED make peace between the Indians and the United States government. How do you think his time of living with the Cherokee Indians might have HELPED him accomplish that?

4. Write about some things you know of that are named after Sam Houston.

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Langston Hughes

1. Langston Hughes was a good student in school, and he loved writing poetry more than anything. Tell about a poem you have written.

Born: February 1, 1902

Joplin, Missouri

Died: May 22, 1967 (Age 65)

New York City, New York

2. All of Langston's poems were about the hard life that his people faced in the early nineteen hundreds. Write about some person or group of people who have had a hard life.

3. Langston Hughes knew that turning to drugs and fighting would ruin people's lives, and he wrote about that, too. Can you write a promise to yourself that you will never include drugs or fighting in your life?

4. Langston Hughes became a HERO because he cared about people and how we treat ourselves, our families, and our neighbors. What can you do even now to show that you care about those things?

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Robert Hugman

Born: February 8, 1902
San Antonio, Texas
Died: July 22, 1980 (Age 78)
Bexar, Texas

1. Robert Hugman loved fishing on his River San Antonio. He also loved the stories about its history. What stories do you know about your family's history that you like to tell?

2. River San Antonio had always had problems with flooding. Have you heard about or seen pictures of flooding in another place? What was it like?

3. When Robert was 19-years-old, there was such a terrible flood that 50 people were killed in downtown San Antonio. How do you think that made Robert feel?

4. Robert Hugman went to college to become an architect. That's how he was able to create a plan for making the San Antonio River both safe and beautiful. Imagine something special that education can enable you to do to HELP people. Write your thoughts.

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James Earl Jones

1. Have you ever seen James Earl Jones in a movie? (Besides Star Wars because we only heard his voice in Star Wars.)

Born: January 17, 1931
Arkabutla, Mississippi
Died: September 9, 2024 (Age 93)
Pawling, New York

2. Have you ever had a problem with stuttering, or known someone else who has? And did you know that a lot of people have been helped by reciting poetry or by singing? Why do you think these things help?

3. James Earl Jones was helped greatly by his teacher, Mr. Crouch. Do you have a special person who helps you a lot with some problem that maybe only you are experiencing?

4. Would you like to be one of those special people who helps other in special ways? (The people we call "Heroes!") If so, why?

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Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Born: January 15, 1929

Atlanta, Georgia

Died: April 4, 1968 (Age 39)

Memphis, Tennessee

1. Dr. King had a dream of a different kind of world than when he was a boy. What dreams do you have for the world today?

2. Dr. King HELPED people learn about brotherhood. How would you explain what brotherhood means?

3. Write about a time when you have seen someone mistreated because he or she was different than the people mistreating him.

4. Do you think Dr. King kept the promise he made to himself and his dad? Tell how.

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Ole Kirk Kristiansen

1. In the story you heard than Kirk Kristiansen was born in the country of Denmark. Do you know where Denmark is and something about that country?

Born: April 7, 1891

Filskov, Denmark

Died: March 11, 1958 (Age 66)

Billund, Denmark

2. Kirk Kristiansen was the 10th child born to a VERY poor family. He had a difficult childhood, but still determined himself to a better life by working at a talent he discovered about himself. Have you ever explored talents that YOU have that may be different from those around you but that you can use to provide a better future?

3. In what ways do you think you could help not only your future self, but your future family and others around you?

4. Ole Kirk Kristiansen put up a sign in the office of his world headquarters for the LEGO Group company. It says, "Only the best is good enough." What does this mean to you, and how can you apply this statement to you own life?

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Mary Jane McLeod

1. Mary Jane McLeod had FOURTEEN brothers and sisters! What do you think it would be like to live in a family with fifteen children as Mary Jane McLeod did?

Born: July 10, 1875

Mayesville, South Carolina

Died: May 18, 1955 (Age 79)

Daytona Beach, Florida

2. Mary Jane wanted more than anything to learn to read. What is something you want very badly to learn? Tell why.

3. Why do you think it was so important to Mary Jane McLeod Bethune to start a school for girls?

4. How do you think Mary Jane's childhood experiences prepared her to HELP the President of the United States work to provide education and jobs for young people?

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Paul Newman

1. Paul Newman was 7-years-old when he got his first role in a play at his elementary school. Tell about a part you have had in a play or a program.

Born: January 26, 1925
Shaker Heights, Ohio
Died: September 26, 2008 (Age 83)
Westport, Connecticut

2. During World War II, Paul served as a radio operator in a very large airplane. But the thing he loved most was acting. Why do you think he took the time to serve in the war instead of going on to college to learn to be an actor?

3. Paul Newman became a movie super star. Would you like for that to happen to you? Why?

4. What do you think really made Paul Newman a HERO—being a super star or giving millions and millions of dollars to charities that HELP poor people? Why?

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Alfred Nobel

1. When Alfred was only 4-years-old, his family moved to Russia. What do you think life was like there for him?

Born: October 21, 1833
Stockholm, Sweden
Died: December 10, 1896 (Age 63)
Sanremo, Italy

2. Explosives at that time were extremely dangerous because they were very unstable, meaning that they could explode when you didn't want them to. Alfred worked hard to learn chemical engineering. After that, what are some things he did to make explosives safer?

3. Just like anything else, explosives can be used for good purposes and bad purposes. What are some GOOD uses for explosives?

4. Alfred Nobel wanted people who worked hard in their lives to help humanity to be recognized for their work. For what 5 areas of accomplishment did Mr. Nobel create awards?

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Louis Pasteur

1. Louis Pasteur lived a long, successful life, HELPING the people of the world in many ways. How do you think things could have been different if he had not obeyed his father?

Born: December 27, 1822

Dole, France

Died: September 28, 1895 (Age 72)

Marnes-la-Coquette, France

2. Tell about a time when it was very important that you obeyed one of your parents or grandparents.

3. How do you think Louis Pasteur has affected your own life with his discoveries of keeping milk and other foods from spoiling quickly and his creation of vaccinations?

4. Even though he was 60-years-old before he finally discovered the way to cure rabies, how do you think Louis Pasteur felt when he reached that goal? Explain why.

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Will Rogers

Born: November 4, 1879
Oologah, Oklahoma
Died: August 15, 1935 (Age 55)
Point Barrow, Alaska

1. As a very young boy, all Will Rogers wanted to be was a cowboy. What did you want to be when you were very young? Why? Is it still what you want to be today?

2. Will Rogers wanted to HELP the Indian boys and girls in his school who were very poor and wore ragged clothes. How have you or your family HELPED someone in need?

3. Will Rogers said he never met a man he didn't like. Do you feel that same way? Why or why not?

4. Will Rogers grew up to be a cowboy, a movie star, a writer, and a man who encouraged everyone to share what they had with others. Which of these things made him a true HERO?

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Sacajawea

1. Sacajawea's name was "Bird Woman." What descriptive name like that would best fit you?

Born: May 1788

Salmon, Idaho

Died: December 20, 1812 (Age 24)

Fort Lisa, North Dakota

2. What feelings do you think Sacajawea experienced when she was stolen away by an enemy tribe and had to learn their ways?

3. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were brave explorers of a wild, unsettled land. Would you like a job like that? Why or why not?

4. Explain why you think Sacajawea was a true HERO.

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Jonas Salk

1. Even as young child, Jonas Salk had an attitude of excellence. Tell about something you do with an attitude of excellence.

Born: October 28, 1914
New York City, New York
Died: June 23, 1995 (Age 80)
La Jolla, California

2. Jonas and his friends had to use a broom handle for a baseball bat and anything they could find for bases. When have you and your friends used whatever you could find to play a game?

3. Jonas Salk loved science and used that interest to HELP many people around the world. What interests do you have that you would like to use some day to HELP others? And how?

4. Polio was a very bad disease that killed many people. The world celebrated when Jonas Salk found a way to prevent it. Tell about some other diseases today for which we need someone to find a prevention or cure.

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John Schneider

1. When John Schneider was in school, he was teased by bullies. Tell about when you have been treated badly by others or seen someone else treated badly.

John Richard Schneider

Born: April 8, 1960

Mount Kisco, New York

(66 years old)

2. If you found a hundred dollar bill and were told you could honestly keep it, how would you use it?

3. John Schneider became a famous television and movie star, but he knew there had to be more important things in life. Discuss some things you feel are more important than being a television and movie star.

4. The Children's Miracle Network, started by John Schneider and his friend, Marie Osmond, does very special things for children who are very, very sick. What special things would you like to do to HELP children like this?

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Rachel Joy Scott

Born: August 5, 1981
Denver, Colorado
Died: April 20, 1999 (Age 17)
Columbine, Colorado

1. When she was still very young, Rachel Joy Scott began keeping diaries of her thoughts and feelings.

She wrote about her family and her friends and her relationships. If you keep a diary or would like to begin keeping a diary, what kinds of things do you (or would you) write in it?

2. Rachel said, "I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion, then it will start a chain reaction of the same. People will never know how far a little kindness can go." Write your thoughts about Rachel's words.

3. Everybody who knew Rachel would say that she was a very happy, caring person. Why do you think she was like that?

4. "Rachel's Challenge" is about making a decision to HELP other people and treat them with kindness. Will you take Rachel's Challenge? How will you do this?

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Dr. Seuss

1. What is your very favorite Dr. Seuss story? Write about it.

Born: March 2, 1904

Springfield, Massachusetts

Died: September 24, 1991 (Age 87)

La Jolla, California

2. Explain how Theodore used his talents for creating funny drawings and silly stories to HELP children everywhere.

3. How do you think the people at the book companies who did not want to print his stories felt after Dr. Seuss became so famous?

4. What would you like to be famous for when you grow up? Explain what education you would need to achieve your goals.

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Chesley Sullenberger

1. In Chesley Sullenberger's spare time, he liked to build model airplanes and model aircraft carriers. What do you like to do in your spare time?

Chesley Burnett "Sully" Sullenberger III
Born: January 23, 1951
Denison, Texas
(76 years old)

2. Tell about something you are very interested in that might HELP you with your career someday.

3. How do you think Chesley Sullenberger felt when he realized that his airplane was in trouble?

4. How important to his passengers' lives was his ability to stay calm? What might have happened if he had panicked?

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John Tesh

John Frank Tesh

Born: July 9, 1952

Garden City, New York

(74 years old)

1. When he was only 6-years-old, John Tesh was learning to play the piano and the trumpet. What are some things you have begun learning at an early age that you may continue to use in your adult life?

2. John Tesh was successful as a news reporter, as a television host, and as a recording artist. Which of those careers would you most enjoy? Why?

3. If you could be on the radio and give people HELPFUL advice, what would you want to talk to them about?

4. John Tesh has always loved figuring out special ways to HELP other people. Tell of some ways you would want to HELP other people? Why?

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Harriet Tubman

1. Harriet Tubman and her family were slaves on a large plantation. Describe what you think their life was like.

Born: March 1822
Dorchester County, Maryland
Died: March 10, 1913 (Age 91)
Auburn, New York

2. Harriet was able to escape by herself, but how do you think she felt about the family and friends she had left behind? If you had been her, what would you have tried to do about it?

3. The Underground Railroad was not really a railroad, but a lot of caring people HELPING runaway slaves. How do you think you would have felt about this if you had been living at that time?

4. Harriet's first name at birth was actually Araminta, but she changed her first name to Harriet to honor her mother. If you could change your first name to be the same as someone you love very much, what would your new name be? Why would you choose that particular name?

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Nick Vujicic

Nick Vujicic

Born: December 4, 1982

Melbourne, Australia

(44 years old)

1. At one point, Nick felt sorry for himself. Have you ever felt sorry for yourself about something? Write about it.

2. Nick had to work very hard to learn simple things most people can do easily. What is something you have had to work very hard to learn? Explain.

3. Nick Vujicic loves talking to young people and teaching them about dealing with problems in their lives. How would you like to HELP young people with their problems? What would you say to them?

4. If you could meet Nick Vujicic, what would you like to ask him?

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Student Interaction Sheet



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Sam Walton

1. Sam Walton grew up on a farm, and before school every morning, he had to milk cows, bottle milk, and deliver milk to customers. Write about some chores you have to do at your house.

Born: March 29, 1918
Kingfisher, Oklahoma
Died: April 6, 1992 (Age 74)
Little Rock, Arkansas

2. Good grades in school did not come easily for Sam Walton. Discuss something you have had difficulty doing but worked hard anyway to accomplish.

3. Sam Walton worked hard to create good stores. What do you think it takes to make a good store?

4. If you could talk to Sam Walton, what would you say to him about his Wal-Mart stores? What do you like about them? What do you think could be improved?

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Carter G. Woodson

1. The words, "It's never too late to learn." were very special to Carter Woodson. How would you explain those words to someone?

Born: December 19, 1875
New Canton, Virginia
Died: April 3, 1950 (Age 74)
Washington, D.C.

2. Carter read all he could every day. How important is reading to you? What do you like to read?

3. Carter Woodson found that it was very important for children to study things they already knew a little bit about. Explain what that means to you. What do you like to study?

4. Why do you think Black History Month is important?