

Grade 4 Exemplars

Prompt: Describe how George Washington Carver overcame challenges and made a difference toward improving the lives of others. Cite evidence from the text to support your response.

Exemplar A:

George Washington Carver overcame challenges, then worked to make changes in America in smart ways. George's first challenge was that when he was a baby, his mother was kidnapped. He then went to school, but had to do "full-time farm work" all through. He also had difficulty getting into college because he was African-American, but found he could be admitted to study art, then switched to science. This shows that after upsetting events, he worked hard and found clever solutions to problems. George then helped farmers who "relied on cotton to support themselves.", but had challenges with growing crops. Planting only cotton depleted the soil of nutrients. His suggestion was to recommend they alternate planting peanuts too, which adds rich nutrients back into the soil. He knew enough about soil to help. However, farmers now had the problem of too many peanuts. George taught farmers to use the extra peanuts to make "peanut milk, paper, and soap." George kept coming up on his own with good ideas that worked as solutions. George shows that being smart and not giving up can make the world better. He spent his life using his good talents to make others' lives better, even though his own start in life had been so hard.

Prompt: Describe how George Washington Carver overcame challenges and made a difference toward improving the lives of others. Cite evidence from the text to support your response.

Exemplar B:

In “The Peanut Man,” and “George Washington Carver”, George solves challenges by working hard and having good ideas that helped improve the lives of others. George’s first challenge was that just after he was born, his mother was kidnapped. He then went to school, but had to do “full-time farm work” all through. He also had difficulty getting into college because of his race, but found he could be admitted to study art, then switched to science. This shows that he worked hard and found clever solutions to problems. When George began helping farmers with their soil challenges, he discovered that if farmers plant cotton every year, this “leaves the soil depleted of nutrients”. If soil has no nutrients, cotton will not grow. George wanted to help farmers who “relied on cotton to support themselves”. He used his good knowledge of science to help them. Planting peanuts too, he taught them, puts rich nutrients back into the soil. Yet, this solution caused too many peanuts so George then taught farmers more than 300 uses for peanuts. Again, George kept thinking up great ways to help. Although he faced challenges in changing something in America, he was smart enough to overcome those challenges. In the end, he cared about others so he worked hard and came up with good ideas to help others.

Prompt: Describe how George Washington Carver overcame challenges and made a difference toward improving the lives of others. Cite evidence from the text to support your response.

Exemplar C:

“The Peanut Man”, the title of one of the articles on George Washing Carver, is a compliment of a nickname! It shows off how after Carver overcame challenges, he worked to make the lives of others better, most famously through helping them grow peanuts. Carver’s mother was kidnapped when he was young, which must have made his life challenging. He then went to school, but had to work on a farm the whole time. He also had difficulty getting into college because of his race, but found he could be admitted to study art in one college, then switched to science at another. This shows that he did not give up his dreams when times were tough, but worked hard and found clever solutions to problems. Next, he worked to help farmers to use the soil better because their crops were not growing well. He knew that plants need nutrients, so he figured out a way to reintroduce nutrients back into the soil, after the soil had been depleted by other crops. He showed intelligence and skill in how he solved challenges. A next challenge was that farmers then grew too many peanuts since peanuts were good for the soil. Once there were too many peanuts, Carver invented “peanut milk, paper, and soap”. He had an amazing ability to use science, and to come up with his own great, creative ideas too. Not only can tough difficulties can be overcome with hard work and being smart, but people who do this can even go on to make important contributions to the lives of others.

People Who Made Others' Lives Better Project

Task: As part of a social studies early America unit, students chose heroes from the period studied and wrote feature articles describing the achievements of the hero they chose. Each student then adopted a personal cause and reflected on how their hero inspired and informed their own service.



Image Source: <http://sawpeanutmilk.com/?p=234>

Just a week old, George and his mother, both slaves, were kidnapped from their home, taken to Arkansas, and sold. An agent of his original owner found him, and brought him back to Missouri. George never saw his mother again. Not an easy start to life, but George grew up to achieve greatness through passion and service anyway.

Plant Passion

Ever since George was young, he felt a strong connection to plants. He would often nurse sick plants back to life. He became known as the plant doctor. George was eager to learn. He walked miles daily to get to school. He had to transfer from one college to another to get to study his early passion - plants.

Putting His Passion to Good Use

George became even more of an expert at helping plants when he finished college. After observing the struggles of cotton growers, Carver set his mind to help. He helped farmers put nutrients back into the soil so they could earn money again through planting peanuts. Carver knew that certain kinds of plants were able to reintroduce nutrients back into the soil. So he taught them how to do this. Natural talent, passion and skill helped him turn possible failed challenges into opportunities to help the land, and others.

Relentless Passion

Carver never seemed to give up when challenges arose. He faced roadblocks and kept trying. At first, he had to convince farmers to plant peanuts. When there were too many peanuts, he invented more than 300 uses for peanuts. It would have been easy for Carver to give up his work to help poor farmers. However, he held on.

Carver's path toward a change was not easy, but he was able to rise to the challenge. What important change is ever easy? There may be times when helping others is easy, but often it involves lots of skill, passion and hard work.