

## Famous African Americans Oprah Winfrey



African-American female writers have always inspired Oprah Winfrey. When she was a teenager, Winfrey read a book that changed her life. That book was *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou. The book spoke to Winfrey. It gave her hope. She realized she could rise above the poverty and racism that **marked**<sup>1</sup> her life.

Winfrey was born in Kosciusko, Mississippi in 1954. When she was 20, she became the first African-American female to host TV news. She was the **anchor**<sup>2</sup> at WTVF-TV in Nashville, Tennessee. After moving to Chicago, Winfrey began hosting a morning TV program. At first it was called *AM Chicago*. However, the show was so popular that it was renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

Today, Oprah Winfrey's career is not only in television. She has produced and acted in several movies. These include *The Color Purple* and *Beloved*. Both movies are based on best-selling novels by African-American female writers.

Winfrey has won many **Emmy Awards**<sup>3</sup> for her talk show. She has become one of the most popular, powerful, and influential African Americans of our time. She is also one of the richest women in America today.

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<sup>1</sup> **marked:** affected

<sup>2</sup> **anchor:** a broadcaster who reads the news and introduces the reports of other broadcasters

<sup>3</sup> **Emmy Awards:** production awards given to U.S. television shows

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What works of art inspired Oprah Winfrey?
  - a. writing by African-American females
  - b. movies based on lives of journalists
  - c. paintings by African-Americans
  - d. plays about small towns
  
2. Which of these is an effect of Winfrey's show *AM Chicago* being so popular?
  - a. she became a news anchor in Nashville
  - b. she read a book that changed her life
  - c. the name was changed to *The Oprah Winfrey Show*
  - d. she produced and acted in several movies
  
3. Based on the passage, Winfrey most likely produced the movies *The Color Purple* and *Beloved* because
  - a. those were her favorite books as a child.
  - b. they were books that inspired her.
  - c. she thought they would make a lot of money.
  - d. she liked the titles of the books.
  
4. Read the sentences: "Today, Oprah Winfrey's career is not only in television. She has produced and acted in several movies."

The word **career** means

- a. work and jobs
  - b. money invested
  - c. influences
  - d. hobbies and games
  
5. What is the main idea of this passage?
  - a. Oprah has been as successful in acting as she has at journalism.
  - b. Oprah has learned from the greats to become a successful novel writer.
  - c. Oprah has won many Emmy Awards for her television show.
  - d. Oprah is an important African-American woman inspired by other African-American women.

6. Name at least two jobs that Oprah Winfrey has held.

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7. Based on the passage, explain whether Winfrey was able to rise above poverty and racism.

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Winfrey believed that she could succeed in life \_\_\_\_\_ reading a book by Maya Angelou titled *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

- a. but
- b. after
- c. because
- d. before

9. Read the following sentence.

**When she was 20, Winfrey became the first African-American female to host TV news in Nashville, Tennessee.**

Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

1. Who? Winfrey
2. What did Winfrey do? \_\_\_\_\_
3. When? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where? \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Vocabulary Word:** influential: important and respected.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher Guide and Answers**

**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 640

**Featured Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

**Passage Summary:** This passage describes the life of Oprah Winfrey, who began hosting a television show, and has since produced and acted in several movies.

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  - a. **writing by African-American females**
  - b. movies based on lives of journalists
  - c. paintings by African-Americans
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2. Which of these is an effect of Winfrey's show *AM Chicago* being so popular?
  - a. she became a news anchor in Nashville
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  - c. **the name was changed to *The Oprah Winfrey Show***
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3. Based on the passage, Winfrey most likely produced the movies *The Color Purple* and *Beloved* because
  - a. those were her favorite books as a child.
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4. Read the sentences: "Today, Oprah Winfrey's career is not only in television. She has produced and acted in several movies."

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- a. **work and jobs**
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5. What is the main idea of this passage?
- Oprah has been as successful in acting as she has at journalism.
  - Oprah has learned from the greats to become a successful novel writer.
  - Oprah has won many Emmy Awards for her television show.
  - Oprah is an important African-American woman inspired by other African-American women.**
6. Name at least two jobs that Oprah Winfrey has held.

**Suggested answer:** The passage states that Oprah Winfrey has been a TV news anchor, a talk show host, an actor, and a producer.

7. Based on the passage, explain whether Winfrey was able to rise above poverty and racism.

**Suggested answer:** Answers will vary but should reflect that she has risen above poverty and racism by becoming a wealthy and important person and by becoming the first African-American female news host. Students can also include that she has produced movies based on important African-American novels.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

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- but
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Answer the questions below based on the information provided in the sentence you just read. One of the questions has already been answered for you.

- Who? Winfrey
- What did Winfrey do? **became the first African-American female to host TV news**

3. When? **when she was 20**

4. Where? **in Nashville, Tennessee**

10. **Vocabulary Word:** influential: important and respected.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.