

Famous African Americans - Oprah Winfrey

by ReadWorks



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 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 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 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.

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.

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

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