

## Reading Selection

### Reading Selection Comprehension Checklist

Whether or not you agree with the ideas presented in the reading selection below, make sure to:

- ☐ briefly scan the entire selection.
- ☐ look at the questions for the selection before reading it.
- ☐ carefully read the selection.
- ☐ understand the purpose or reason the selection was written.
- ☐ understand the main idea and the details that support it.

Complete the Multiple-choice that follow this reading selection.

## 1 A Slave Among Slaves

By Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)

I was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin County, Virginia. I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date of my birth, but at any rate I suspect I must have been born somewhere and at some time. As nearly as I have been able to learn, I was born near a cross-roads post-office called Hale's Ford, and the year was 1858 or 1859. I do not know the month or the day. The earliest impressions I can now recall are of the plantation and the slave quarters—the latter being the part of the plantation where the slaves had their cabins.

My life had its beginning in the midst of the most miserable, desolate, and discouraging surroundings. This was so, however, not because my owners were especially cruel, for they were not, as compared with many others. I was born in a typical log cabin, about fourteen by sixteen feet square. In this cabin I lived with my mother and a brother and sister till after the Civil War, when we were all declared free.

Of my ancestry I know almost nothing. In the slave quarters, and even later, I heard whispered conversations among the coloured people of the tortures which the slaves, including, no doubt, my ancestors on my mother's side, suffered in the middle passage of the slave ship while being conveyed from Africa to America. I have been unsuccessful in securing any information that would throw any accurate light upon the history of my family beyond my mother. She, I remember, had a half-brother and a half-sister. In the days of slavery not very much attention was given to family history and family records—that is, black family records. My mother, I suppose, attracted the attention of a purchaser who was afterward my owner and hers. Her addition to the slave family attracted about as much attention as the purchase of a new horse or cow. Of my father I know even less than of my mother. I do not even know his name. I have heard reports to the effect that he was a white man who lived on one of the near-by

plantations. Whoever he was, I never heard of his taking the least interest in me or providing in any way for my rearing. But I do not find especial fault with him. He was simply another unfortunate victim of the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it at that time.

The cabin was not only our living-place, but was also used as the kitchen for the plantation. My mother was the plantation cook. The cabin was without glass windows; it had only openings in the side which let in the light, and also the cold, chilly air of winter. There was a door to the cabin—that is, something that was called a door—but the uncertain hinges by which it was hung, and the large cracks in it, to say nothing of the fact that it was too small, made the room a very uncomfortable one. In addition to these openings there was, in the lower right-hand corner of the room, the "cat-hole,"—a contrivance which almost every mansion or cabin in Virginia possessed during the ante-bellum period. The "cat-hole" was a square opening, about seven by eight inches, provided for the purpose of letting the cat pass in and out of the house at will during the night. In the case of our particular cabin I could never understand the necessity for this convenience, since there were at least a half-dozen other places in the cabin that would have accommodated the cats. There was no wooden floor in our cabin, the naked earth being used as a floor. In the centre of the earthen floor there was a large, deep opening covered with boards, which was used as a place in which to store sweet potatoes during the winter. An impression of this potato-hole is very distinctly engraved upon my memory, because I recall that during the process of putting the potatoes in or taking them out I would often come into possession of one or two, which I roasted and thoroughly enjoyed. There was no cooking-stove on our plantation, and all the cooking for the whites and slaves my mother had to do over an open fireplace, mostly in pots and "skillets." While the poorly built cabin caused us to suffer with cold in the winter, the heat from the open fireplace in summer was equally trying.

## Multiple-choice

### Multiple-choice Instructions

On the actual test, these questions will be on a sheet of paper separate from your test booklet and will be marked by a computer. Make sure to completely fill in the circle of the answer you choose.

**IMPORTANT:** Do NOT use an "X", check mark, half circle fill, nor a partial circle fill.

- ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☒ Correct form  
☒ X ☒ ✓ ☐ ◐ ☐ ◑ ☒ Incorrect form

Choose the best or most correct answer. To indicate your answer fill in the circle completely.

5.1 Booker T. Washington was born

- A in Hale's Ford.  
 B in 1858.  
 C in 1859.  
 D on a plantation.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5.2 Mr. Washington's comment, "I must have been born somewhere and at some time," shows his

- A confusion.  
 B sense of humour.  
 C unhappiness.  
 D status as a slave.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5.3 The word "latter" in the first paragraph refers to

- A the plantation.  
 B Hale's Ford.  
 C the slave quarters.  
 D the cross-roads.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5.4 Mr. Washington's life began in unpleasant surroundings because

- A his owners were cruel.  
 B he was declared free.  
 C that was the way slaves were usually treated.  
 D he was born in a log cabin.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5.5 The purchase of Washington's mother

- A attracted a lot of attention.  
 B attracted less attention than a new horse.  
 C attracted more attention than a new cow.  
 D attracted the same attention as a new horse or cow.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5.6 Washington did not get any child support from his father because

- A his father was a white man.  
 B there were no family records.  
 C he didn't know his father's name.  
 D his father was an unfortunate victim.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5.7 Washington did not hold a grudge against his father because

- A he didn't know how to find him.  
 B his father supported him.  
 C his father was also a victim.  
 D he didn't know his father's name.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

5.8 Washington's level of language in this passage reveals

- A his ancestry.  
 B his family background.  
 C his education.  
 D his lifestyle.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D