

Social studies

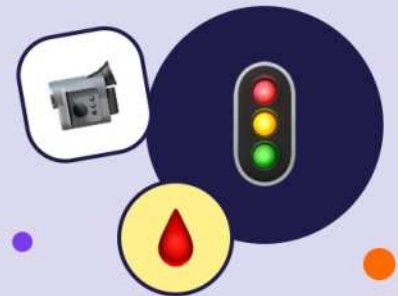
Grade 4

Black History Month reading comprehension: inventors who changed daily life

Read short biographies of three Black inventors and find the main idea of each.



I can determine the main idea of a biography and explain how an invention helps people.



1



Three inventors



Garrett Morgan was an inventor and businessman in Cleveland, Ohio. In the early 1900s, streets were crowded with cars, horses and people, and crashes were common. In 1923, Morgan received a patent for a traffic signal with a warning position that told drivers to get ready to stop. He also invented a safety hood that helped rescuers breathe in smoke.

Marie Van Brittan Brown was a nurse in New York City. She often worked late and came home alone. With her husband, Albert, she designed a home security system. It used a camera, a TV screen and a microphone so a person could see and talk to a visitor before opening the door. It was patented in 1969, and many modern home security systems build on the same ideas.

Dr. Charles Drew was a surgeon and scientist. He found better ways to separate and store plasma, a part of blood, so it could be saved longer. In 1940 and 1941 he led large programs that collected blood to help save lives. He also spoke out when blood was separated by the race of the donor, since there is no scientific reason to do so.

2 Inventor and idea

Draw a line from each person to the work they did.

☐ Garrett Morgan ●

☐ Marie Van Brittan Brown ●

☐ Charles Drew ●

● A. Home security system with a camera

● B. Better ways to store blood plasma

● C. Traffic signal with a warning position

3 Main idea

Circle the best answer.

1. What is the main idea of the paragraph about Marie Van Brittan Brown?

A She was a nurse who liked TV.

B She designed a system to help people see who is at the door.

C She lived in Ohio.

2. What problem did Garrett Morgan's traffic signal help solve?

A Crashes on crowded streets

B Dark houses

C Too much rain

3. What is plasma?

A A kind of camera

B A part of blood

C A street sign

4

**True or false**

Circle the right answer.

1. Garrett Morgan also invented a safety hood.
2. Marie Van Brittan Brown's system was patented in 1923.
3. Charles Drew was a surgeon.
4. Modern home security systems build on Brown's ideas.

True

False

True

False

True

False

True

False

5

**Key details**

Use the text to fill in each blank.

1. Morgan's traffic signal had a _____ position.
2. Brown designed her system with her husband, _____.
3. Brown's system was patented in _____.
4. Plasma is a part of _____.
5. Morgan got his patent _____ years before Brown got hers.

6

**Timeline**

Write 1 to 4 in the boxes, from earliest to latest.

☐

Charles Drew leads large blood collection programs.

☐

Garrett Morgan gets a patent for his traffic signal.

☐

Marie Van Brittan Brown's security system is patented.

☐

Streets are crowded and crashes are common.

7

**Who is it?**

Write each detail under the right person.

lived in Cleveland, Ohio

was a nurse

was a surgeon

invented a safety hood

used a camera and a microphone

found ways to store plasma

Garrett Morgan

Marie Van Brittan Brown

Charles Drew

8

**Problem and solution**

Circle the best answer.

1. What problem did Brown want to solve?

A She needed a faster car.

B She wanted more TV shows.

C She often came home alone late and wanted to feel safe.

2. What did Drew say about separating blood by the donor's race?

A It keeps blood fresh.

B There is no scientific reason to do it.

C It is needed for plasma.

3. What does 'patent' most likely mean in the text?

A An official paper that says an invention belongs to its inventor

B A kind of traffic light

C A hospital room

9



Why it matters

Choose one inventor. Explain how their work still helps people today. Use a detail from the text.

How did it go?



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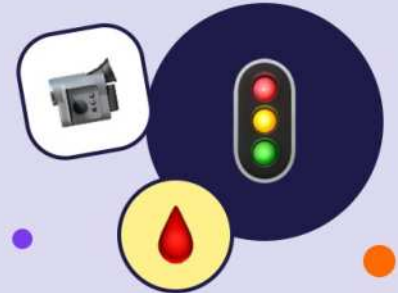
Answer key

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C Garrett Morgan •

A Marie Van Brittan Brown •

B Charles Drew •

• **A.** Home security system with a camera

• **B.** Better ways to store blood plasma

• **C.** Traffic signal with a warning position

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Why it matters

Choose one inventor. Explain how their work still helps people today. Use a detail from the text.

Answers vary. Example: Garrett Morgan's traffic signal warned drivers to get ready to stop.

Traffic lights today still use a warning light, which helps prevent crashes.

How did it go?



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