

Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington

Job Ranking Enrichment Activity

Introduction: Young students need to be aware that all jobs are not created equal. Once they understand that a job is work that is done for money, they can start thinking about what is a job and how different jobs require different skill sets.

Grade Level: K-3

Time Required: 15-20 Minutes

Objectives:

- The student will rank jobs that were held by Booker T. Washington according to various criteria.
- The student will discuss the merits and difficulties of various jobs.

Materials:

- The book *Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington* by Jabari Asim (Little, Brown and Company, 2012)
- Job Ranking Cards- run off on card stock and cut into individual cards

Procedure:

1. Prepare the job cards before class. These cards may hand printed or computer-generated.
2. Introduce the lesson by telling the students they will be listening to a story about a boy who was determined to get an education.
3. Read the book *Fifty Cents and a Dream: Young Booker T. Washington* by Jabari Asim to the class. This takes six to seven minutes.
4. Ask the student if they know what a job is. Job can be defined as “A piece of work usually done on order at an agreed-upon rate. Also a paid position of regular employment.”
5. Hold up the prepared behavior cards and read them one at a time. You may wish to share more detailed information about each job including:
 - **Book Carrier-** Carried the schoolbooks to school for his master’s daughter. (He was a slave and did not get paid money for this job.) **[Skills required include: physical strength and trustworthiness]**
 - **Salt Furnace Worker-** Shoveled, packed, and hauled salt in a hot factory (He joined his stepfather at this job.) **[Skills required include: physical strength, ability to use necessary tools and dependability]**
 - **Coal Miner-** Went underground to dig coal (This was a dangerous job for a man, yet he and his brothers worked hard mining coal to make money for the family.) **[Skills required include: physical strength, ability to use mining tools, bravery, and dependability]**
 - **Dock Worker-** Hauled cargo off of barges. (He used the money he earned from this job to help him get to Hampton, Virginia to go to school.) **[Skills required include: physical strength, problem solving abilities and communication skills]**

- **School Janitor**- Cleaned classrooms, washed windows, and scrubbed floors (This job helped him pay his school tuition.) [**Skills required include: physical strength, ability to use cleaning supplies**]
 - **Teacher**- Taught students (The money he earned was used to pay for his brothers' tuition at Hampton Institute.) [**Skills required include: ability to read and write, communication skills and reliability**]
 - **Book Author**- Wrote books (His autobiography "Up from Slavery" becomes a bestseller.) [**Skills required include: ability to read and write, communication skills and creativity**]
6. Ask for seven volunteers to come to the front of the room and give each a job card. Tell the volunteers to hold the cards out so that the members of the class may see them.
 7. Instruct the students in the class to arrange the cardholders so that the jobs are ranked according to the stated scenarios.
Suggested scenarios include:
 - Rank the jobs from the one you think is the safest to the most dangerous.
 - Rank the jobs from the one that you think require the most physical strength to the least physical strength.
 - Rank the jobs from the one you think takes the most education to the least education.
 8. Challenge more advanced students to use to cards to do the following tasks:
 - Rank the jobs according to their pay.
 - Identify which jobs still exist.
 - Identify which jobs have been changed by the invention a new technology.
 - Identify which jobs may be replayed by technology in the future.
 9. Encourage discussion between each ranking. As the ranking is subjective, there are no right or wrong answers. (Be aware that this may frustrate some students as they are used to absolutes. However, experiencing the ambiguous is good every now and then.)

Ranking Activity Cards

Book Carrier
Salt Furnace Worker
Coal Miner
Dock Worker
School Janitor

Teacher
Book Author