

# OUTSTANDING AMERICANS

REM 1116A

**A TEACHING RESOURCE FROM**



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# INTRODUCTION

The biographies in **Outstanding Americans** are sure to enhance your reading program. The stories about outstanding Americans who have made significant contributions to society will help students appreciate and understand the role of these notable minorities.

A list of relevant words and definitions precedes each story to ensure understanding and expand vocabulary enrichment. Sentence writing and comprehension questions follow each biography. An answer key is provided.

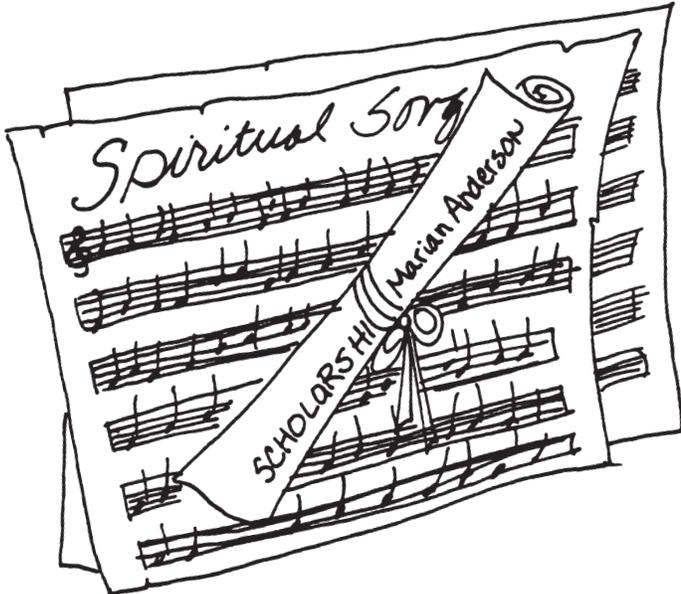
This book was designed for use in grades 5-8. Readability is at the 3rd-4th grade level.

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**MARIAN ANDERSON (1902-1993)**

**“Once in a Century”**



**VOCABULARY**

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>spiritual</b>   | <i>type of church song</i>                    |
| <b>opera</b>       | <i>a play set to music</i>                    |
| <b>orchestra</b>   | <i>people who play music together</i>         |
| <b>scholarship</b> | <i>money for school expenses</i>              |
| <b>musician</b>    | <i>one who plays an instrument</i>            |
| <b>prejudice</b>   | <i>dislike of someone without good reason</i> |

Marian Anderson was not yet 10 years old. But she supported her mother and sister by singing. Her father had died, and they were very poor.

Marian sang Negro spirituals in her church choir. As she grew, people saw her talent. When she was 19, a well-known voice coach became her teacher. A few years later, she won a contest. She beat 300 other singers and was allowed to appear with a large orchestra. Still, it was hard for an African American singer to find work.

Marian won a scholarship. This gave her money to study in Europe. She became very popular. A famous musician said, “A voice like hers comes only once in a century.”

Slowly, she became famous in the United States. At last, she became the top singer. But in 1939, she was refused the chance to sing on a famous stage. It was because she was black.

Her fans were upset. They arranged for her to sing at the Lincoln Memorial instead. A record crowd of 75,000 people came to hear her.

In 1955, Marian became the first African American to sing at the biggest opera house in New York. She retired 10 years later.

Marian once said that prejudice was like “a hair across your cheek. You can’t see it. But you can feel it.”

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### MARIAN ANDERSON (1902-1993)

Use each vocabulary word in a complete sentence.

1. spiritual: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. opera: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. orchestra: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. scholarship: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. musician: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. prejudice: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Answer each question with a complete sentence.

1. When Marian was nearly 10, why did she have to begin working? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What did Marian say prejudice was like? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What lesson do you think Marian learned very early in life?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_