

Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas

by Charlemae Rollins

In the years around 1920, more and more people were driving automobiles. Soon ways to direct this new street traffic were needed. In 1923, Garrett A. Morgan, an African-American businessman of Cleveland, Ohio, patented a traffic signal. But you will see that this was just one of his ideas.

Mr. Morgan's family was a traveling family. He sold cosmetics to people who lived in the small towns and cities of the South. He liked to take his wife and three sons along. And he wanted to make sure that they were comfortable.

So Garrett Morgan turned a bus into a house on wheels. He took out the seats and put in bunk beds. Then he put in a radio, a coffee pot, and a cooking rack for hot dogs. As he and his family rode down the highways, they could eat, sleep, and listen to the radio.

One afternoon the family was driving through a city about the time that school let out. Children raced across the streets on their way home, not caring at all about the traffic.

Time and time again Mr. Morgan had to stop suddenly to miss hitting a child.

"Driving is getting more and more dangerous," Mr. Morgan told his family. "There are a few policemen around to direct traffic, but there are not enough of them."

As Mr. Morgan drove around, he studied traffic lights that were being operated by hand in several cities. When he got back to Cleveland, he planned a traffic signal of his own. In 1923 he was given a patent for his hand-operated traffic signal. The diagram shown below is taken from the plans he sent to the Patent Office.

The signal was first used in Cleveland, at the corner of East Ninth Street and Euclid Avenue. It was credited with saving thirty-two lives. Soon after that, more signal lights were put in at other busy corners in the city.

Another of Mr. Morgan's ideas also helped save people's lives. It was a gas mask. But no one showed much interest in it until the night a gas line exploded in the Cleveland Waterworks.

Two dozen men were trapped in a tunnel. No one could go down to get the men because the gas fumes were too dangerous.

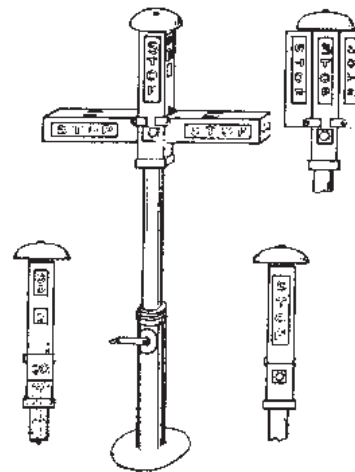
Quickly a call went out for Mr. Morgan. In an hour he and a few other men, each wearing a gas mask, entered the tunnel. Down they went—one hundred feet, two hundred feet into the darkness. Soon they stumbled over some of the workmen and found that they were still alive. Mr. Morgan led them up to safety and then went down for others.

For this act of bravery, the city of Cleveland presented Garrett A. Morgan with a gold medal.

Nov. 20, 1923

G. A. MORGAN
TRAFFIC SIGNAL
Filed Feb. 27, 1922

1,475,024



1. Why was Mr. Morgan awarded a gold medal?
 - A He helped save some men who were trapped.
 - B He sold the most cosmetics of any salesman in 1923.
 - C He saved thirty-two children.
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2. What did both of Mr. Morgan's inventions have in common?
 - A They saved money.
 - B They saved work.
 - C They saved lives.

3. What did Mr. Morgan invent?

- A bunk beds
- B automobile
- C traffic signal

4. As Mr. Morgan went into the tunnel, how did he *most likely* feel?

- A He worried that people thought the gas masks looked silly.
- B He was nervous but glad to be able to help the men.
- C He was afraid to be by himself in the dark tunnel.

5. Which of Mr. Morgan's inventions affects the *most* people every day?

- A stoplight
- B motor home
- C gas mask

6. What is the purpose of this selection?

- A to inform readers about an inventor of common objects
- B to convince readers of the need to improve highways
- C to entertain readers with a funny story about family life

7. In this selection what helps the reader understand that the first traffic signal was different from modern day stoplights?
- A the title
 - B the last paragraph
 - C the pictures

End of Sample Items

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EOG Grade 5 Reading Sample Items

Selection Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas	1	A	Knowing	2.02
Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas	2	C	Organizing	2.02
Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas	3	C	Analyzing	2.02
Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas	4	B	Generating	2.05
Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas	5	A	Applying	2.05
Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas	6	A	Evaluating	2.06
Garrett Morgan, Man of Ideas	7	C	Evaluating	2.02