# AWESOME stories

## A Change of Life for Albert Schweitzer

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In October of 1905, Albert Schweitzer wrote to his parents informing them that he was enrolling as a medical student. His destination would be Africa. His life would turn away from music, philosophy and theology and be replaced by the practice of medicine. He told them he felt he needed to not *talk* about love, but put it to action:

On October 13, 1905, I dropped into a letter box on the avenue de la Grande Armée in Paris letters to my parents and to some of my closest friends telling them that at the beginning of the winter term I would embark on the study of medicine with the idea of later going out to equatorial Africa as a doctor. (See Out of My Life and Thought: An Autobiography, at page 81.)

His parents and friends were furious and expressed their disapproval with many objections. They told him his venture would be foolish. They could not understand how this talented and artistic man would choose to bury himself in an African jungle.

The only one who understood and supported him was <u>Helene Bresslau</u>—who later became his wife in 1912. Helene respected Albert's courage to follow his own beliefs. His decision to enter medical school prompted her to study nursing so she could help him with his work.

Despite all the objections, Albert enrolled in medical school in January, 1905. He received his degree—specializing in tropical medicine and surgery—in 1913, at the age of 38.

### See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

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#### See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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