

Pioneers of Change: Mary Seacole

Learning objective: To understand the significant contribution of Mary Seacole to nursing and history.

Read the text carefully about Mary Seacole's life and work, then answer the questions below. Use your best handwriting and full sentences.

Mary Seacole was a remarkable woman born in Jamaica in 1805. Her mother was a traditional healer who taught Mary the medicinal properties of tropical plants. During her life, Mary travelled extensively, using her nursing skills to treat people suffering from cholera and yellow fever. When the Crimean War began in 1853, Mary heard that British soldiers were dying without proper medical care. Despite being turned away by official organisations because of her background, she refused to give up. Using her own savings, she travelled thousands of miles to the Crimea. There, she established the 'British Hotel', a sanctuary where she provided food, shelter, and vital medical supplies to soldiers on the front lines. Mary became a beloved figure, known affectionately as 'Mother Seacole'. Her bravery and unwavering commitment to helping others under dangerous conditions remain an inspiration. Today, she is remembered as a pioneer of nursing who overcame prejudice through her kindness and resilience, leaving a lasting legacy in British history.

Word bank: pioneer · nursing · resilience · compassion · contribution · heroic · reputation

1. Where was Mary Seacole born, and what did she learn from her mother? (2 marks)

2. What was the name of the place Mary established in the Crimea, and what did she provide for the soldiers there? (2 marks)

3. Why do you think the soldiers gave Mary the nickname 'Mother Seacole'? (2 marks)

4. How did Mary show resilience when official organisations refused to let her join their nursing team? (2 marks)

5. Mary Seacole was not recognised for her work for many years. Why is it important that we learn about her contributions today? Justify your answer. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a portrait of Mary Seacole standing outside her 'British Hotel'. Include details like medical supplies or a kettle to show how she cared for the soldiers.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast the challenges Mary Seacole faced with the challenges modern nurses might face today. What might have happened if Mary had decided to return home after being rejected by the official organisations? Explain your reasoning in a short paragraph.