

Celebrating Pioneers: A Journey Through History with Ellie

Learning objective: To develop reading comprehension skills by exploring the achievements of inspiring Black historical figures.

Read the passage below carefully. Use your knowledge of vocabulary and inference to answer the questions that follow. Think carefully about why these individuals are remembered today.

Ellie the elephant has an incredible memory, and she loves to tell stories about people who changed the world. This month, she is sharing the story of Mary Seacole. Born in Jamaica in 1805, Mary was a brilliant nurse. When she heard about the Crimean War, she knew she had to help. Even though she faced many challenges and was told she could not travel to help the soldiers, she did not give up. She used her own money—saving up her pounds and pence—to sail to the battlefield. She built the 'British Hotel', a place where soldiers could find food, medicine, and kindness. Mary Seacole showed incredible resilience and bravery. Her story teaches us that even when things seem difficult, one person's determination can make a huge difference to the lives of others.

Word bank: courageous · pioneer · contribution · injustice · resilience · legacy

1. Why did Mary Seacole choose to travel all the way to the Crimean War? Use evidence from the text. (2 marks)

2. How does the author describe Mary Seacole's personality? Give two examples. (2 marks)

3. Explain why the 'British Hotel' was more than just a place to stay. What does this tell us about Mary's character? (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast: How might the soldiers have felt before and after meeting Mary Seacole? (2 marks)

5. Justify your answer: Why do you think Ellie the elephant considers Mary Seacole a 'pioneer'? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of Mary Seacole at the 'British Hotel'. Include details that show how she was helping the soldiers, such as medicine bottles or a warm bowl of soup.



Extension challenge: Research another historical figure who showed great courage. Write a short paragraph explaining what their 'legacy' is today. What might happen if this person had never stood up for what they believed in?