

NUFFIELD PRIMARY HISTORY



KS1 FAMOUS PEOPLE: FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

TEACHERS' NOTES

We are now following the QCA schemes of work. One of the History units is called *Why do we remember Florence Nightingale?*. This unit looks at her life, why she went to the Crimea, and what happened as a result of her work. It builds on previous units by focusing on the way of life of a famous person who lived at the time before living memory, and it also contributes to cross-curricular work that the children covered last year, on 'People who help us'.

I wanted to use the QCA scheme as a framework, and interpret it in the light of teaching ideas from the Nuffield Literacy and History course we'd done at Sefton.

In the unit on Florence Nightingale, my aim was to be able to stretch and challenge all children, regardless of their ability, whilst teaching literacy (particularly oracy) skills through history. I wanted to provide children with an in-depth focus so that they would be able to remember it more clearly. Having said this, I did not feel particularly inspired by the topic myself, but I decided to try to incorporate into the teaching of the unit some ideas which I had come across on the Nuffield course. I was keen to see if it would be possible to meet both History and Literacy learning objectives.

Year group/class

The children are a mixed ability Year 2 class. There are four children who receive help for Special Needs, and 22 children altogether.

Teaching time

Five sessions, each approximately 1 hour long.

Learning objectives

Children should learn:

- to identify people from the present and the past who are famous
- to identify how they became famous
- to infer information from pictures of the past through questioning and close observation to detail
- to recognise similarities and differences between what people wear today and what people wore a long time ago
- about the life of a famous person from the past and why she acted as she did
- to infer information from a written or visual account of a person's life
- to recount and sequence the main events in the life of a famous person
- about conditions in the Crimea
- to select information from pictures and film about conditions in the hospital in Scutari
- to build up their vocabulary – words associated with the passing of time, the Crimean War, hospitals and a range of adjectives to describe human qualities
- to be able to make comparisons between the lives of two famous people from a similar time
- to compare how nursing has changed since the days of Florence Nightingale
- to explore the points of view of people in the past, and to identify some reasons for Florence Nightingale's actions.

Key questions

Why do we remember Florence Nightingale?

Why did Florence Nightingale act as she did?

How has nursing changed since her days?

Resources

Watch video about the work of Florence Nightingale in Scutari

Information sheet about the life of Florence Nightingale

Large picture of Florence Nightingale (both the information and the picture of Florence Nightingale can be found on the website)

www.florence-nightingale.co.uk/; this is the website of London's Florence Nightingale Museum and is full of interesting information)

Books showing pictures of hospitals now and in the past

Map of the world

Pictures of modern nurses

Writing frames:

1 Story-writing (Beginning/Middle/End)

2 Comparison (Before/After)

3 Classification (see/hear/smell/taste)

The teaching [Lesson 1]

Episode 1

Focus: Questioning to introduce the topic; making lists.

I began by asking the children the questions: Who was Florence Nightingale? What do we know about her? How could we find out more?

We drew up a list of what the children already knew, then I asked what else they would like to know.

From children's contributions we drew up another list, of possible sources of further information.

Episode 2

Focus: Discussing the concept of a famous person.

I asked the children: What makes a hero? Who are your heroes/heroines? Why is this? What sort of questions would you ask your hero if you could?

The children then drew a picture of their heroes and thought of questions they'd like to ask them.

Episode 3

Focus: Investigating the role of nurses.

We now moved on to the question: What do nurses do?

As a class, the children made a list of all the different things nurses do, and thought about where they might see a nurse.

Individually, the children now drew their own pictures of a modern-day nurse and listed the things that nurses do.

The teaching [Lesson 2]

Episode 1

Focus: Story – telling the life story of Florence Nightingale.

Following a discussion of the story, I asked the children to write it out in sequence – Beginning, Middle and End, using the writing frame.

I told the children to put what they saw as the most important part in the middle and to draw pictures and describe what was going on underneath them. This they did with a will.

The teaching [Lesson 3]

Episode 1

Focus: Using a visual source.

To find out more about the work that Florence Nightingale did, I showed the children a *Watch* video, in which a man magically takes his grandchildren back in time. He moves from a modern hospital to the hospital in Scutari, before Florence Nightingale was able to help, and then he takes the children a little forward in time to when Florence Nightingale had made many improvements.

We followed the video with a discussion about all they had noticed and learnt from the video.

Episode 2

Focus: Recording perceptions using a writing frame.

The children followed up the video by imagining what they would be able to sense if they were at the hospital at Scutari.

They wrote on a writing frame what they would see, hear, feel and smell before Florence Nightingale began to change things.

Episode 3

Focus: Comparing and recording conditions before and after Florence Nightingale.

The children also compared what it was like before and after the improvements.

For this, they filled in another writing frame listing what the hospital was like before and after Florence Nightingale set to work.

The activities in this lesson helped to extend their vocabulary related to the passing of time, hospitals, human qualities and their use of adjectives.

The teaching [Lesson 4]

Episode 1

Focus: Questioning and discussion to illuminate issues.

By this point I felt that the children had as much information as possible at their disposal, given the limited time that we had.

We had a discussion centred around the questions: Why did Florence Nightingale face opposition to her improvements? What did she do about it? What were her reasons for this?

We discussed the fact that at first the doctors in Scutari were reluctant to accept any help, especially from a woman, and how she had had to approach the British government and persuade them of the awful conditions in the Crimea, and of how much help was needed.

This discussion focused the children on considering the different points of view of the British government and Florence Nightingale.

Episode 2

Focus: Locating Florence's story on a map.

We looked at a map of the world and located Turkey and England. Owing to time constraints we were not able to spend as much time as I would have liked in getting the children to see how great the distance was, and how long it would have taken to travel the distance in those days.

Unfortunately, without any accurate research myself, I could not be sure of exactly how long it would have taken. However, next time I

think more work will have to be done on this if Year 2 are to develop a real understanding. [See information at the end of these notes.]

More work on historical aspects of transport could be incorporated into a *Journeys* theme that I cover earlier in the year.

Episode 3

Focus: Deepening the children's understanding through role play; catering for enactive learners.

The children now engaged in a role-play exercise, in which Florence had come to see the Prime Minister in order to persuade him to let her help. There was also a butler thrown in for good measure – this went down well with some of the quieter children who lacked confidence to participate in one of the major roles.

I began by being the Prime Minister and children volunteered and took turns to be Florence Nightingale, until eventually children took over as the Prime Minister too.

After each 'session' I asked members of the class if they could offer any advice on what else Florence could say, the Prime Minister's role being mainly a questioning one.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the activity and did amazingly well. Indeed, several children were keen to try out both roles. Only a couple of children held back, but with encouragement they tried to give some advice to the actors.

The role-play was also a good assessment tool as it gave great insight into what the children had taken in. I was amazed by the amount of information which was recalled, and by the appropriate vocabulary that they used.

The session went on for far longer than I intended, and in fact we were only saved by the bell. The children even walked onto the playground saying, 'Right, I'll be Florence.'

This session helped to reinforce previous work, and also to develop oracy skills. I was quite surprised by the contributions made by some of the less able children, not to mention the comedians who always come out of the woodwork!

The activity focused the children on Florence's point of view, as well as the reasons for acting as she did, thereby meeting some of the history learning objectives as well as the more obvious literacy ones.

The teaching [Lesson 5]

Episode 1

Focus: Communicating what the children have learnt, using the letter-writing genre.

In order to consolidate the work done in the role-play session, the children went on to write an imaginary letter to the Prime Minister from Florence, describing the conditions in Scutari and asking for help.

The letters were fairly detailed and descriptive, illustrating the disgust the children felt at what they had seen in the video. The fact that they were able to visualise the scene had a big impact on the content of their letters.

Learning outcomes

From a historical point of view I feel that the children met the learning objectives which I identified. They recognised not only why Florence had become famous and why we remember her, but also why she acted as she did and what happened as a result.

Children developed knowledge of how nursing has changed over the years, and the part that Florence Nightingale had to play in this. They were able to identify differences, not only in her lifetime, but also in comparing hospitals and nurses now with those in the past.

The children learnt about and used different sources from which to get information. They developed their understanding of historical enquiry by asking and answering questions about Florence and conditions in the Crimea.

The children began to think about the point of view of others, and some of the reasons why people in the past acted as they did.

The children learned about conditions in the Crimea, and were able to identify features of life in the hospital in Scutari that were not hygienic.

From a literacy perspective, oracy was promoted through questioning, as well as pair and group discussions, and the oral presentation of ideas through role-play. This also fostered social skills. Overall, the children explored:

- asking and answering questions
- extending their vocabulary
- role-play
- letter writing
- making lists
- reading for information

The children were able to select important knowledge and to communicate it in a variety of ways.

Reflection / Evaluation

I felt that the work was fairly successful, although there are still several improvements I would like to make. The children clearly enjoyed what I had originally thought of as a very dull topic.

Next time I would like to be able to give the children a greater depth of knowledge, and to have the time to address such questions as:

What is war?

Why did the Crimean war occur? (Further knowledge here may prevent pictures of tanks and helicopters appearing in the children's work next time!)

What is a soldier?

What would Florence's journey to and from Turkey have been like?

I did intend showing a letter written by Florence Nightingale to the children, and to use some of the ideas used on the course in the children's reading of it; however, I was unable to download what I wanted from the internet and time was running out. Next time I will make sure that I have this ready, and also have a look at the Nicolas Roberts pack.

In addition to this I believe that the children would have benefited from further independent research and investigation; this would have meant quite a bit more time. Having said this, I think that in involving children from the very beginning in deciding what they wanted to know, and in how they might go about finding it out, was an important factor in the high level of motivation.

Nuffield Primary History project

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downloaded from www.nuffieldfoundation.org/primaryhistory

Travel times:

The troops left England by sea 5th September 1854, arrived at the Crimea 14th September 1854.

Florence Nightingale left London 21st October 1854, travelled to Paris and across France to Marseilles, by sea from Marseilles to Constantinople which she reached on 4th November 1854