

Y5 Information Text: Biography

Example Text

Who Was Mary Seacole?

Mary Seacole (born Mary Grant) was a British-Jamaican woman who became famous in the 19th century as 'Mother Seacole' due to her work caring for injured soldiers in the Crimean War.

Mary's Early Life

Mary Anne Grant was born in 1805 in Kingston, Jamaica. Her father was a Scottish soldier and her mother was a well-known Jamaican 'doctress', who treated people using herbal remedies (such as aloe vera and ginger). Mary also had two siblings, Edward and Louisa.

As a child, Mary was fascinated by her mother's work and practised the skills she learned using dolls and pets as patients. By the age of 12, she was helping her mother as a nurse. Because of her father's connections, she was also able to travel twice to visit England in her teens and this made her quite unusual for a black person at that time.

When she was 31, Mary married a naval officer called Edwin Horatio Seacole. She was a good businesswoman and together they ran a successful store. Unfortunately, her husband died only eight years later. In 1853, she went to Panama, where her brother lived, and opened a hotel for the gold miners there. She continued to look after ill people and even risked her own life to care for the victims of an illness called cholera.



The Crimean War

The Crimean War began in 1854. Mary was determined to help the soldiers so she travelled to London and offered to go with Florence Nightingale's nurses. However, this was a time of racial prejudice, which meant that black people were not allowed to do certain things. The government refused to co-operate with her, probably because of racial narrow-mindedness.

Instead, Mary and Thomas Day (a family friend) went to Crimea together taking medicines and stores. There they set up the 'British Hotel', which was a simple building that provided medicine and hot food to fortify the soldiers. Additionally, she sold clothing and blankets to make them comfortable. Unlike Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole treated the soldiers' injuries even in the thick of the fighting. They called her 'Mother Seacole' because she was so kind. She said in her autobiography, "It was the grateful words and smiles which rewarded me."

Mary's Old Age

At the end of the war in 1856, Mary returned to England with very little money. However, veteran soldiers started a campaign to help her and she was therefore able to live comfortably until her death on 14th May, 1881. Some people have criticised her fame because she was not a real nurse like Florence Nightingale but she must be regarded nowadays as an excellent role model for doing good work in difficult and dangerous situations.

Y5 Information Text: Biography

Annotated Genre Features

¹ an introduction that summarises the main events of the person's life

² information about the key events in the person's life in chronological paragraphs

³ specific facts about achievements, influences and significant people

⁴ verbs written in past tense and third person

⁵ their feelings about different points and events in their life

⁶ quotes from the person themselves or other key people in their life

⁷ a conclusion about how they are/ will be remembered

Who Was Mary Seacole?

Mary Seacole (born Mary Grant) was a British-Jamaican woman who became⁴ famous in the 19th century as 'Mother Seacole' due to her work caring for injured soldiers in the Crimean War.

Mary's Early Life

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As a child, Mary was fascinated by her mother's work⁵ and practised the skills she learned using dolls and pets as patients. By the age of 12, she was helping her mother as a nurse³. Because of her father's connections, she was also able to travel twice to visit England in her teens³ and this made⁴ her quite unusual for a black person at that time.

When she was 31, Mary married a naval officer called Edwin Horatio Seacole³. She was a good businesswoman³ and together they ran⁴ a successful store. Unfortunately, her husband died⁴ only eight years later. In 1853, she went to Panama, where her brother lived⁴, and opened a hotel for the gold miners there. She continued⁴ to look after ill people and even risked her own life to care for the victims of an illness called cholera³.



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The Crimean War began in 1854. Mary was determined⁵ to help the soldiers so she travelled to London and offered⁴ to go with Florence Nightingale's nurses. However, this was a time of racial prejudice, which meant that black people were⁴ not allowed to do certain things. The government refused to co-operate with her, probably because of racial narrow-mindedness.

Instead, Mary and Thomas Day (a family friend) went to Crimea together³ taking medicines and stores. There they set up the 'British Hotel'³, which was⁴ a simple building that provided medicine and hot food to fortify the soldiers. Additionally, she sold⁴ clothing and blankets to make them comfortable. Unlike Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole treated the soldiers' injuries even in the thick of the fighting³. They called her 'Mother Seacole' because she was so kind. She said in her autobiography, "It was the grateful words and smiles which rewarded me."^{5&6}

Mary's Old Age

At the end of the war in 1856, Mary returned to England³ with very little money. However, veteran soldiers started a campaign to help her and she was therefore able to live comfortably until her death on 14th May, 1881³. Some people have criticised her fame because she was not a real nurse like Florence Nightingale but she must be regarded nowadays as an excellent role model for doing good work in difficult and dangerous situations.⁷

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Annotated Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling Features

¹ Uses the full range of spelling, grammar and punctuation features that have been taught in previous year groups throughout the text.

² Selects appropriate grammar and vocabulary to match the purpose and audience of their writing.

³ Uses organisational and presentational devices that are relevant to the text type, e.g. headings, bullet points, underlining.

⁴ Uses linking words/phrases between sentences and paragraphs to build cohesion including time adverbials, e.g. later; place adverbials, e.g. nearby; and number, e.g. secondly.

⁵ Uses relative clauses beginning with a relative pronoun (who, which, where, when, whose, that), e.g. Professor Scriffle, who was a famous inventor, had made a new discovery.

Who Was Mary Seacole?³

Mary Seacole (born Mary Grant)⁷ was a British-Jamaican woman who became famous in the 19th century⁵ as 'Mother Seacole' due to⁴ her work caring for injured soldiers in the Crimean War.

Mary's Early Life³

Mary Anne Grant was born in 1805 in Kingston, Jamaica. Her father was a Scottish soldier and her mother was a well-known Jamaican 'doctress'², who treated people using herbal remedies⁵ (such as aloe vera and ginger)⁷. Mary also had two siblings,⁸ Edward and Louisa.

As a child⁴, Mary was fascinated by her mother's work and practised¹¹ the skills she learned using dolls and pets as patients¹¹. By the age of 12⁴, she was helping her mother as a nurse. Because of her father's connections², she was also able to travel² twice to visit England in her teens and this made her quite unusual for a black person at that time.

When she was 31⁴, Mary married a naval officer called Edwin Horatio Seacole. She was a good businesswoman and together they ran a successful store. Unfortunately⁴, her husband died only eight years later. In 1853⁴, she went to Panama,⁷ where her brother lived^{5,7} and opened a hotel for the gold miners there. She continued to look after ill people and even risked her own life to care for the victims² of an illness called cholera.



⁶ Uses adverbs and modal verbs to indicate degrees of possibility, e.g. surely, perhaps, should, might.

⁷ Uses brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis.

⁸ Uses commas to clarify meaning or to avoid ambiguity.

⁹ Spells a wider range of verb prefixes correctly, e.g. deactivate, overturn, misconduct.

¹⁰ Spells nouns or adjectives converted into verbs using suffixes, e.g. designate, classify, criticise.

¹¹ Spells more complex homophones correctly, e.g. affect/effect, practice/practise.

¹² Spells most words correctly from the Y5/6 statutory spelling list.

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The Crimean War³

The Crimean War began in 1854. Mary was determined to help the soldiers² so she travelled to London and offered to go with Florence Nightingale's nurses. However⁴, this was a time of² racial prejudice¹², which meant that black people were not allowed to do certain things⁵. The government¹² refused to co-operate⁹ with her,⁸ probably⁶ because of racial narrow-mindedness.

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At the end of the war in 1856⁴, Mary returned to England with very little money². However, veteran soldiers started a campaign to help her and she was therefore able to live comfortably until⁴ her death on 14th May, 1881. Some people have criticised^{10&12} her fame because she was not a real nurse like Florence Nightingale but she must⁶ be regarded nowadays as an excellent¹² role model for doing good work in difficult and dangerous situations.

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Instead, Mary and Thomas Day (**a family friend**)⁷ went to Crimea together taking medicines and stores. **There**⁴ they set up the 'British Hotel', **which was a simple building that provided medicine and hot food to fortify**¹⁰ the soldiers⁵. **Additionally**⁴, she sold clothing and blankets to make them comfortable. Unlike Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole treated the soldiers' injuries **even in the thick of the fighting**⁴. They called her 'Mother Seacole' because she was so kind. She said in her **autobiography**, "It was the grateful words and smiles which rewarded me."

Mary's Old Age³

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