Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale is famous for modernising nursing and often referred to as 'The Lady of the Lamp'. She was born on 12th May 1820, in Florence, Italy to a wealthy family and she had an older sister. The family returned to England shortly after Florence was born.

Early Life

From a young age, Florence liked to help others. She often assisted ill people in the village near her home and by the age of sixteen, she knew that she wanted to become a nurse. Her parents were not happy with this idea as nursing was not considered to be a good career for wealthy young ladies.

To try and take her mind off the idea, Florence's family sent her on holiday. She travelled to France, Italy, Greece and Egypt. When she returned, she still wanted to become a nurse. So in 1851, her family allowed her to study nursing in Germany.

Early Career

Florence returned to London to work in a hospital and she was quickly promoted to superintendent. The hospital was treating patients with a terrible illness called cholera. Florence wanted to make sure that the hospital was cleaned well so that people could get better, as many were dying from the illness.

Crimean War

In 1953, the Crimean War began. British soldiers were injured and dying in hospitals in Turkey. Florence Nightingale was asked to take a group of nurses to Crimea to work in the hospitals. She took thirty-eight nurses there in 1854 and they worked at the Scutari Hospital.

When Florence and her nurses arrived, they were shocked at the conditions within the hospital. Soldiers were lying on the floor as they had no beds. The hospital was also unhygienic and smelly, with rats and insects crawling everywhere. There were not enough bandages or soap and many soldiers were dying because of the dirty conditions.

The first thing that Florence Nightingale did at the Scutari Hospital was organise brushes and soap. The hospital was cleaned from top to bottom. She then made sure that the soldiers had beds and that the bedding wash changed regularly. The patients were also washed and given healthy food to help them recover. Florence spent most of her time caring for patients and walked around the beds at night, carrying a lamp, to check on the soldiers. They began to call her 'The Lady with the Lamp', which is a name that stayed with her. Florence Nightingale had improved the conditions in the hospital and many more soldiers were now recovering from their illness and injury.

After the War

The Crimean War ended in 1856 and Florence was given a heroes' welcome when she returned to England. Queen Victoria awarded her a brooch called the 'Nightingale Jewel' and gave her a large sum of money. She used this money to help fund St Thomas' Hospital in London and set up 'The Nightingale Training School For Nurses' in 1859. Because of Florence's work, many women from wealthy backgrounds now wanted to become nurses.

Unfortunately, following the war Florence became unwell with Crimean Fever and had to spend much of her time in bed. She continued to write and advised hospitals. Many hospitals set up Nightingale wards which had one large room with beds arranged along the sides. Nurses could watch over the beds easily and observe patients. She died on 13th August 1910 aged ninety.

How has she been remembered?

Florence Nightingale changed nursing forever. It became a more caring role with cleanliness being very important. She is still remembered today and there is a statue of her in London. In 2020, temporary hospitals were built and named 'Nightingale Hospitals' after the famous nurse.

Reading Comprehension

These questions are about the text on page 1.

1. When was Florence Nightingale born?

_____

2. Find and copy one word that means *rich.*

_____

3. *'She often assisted ill people …'*

   What does the word *assisted* mean?

_____

4. Which countries did Florence Nightingale go on holiday to?

   Tick your answers.

   Greece ☐   Germany ☐

   America ☐   France ☐

5. Why did Florence's parents not want her to become a nurse?

_____

_____

6. What terrible illness did patients have at the hospital in London?

_____

Reading Comprehension

These questions are about the text on page 2.

7. How many nurses did Florence Nightingale take to Crimea?

_____

8. What two animals were '*crawling everywhere*'?

_____ and _____

9. Why do you think Florence was shocked to see patients on the floor?

_____

_____

10. Why do you think that Florence was asked to go and work in a hospital in Crimea?

_____

_____

11. Write two things that Florence Nightingale did at Scutari hospital.

   • _____

   • _____

12. Why was Florence Nightingale called '*The Lady with the Lamp*' by soldiers?

_____

_____

13. Find and copy a word which means '*to get better*'.

_____

These questions are about the text on page 3.

14. Why do you think she was given a heroes' welcome when she returned from Crimea?

_____

_____

15. Explain how Nightingale wards could help patients.

_____

_____

16. Why did Florence spend much of her time in bed after the war?

_____

17. How is Florence Nightingale remembered today?
    Write two ways.

   • _____

   • _____

Questions about the whole text.

18. Number the events from 1–5 to show the order that they happened in Florence Nightingale's life.

    One has been done for you.

    | | Florence Nightingale spent much of her time in bed. |
    | | The nurses cleaned the Scutari Hospital from top to bottom. |
    | *1* | Florence Nightingale was born 12th May 1820. |
    | | Florence studied nursing in Germany. |
    | | She was shocked by how dirty the Scutari hospital was. |

19. People say that Florence Nightingale was a very caring person. Using examples from her life story, why do you think people say this?

    _____

    _____

    _____

20. Write three things you would expect to see in a modern hospital now thanks to Florence Nightingale.

    • _____

    • _____

    • _____