



GCSE HISTORY MEDICINE THROUGH TIME TASKS

What was Florence Nightingale really like?

Florence Nightingale was famous in Victorian times as the "Lady with the Lamp". The British army was fighting the Russians in the Crimean War and conditions in the military hospital at Scutari were so bad that many wounded soldiers died of neglect. Florence Nightingale arrived and turned the situation round, winning the admiration of the

whole of Victorian Britain. But was she just a media heroine? What did she actually do?

This enquiry compares the media images of Florence Nightingale with her own words and asks you to make your mind up about what she was really like.

TASK 1

Use Source A.

First impressions

Looking at Source A, what impression of Florence Nightingale do you get from this picture? Choose three words you would use to describe her.

TASK 2

Use Sources A and B.

Her own words

The picture, Source A, was made in England. The artist may not have seen Florence Nightingale on her night rounds. The five extracts in Source B come from her own letters. What do they tell us about her? Fill in what each extract tells you about her personality in the table.

Extract	What it tells you about Florence Nightingale's personality
i)	
ii)	
iii)	
iv)	
v)	

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TASK 3

Putting it together

Now look at Sources C and D.

Florence Nightingale's work at the hospital at Scutari soon made her famous. These pictures are just two of many published in England in the following few years. We do not know if the artists had seen the places they illustrated, but they were the kinds of pictures the people of Victorian Britain saw. What kind of person do these pictures make her seem to be?

From your knowledge of her own letters, is this public view of her an accurate one? Explain your answer.

TASK 4

Florence Nightingale and History

How would a historian make use of BOTH Florence Nightingale's letters (Source B), and the popular pictures of her (Sources A, C and D)?

of a vany come, Make
the burnt Claret wine ge
pon a pinnis, at morning
with feru. Make some b
is juus, and Knoted gray.
this at pleatur. put u
rinke it the frede o
I have found good E
the medicine.



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SOURCE MATERIALS 1 OF 4

What was Florence Nightingale really like?

Source A.

Florence Nightingale on her night round: an illustration from about 1856, published in England. The caption says "Miss Nightingale, in the hospital, at Scutari." (Western Manuscript 5484) L0030577



MISS NIGHTINGALE, IN THE HOSPITAL, AT SCUTARI.—(SEE PRECEDING PAGE.)

What was Florence Nightingale really like?

Source B.

Extracts from 'The Letters of Florence Nightingale' edited by Sue Goldie.

i) Florence Nightingale describes her night rounds

Barrack Hospital, Scutari,
Asiatic Side,
14th November 1854

As I went on my night rounds among the newly-wounded that first night, there was not one murmur, not one groan, the strictest discipline, the most absolute silence and quiet prevailed, only the step of the sentry, and I heard one man say, "I was dreaming of friends at home", and another said "And I was thinking of them". These poor fellows bear pain and mutilation with unshrinking heroism, and die or are cut up without complaint.

ii) Florence Nightingale describes operations in the hospital

Barrack Hospital, Scutari,
Asiatic Side,
14th November 1854

Then come the operations and a melancholy, not an encouraging list is this. They are all performed in the wards – no time to move them. One poor fellow, exhausted with [bleeding], has his leg amputated as a last hope and dies ten minutes after the surgeons have left him. Almost before the breath has left his body, it is sewn up in a blanket and carried away – buried the same day. We have no room for corpses on the wards...

I am getting a screen now for Amputations, for when one poor fellow, who is to be amputated tomorrow, sees his comrade today die under the knife it makes an impression – and diminishes his chances. But anyway, among these exhausted frames the mortality of operations is frightful.

Now comes the time of haemorrhage [bleeding] and Hospital Gangrene, and every ten minutes an orderly runs, and we have to go and cram lint into the wound till a Surgeon can be sent for, and stop the bleeding as well as we can.

iii) Florence Nightingale describes the numbers of wounded and ill soldiers coming to the hospital

Barrack Hospital, Scutari,
Asiatic Side,
14th November 1854

...On Thursday last we had 1715 sick and wounded in the Hospital, (among whom were 120 Cholera Patients), and 650 severely wounded in the other building... when a message came to prepare for 570 wounded on our side of the hospital. Who were arriving from the dreadful affair of the 5th Novber. at Balaclava, where some 1763 were wounded, and 442 killed, besides 96 Officers wounded and 38 killed... We had but half an hour's notice before they began landing the wounded. Between one and nine o'clock, we had the mattresses stuffed, sewn up and laid down, alas! only on the floors, the men washed and put to bed, and all their wounds dressed.

iv) Florence Nightingale describes the shortages of supplies at the hospital

Barrack Hospital, Scutari,
Asiatic Side,
14th November 1854

Not a sponge, nor a rag of linen, not anything have I left. Everything is gone to make slings and stump pillows and shirts. These poor fellows have not had a clean shirt nor been washed for two months before they came here, and the state in which they arrive from the transport is literally *crawling*. I hope in a few days we shall establish a little cleanliness. But we have not a basin, nor a towel, nor a bit of soap, nor a broom – I have ordered 300 scrubbing brushes. But one half of the Barrack is so out of repair that it is impossible to use a drop of water on the stone floors, which are laid on rotten wood, and would give our men fever in no time.

21st December 1854

This morning I foraged in the Stores – a cruise I make almost daily, as the only way of getting things. No mops, – no plates, no wooden trays (the Engineer is having these made) – no slippers, no shoe brushes, no knives and forks, no spoons, no scissors (for cutting the men's hair which is literally alive...), no basins, no towelling.

Will you send us:

1000 mops (sticks can be made here)

3000 tin plates (these we are having made here, but they are so expensive that 3000 from England would not be misplaced)

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What was Florence Nightingale really like?

iv) continued...

500 tin dishes, deep, to hold soup or meat

2000 yards of coarse towelling...

200 pairs common large scissors...

v) Florence Nightingale outlines the rules she would like to make for the efficient running of the hospital

21st December 1854

That the patient cease to be a soldier and become a patient from the moment he crosses the hospital doors.

That he leaves his clothes, blanket and kit behind in a store-room for the purpose...

That... he have a warm bath after which he has a *clean* shirt and Hospital suit given him and goes up to his bed or is carried upon a stretcher with clean blankets.

That, when the patient leaves the hospital, he leaves every article used in the hospital behind and becomes a soldier again.

That the orderlies should have an orderly's ward-room... where they sleep – one orderly for each ward being on duty for the day and one for the night – the orderlies taking it in rotation.

That no orderly should eat or sleep in the wards.

That the washing (1) of bedding (2) of personal linen (3) of surgical appendages such as bandages etc and of cleaning cloths be done in three different places...

That the cooking be done not by drunken soldiers but by cooks – that the kitchens be multiplied or added to and *the cooked food inspected daily...*

Source C.

Florence Nightingale welcoming wounded soldiers into the Hospital, an illustration published in England in 1861.

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SOURCE MATERIALS 4 OF 4

What was Florence Nightingale really like?

Source D.

Florence Nightingale in the hospital ward, an illustration published in England in 1856. *M0007724*

