

SCIENCE AT WORK

All about Mary Seacole

WHAT DID MARY SEACOLE DO?

Mary Seacole was a nurse. She was the daughter of a black Jamaican woman and a white Scottish man. Mary grew up in Jamaica, helping her mother nurse sick and injured people in their boarding house. When she was 15 she travelled to England and learned more about nursing. Over the next few years she worked in a scientific way to discover which medicines were best for treating cholera. She became an expert, saving many people's lives in Panama and Jamaica. When the Crimean war broke out, Mary asked to be sent there, but was turned away by the war office in London. She was so determined to go that she went anyway, paying for her own travel. With great kindness and skilled nursing, she treated soldiers on the front line, often under fire. The soldiers called her 'Mother Seacole'.



This is the only known photograph of Mary Seacole, taken in London in around 1873. Can you find any paintings or drawings of her?

Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale

During the Crimean War, Mary improved conditions for soldiers and saved many of their lives, often in dangerous circumstances. Florence Nightingale also saved many lives, but was in less danger herself. But after the war, Florence became a legendary figure in British history, and Mary was forgotten. Until recently hardly anyone had heard of her.

When Mary's application to nurse wounded soldiers in Crimea was rejected, she knew that it was not for lack of experience and good references, but because she was black. She cried in the street and said, "Did these ladies shrink from accepting my aid because my blood flowed beneath a somewhat duskier skin than theirs?"

FIND OUT MORE

[The Mary Seacole Trust](#) - Lots of information and pictures to look at

[Facts and pictures about Mary](#) - Find out more about her life and work

[Find out more about the challenges Mary faced as a black woman in England](#)



You might like to read **The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands** - Mary Seacole's autobiography that she wrote in 1857

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1 FIND OUT ABOUT MARY SEACOLE

On the other page, you will find some information and ideas to get you thinking and finding out more about her. What did she do in her life? What made things difficult for her? Write down the most interesting things you find out.

2 DRAW A PICTURE

What did Mary look like?
What uniforms did nurses wear?

3 IF YOU COULD MEET MARY SEACOLE, WHAT WOULD YOU ASK HER?

What would you most like to find out?
Write down your three best questions

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[CLICK HERE TO GO TO SPECTRUM DRAMA FOR INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO MEET MARY SEACOLE](#)