

Hidden histories



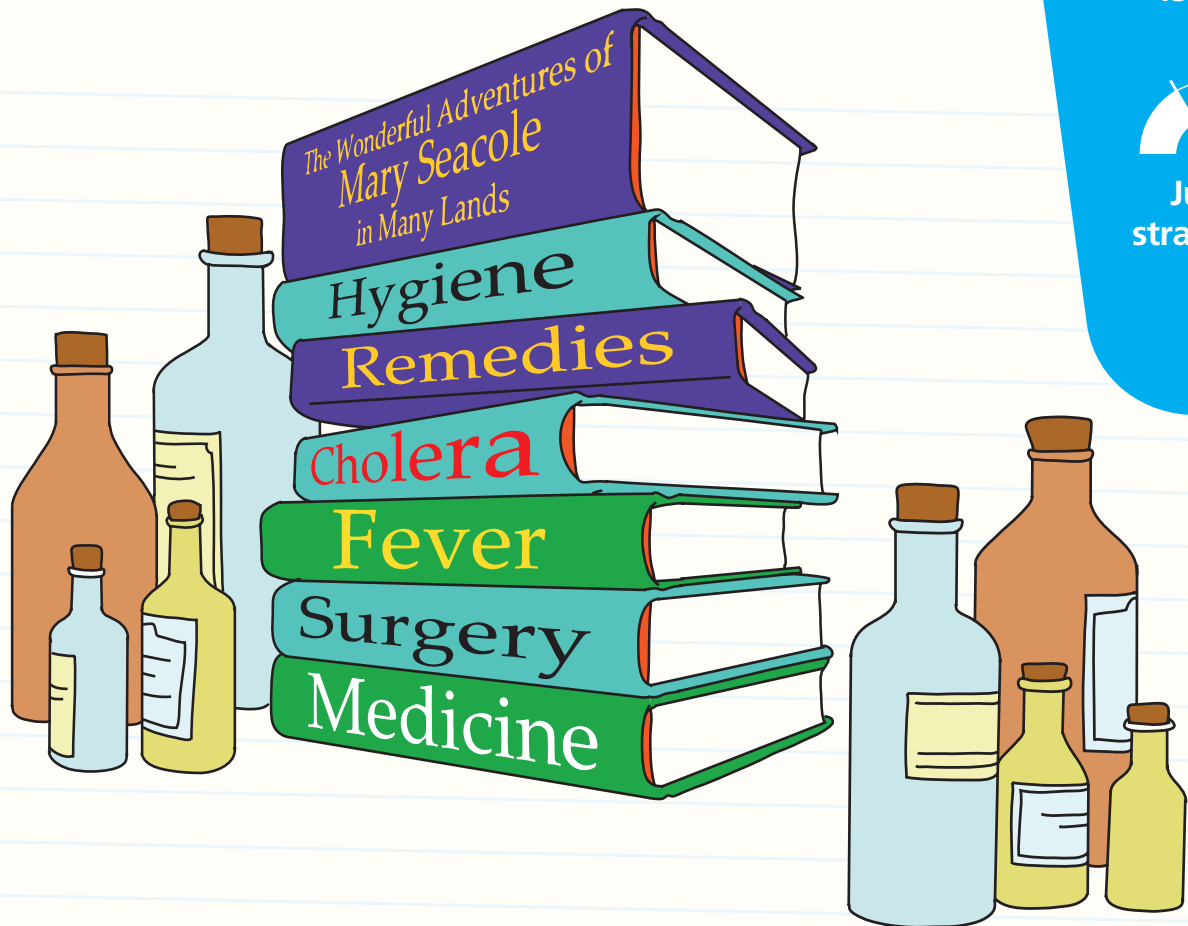
Black History Month



45 mins



Jump straight in



Aim of activity

Celebrate Black History Month by discovering the story of Mary Seacole. Travel through time and across the world while finding out about her amazing life.

What you'll get out of it

- Explore the story of Mary Seacole.
- Find out about Black History Month and why it's important.

What you'll need

- A timer
- Paper and pens (optional)
- A selection of craft materials (optional)
- Black History Month information – see 'Note to leader' (optional)



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding



Note to leader

Before running this activity, you might want to find out more information about Black History Month and Girlguiding's commitment to standing together against racism. We've pulled together lots of resources and links to support you in having conversations with young members about race and racism: www.girlguiding.org.uk/talking-race-and-racism.

Girls should not include full names or identifiable personal details in their posters.

What to do

1 Raise your hand if you've heard of Mary Seacole. Can you tell your unit what you know? If you haven't, don't worry – you're about to find out all about her.

2 Your leader will tell you about some parts of Mary's life. Listen to the story and complete the challenges as you travel on a journey with Mary.

Mary's story part one

Mary was born in 1805 in Kingston, Jamaica. Her father was part of the British Army, and her mother was nicknamed 'The Doctress' as she used traditional Caribbean and African herbal **remedies** to heal people across the country. Remedies are medicines for treating people who are sick or injured. Mary's mother taught her how to use these remedies for illnesses like fever and cholera, which is when people get sick from eating food with bad bacteria or drinking dirty water. When she was young, Mary practised her medical skills on her doll and when she was old enough, she trained as a nurse. Mary became one of the first people to practise good hygiene in nursing.

3 Good hygiene is something you do to keep yourself or others healthy, like brushing your teeth or washing your hands. Can you tell good hygiene from bad? Your leader will pick someone to cover their eyes and ears and quietly tell everyone else an action from the list. Practise your actions. Remember these are pretend actions, so don't really do the actions, like putting your fingers in your nose or ears!

Actions

Good – washing hands, brushing teeth, showering, washing clothes, coughing into your elbow.

Bad – picking nose, not washing, sneezing with no covering, putting fingers in your ears.



4 Uncover your ears. Everyone else start to do the action. Can you guess what they're doing?

5 Once you've guessed, decide if the action is good or bad hygiene. Keep going, choosing a different Rainbow to cover their eyes and ears and trying different actions.

Mary's story part two

Mary moved around between London, Jamaica and Central America where she helped treat people with cholera. When Mary heard about the Crimean War, she wanted to travel to England to volunteer to help sick people. But Mary was treated unfairly because she was a Black woman. When the British Army turned down her offer to help she went on her own to the Crimea, which is an area in Eastern Europe. She set up the British Hotel near the frontline to look after soldiers. Not only did it help the injured and sick, but it had a shop, hotel and restaurant in it. Mary used the money from these to pay for medicine.

6 It's time to travel onto the next part of Mary's story – you've all landed in the middle of the British Hotel! Find a space and pick someone to be Mary. Everyone else pretend to be a sick or injured soldier.

7 Mary – you want to help all the soldiers by giving them medicine. To make each bottle of medicine, you need to touch your head, shoulders, knees and toes whilst standing in front of a soldier. Soldiers – once you've been cured, start turning slowly in a circle on the spot. Mary has one minute to help as many soldiers as possible.

8 Was Mary able to help everyone? Mary Seacole was really busy as there were so many people to help. Play again with another Rainbow as Mary and see if you can cure even more.

Try it this way

If you're playing this virtually, instead of Mary standing in front of the soldier, say the Rainbow's name five times as fast as you can to make the medicine.

Mary's story part three

Many say Mary was one of the first Black women in the British Empire to write an **autobiography**. An autobiography is a book written by the author about their own life. Mary's autobiography is called 'The Wonderful Adventures of Mary Seacole in Many Lands'.



9 As you get older, it might be harder to remember all the things you've done as a Rainbow. Come together in a big circle. Take turns telling everyone one thing you're proud of – it might be discovering how to tie your shoelaces, finding out how to say a word in another language or saying your Rainbow Promise. You've all done so many amazing things, and it's important to celebrate people for the amazing things they've done!

10 Now, a final challenge. Find a space. Can you clap, stamp your feet, do star jumps or stay silent for 100 seconds? Together decide your action. Your leader will time you.

11 Did those 100 seconds feel like a very long time? Mary Seacole was well known in England when she was alive, but most people forgot about her after she died. Because she was Black, Mary's story was left untold and uncelebrated for almost a century, which is 100 years. Every second you did your action or stayed silent represented a year that Mary wasn't celebrated. Do you think it was fair that Mary's story wasn't celebrated for so long?

October is Black History Month in the UK. We come together to recognise and celebrate the stories of inspirational Black people throughout history. It's important to remember the stories of people who've shaped our country, especially people whose stories haven't been celebrated in the past.

12 As a unit, decide together how you'd like to celebrate Mary's story. You could create a poster to tell people about her story or share the games you played today with friends and family. You might want to make a craft too to remember what you've done today. Ask your leader to share on social media what your unit did this year to celebrate Black History Month and inspire other units to take part too.

This activity is about one person's story. There are so many stories of amazing Black people's lives that we should continue to discover and celebrate. Do you know of any other stories of inspirational Black women you could share with your unit?

Take it further

Find out how people are celebrating Black History Month in your local area. If you can't find anything, why not create something yourselves?