

Florence Nightingale

Poem

Read and Enjoy

- ✧ Read aloud this beautiful poem or ask students to take turns reading it. It is a description of the work done by Florence Nightingale and of her kindness which earned her the love, respect and gratitude of soldiers. It is written in six stanzas, each with a rhyme scheme of aabccb.
- ✧ In the first stanza, the poet describes the scene that gave Florence Nightingale the title of 'the Lady with the Lamp'. During the Crimean War, Florence attended the injured soldiers with loving care and efficiency. The walls of the camp where the wounded soldiers were housed were whitewashed, says the poet, a tribute to the sparkling cleanliness that Florence brought to the dirty, infection-ridden place. The poet describes the shadow of Florence on the walls as she walks along 'the darksome floors'. The light she carries falls on her face, with its 'soft, angelic smile'. Everything around her reflects the dark and tragic circumstances under which she works ['the dismal corridors'] and contrasts strongly with the care and light she brings into the place.
- ✧ In the second stanza, the poet shows us Florence's kindness as she speaks softly and sweetly to the soldiers, who are grateful for it. They find her voice and words soothing, more 'than the most plaintive tale of the sad nightingale'. Also, this gentle lady bears both the name and the tenderness of a nightingale, because her name is Florence Nightingale.
- ✧ As Florence walks through the rooms full of 'agony and gloom', the wards full of wounded soldiers and patients, the poet tells us that there are no irritated murmurs, no curses rising out of the pain from the people there. For everyone has only a prayer to offer as she appears to be an angel from God. She cries, feels deeply moved by the human pain around her. So nobody raises his voice in anger or agony even though they are in pain. Her presence brings them comfort.
- ✧ The gratitude that the patients feel, says the poet in the fourth stanza, is expressed by the way in which they lift themselves from their beds and look at her 'with eager, tearful eyes.' And some, who are unable to speak as they are dying, just bend to kiss her shadow as she passes by, grateful for that glimpse of her. They die in peace.
- ✧ In the fifth stanza, the poet talks about the recognition of her work. She does not need a monument or statue for her true heroism, the risk she takes as she serves the sick, the injured and the dying. Each soldier who is lying there is a 'noble heart' who has served his country, and her name is engraved on their hearts. The recognition she will receive will follow for years, as every time her name is mentioned, the soldiers will have tears of gratitude flowing from their eyes.
- ✧ In the last stanza, the poet says that there are many today who have not seen the face of this saintly lady or the beautiful angel-like smile that used to flit across her face. But they will read her story and, in gratitude, kiss even the pages on which her story is written, a shadow of her presence, but so beautiful and noble.

Read and Understand	✧ Exercises A, B and C: Explain the exercises. Do them orally first. Ask the students to write the answers. It is desirable to check and assess their work individually.
Think and Answer	✧ Exercise A: Explain the exercise. Discuss and then ask the students to write the answer. It is desirable to check and assess their work individually.
Word Wise	✧ Exercises A and B: Explain the exercises. Do them orally first. Ask the students to write the answers. Announce the answers aloud and let the students check them in pairs.
Write Well	✧ Exercise A: Discuss the safety protocol and each picture. Then ask students to write the paragraph. It is advisable to check and assess their work individually.
AIL Activity	✧ Exercise A: Make groups of four. Find out the Hippocratic Oath and write it down. ✧ Exercise B: Collect information from your neighbourhood and write about any medical professionals you can find out about. ✧ Exercise C: Discuss the topic in class under the guidance of the teacher.