

Synopsis

Off to Africa chronicles the life of Mary Kingsley, focusing on her quest to explore Africa. The book highlights Mary's determination in the face of the prevailing attitudes toward women in Victorian times.



At a Glance

- ◆ **Genre:** biography
- ◆ **Theme:** determination—the will to succeed
- ◆ **Developing Comprehension:** forming questions and finding answers
- ◆ **Developing Vocabulary and Language:** using prefixes to form antonyms.
Highlighted words: *bedridden, culture, custom, depressed, determination, epidemic, hostile*
- ◆ **Developing Fluency:** using illustrations to anticipate text
- ◆ **Developing Writing:** writing a tribute

Learning Outcomes

Students will

1. read text and interpret illustrations to make assumptions and answer questions **(LO 1)**
2. compose a set of questions about Mary Kingsley and search the text for answers **(LO 2)**
3. write about Mary Kingsley's accomplishments in the form of a tribute **(LO 3)**
4. display an understanding of the importance of determination in achieving a goal **(LO 4)**

Visual Elements

- ◆ timeline
- ◆ map of Africa
- ◆ quotations in circles
- ◆ historical photographs

Focus on Fluency

Using Illustrations to Anticipate Text

Many biographies are set in locations and time periods that students are unfamiliar with. Being able to anticipate text using illustrations and photographs is important in maintaining fluent reading. Students need time to search photographs and illustrations and to form and answer questions about them.

Choose an illustration, for example, the one on pages 12–13, to discuss in detail. Generate questions that will encourage students to read the accompanying text. For example, *What is happening? What is interesting about the way Mary is dressed? Why is she alone?* Then read the text with students. Discuss how the illustration contains much of the information included in the text. Encourage students to look carefully at illustrations and photographs as they read this biography.

Before Reading



Read the title and summary on the back cover with students. Help them understand how different life was for women in the 1800s. Read the entries on the contents page. Together, generate a list of five questions students think the text might answer; for example, *What was Mary's early life like? Why did she want to travel to Africa? What dangers did she face?*

Hand out the **Questions and Answers** activity sheet, and have students record these questions in the left-hand column. Then challenge them to think of and record another question of their own. (This activity will be discussed in the Developing Comprehension section).

Other Books in the West Africa Set

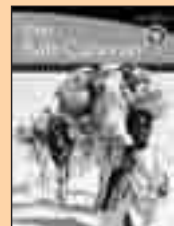


Photo Essay



Fiction