

Day 2: Hospital Sketches, Chapter III: "A Day"

Begin lesson

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	Teaching notes
	Click the "Begin lesson" button to view this lesson. Teaching notes for each slide will appear in this box.

Before the Lesson

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Before the Lesson	Teaching notes

Anchor Text

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<p style="text-align: center;">Hospital Sketches, Chapter III "A Day"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By Louisa May Alcott 1863</p> <p>"They've come! they've come! hurry up, ladies—you've wanted."</p> <p>"Who have come? the rebels?"</p> <p>This sudden summons in the gray dawn was somewhat startling to a three days' nurse like myself, and, as the thundering knock came at our door, I sprang up in my bed, prepared</p> <p>"To gird my woman's form, And on the ramparts die,"</p> <p>if necessary; but my room-mate took it more coolly, and, as she began a rapid toilet, answered my bewildered question,—</p> <p>"Bless you, no child; it's the wounded from Fredericksburg; forty ambulances are at the door, and we shall have our hands full in fifteen minutes."</p> <p>"What shall we have to do?"</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching notes</p> <p>Download and print copies of the anchor text for each student.</p>
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Student Notes Sheet

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<p style="text-align: center;"> LearnZillion</p> <p>Name: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Student notes for: Hospital Sketches, Chapter III: A Day</p> <p>Day 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reread the paragraph on page nine that begins, "Having done up our version of the human race, and laid it out to dry... and ends with a poem. In the first sentence, who is the "lost," and what is the "human work"? What contradiction is Alcott making with the language choice? 2. Later in that sentence, Alcott states, "The sacred symbols of our version of the world are here was attacked with much success." What work is Alcott referring to by "our version"? What has each of "they" done she did in this sentence? 3. Alcott also makes reference to war when she ends the paragraph with her own version the "Light Brigade" in popular poems about a disastrous battle in the Crimean War. How do these war references affect our understanding of the nurse's work? Find specific lines from the paragraph or poem to support your answers. 4. Reread the last paragraph on page 12, which continues to the top of page 13, and find places where Alcott describes the surgeons with well-known metaphors. How does describing a nurse's work with the language used to describe using battlefield metaphors? 5. On page 7, a soldier says that the hospital work is unpleasant and difficult, perhaps even too much so for the women, when he says the characters say, "And, indeed, for you ladies, there does the nurses' reason?" What does this 	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ This guided notes sheet provides students with the text-dependent questions associated with this lesson, and relevant graphic organizers. You may modify these sheets as needed. ■ During class, students can use these sheets to record their responses, notes, or ideas. Use the back to record responses to the focus question. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Following class, collect student notes to use as a formative assessment. <p>Timing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ While this lesson is paced for a 45-minute class, the timing is tight. Included in the teacher's notes are ways to expand (under "Additional Notes") and condense (under "Timing") this lesson to fit your schedule and students.
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Getting Started

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<h2>Getting Started</h2>	Teaching notes

Introduction 1 of 3

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- Hospital Sketches, Chapter III: "A Day"
- Louisa May Alcott
- Published 1863 in the middle of the Civil War
- A semi-fictionalized account of being a Civil War hospital nurse, based on letters Alcott sent home as a nurse

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~2 min

Notes:

- Remind students that "Hospital Sketches Chapter III: A Day" is a heavily-crafted account of a Civil War hospital written by Louisa May Alcott, who actually was a Civil War nurse for

a month and a half.

- Set the stage for the day:
 - Remind students of their work the previous day, where they saw the difficult and diverse work required of a Civil War nurse.
 - Today, we will focus on what Alcott's language choices say about her thoughts on the nursing profession. Rather than look across the whole text, as we did yesterday, we will focus on three key sections of the text: lunch, surgery, and washing the Sergeant.
 - As we did yesterday, we will be analyzing evidence and recording our thoughts, both on the answer sheets and on the story itself.
- Make sure that each student has his or her copy of the story and a copy of the day's question sheets.

Introduction 2 of 3

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We will focus on the language in three key parts:

- Lunch (9-10)
- Surgery (12-13)
- Washing the Sergeant (7)

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~2 min

Notes:

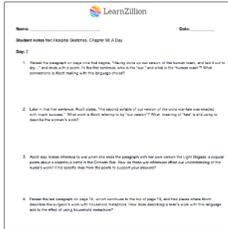
- Remind students that "Hospital Sketches Chapter III: A Day" is a heavily-crafted account of a Civil War hospital written by Louisa May Alcott, who actually was a Civil War nurse for

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Introduction 3 of 3

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As we explore the text we will be asking and answering questions.

We will find and keep track of evidence from the text to support our ideas about each question, both as annotations and as written answers to questions.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~2 min

Notes:

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a month and a half.

- Set the stage for the day:
 - Remind students of their work the previous day, where they saw the difficult and diverse work required of a Civil War nurse.
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Exploring the Text

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<h2>Exploring the Text</h2>	Teaching notes

Supporting Question 1

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Reread the paragraph on page 9 that begins, "Having done up our version of the human wash, and laid it out to dry..." and ends with a poem. In the first sentence, who is the "our" and what is the "human wash"? What connections is Alcott making with this language choice?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~4 minutes

Standard: RL.11-12.4

Purpose: These questions help orient students to a paragraph rich with metaphorical language by guiding them to understand what is being discussed, and then prompting them to think about the effect of this

figurative language.

Answer:

- The "our" references the nurses, and the "human wash" is the washing of the soldiers.
- This sounds like doing laundry. Alcott is making a connection between what nurses do and being a housewife.

Look for students....

- Making some connection between nursing and domestic life.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- "What has been happening in the paragraphs before this? How does that help us understand who the 'our' is and what the 'human wash' is?"
- "When you hear the phrases 'do the wash' and 'lay it out to dry,' what or who do you think of?"

Additional Notes:

- Push students further by asking them, "Why might Alcott have done this?" They will need to consider this question later in the day, but they might have hypotheses at this point.

Supporting Question 2

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Later in that first sentence, Alcott states, "the second syllable of our version of the word warfare was enacted with much success." What work is Alcott referring to by "our version"? What two uses of "fare" does she use in this sentence?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~4 min

Standard: RL.11-12.4

Purpose: "Fare" has multiple uses, and Alcott makes it even more complicated by using the suffix form as her jumping off point. These questions guide students to first comprehend what the text is saying,

then to think about the wordplay. In the next question, they will look at the use of war language more generally.

Answer:

- Alcott is referring to feeding the soldiers lunch.
- She starts by using the word -fare in the suffix form, which refers to how things are done (warfare, welfare, fanfare). However, the nurse's use "fare" in the sense of food.

Look for students....

- Noting that "fare" has multiple meanings.
- Defining "fare" as food.
- Using other "-fare" words to get a sense of the suffix.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- "What do the nurses do in this paragraph?"
- "What other words end in -fare? What do they have in common?"
- "Later in the paragraph, the nurse says that her pinafore, a type of apron, became a 'bill of fare, presenting samples of all refreshments going or gone.' How does that help you understand what else 'fare' might mean?"

Additional Notes:

- Consider discussing the other meanings of fare, both modern (as payment for public transportation or as a verb for how something goes) and archaic (travel, how something will turn out), drawing connections that all have something to do with process and "going" (with the exception of "fare" as used in Alcott's story).
- Non-essential vocabulary:
 - perambulating
 - ragamuffin

- recumbent
- convalescent

Timing:

- If time is tight, consider skipping this question. While students will miss a good opportunity to examine word play with multiple meanings and miss an explicit connection between warfare and women's work, they should still be able to address the day's focus question without exploring this question. If skipping this question, make sure students understand what is happening in this paragraph by asking, "What task does the nurse do after she washes the men?"

Supporting Question 3

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Alcott also makes reference to war when she ends the paragraph with her own version of the "Light Brigade", a popular poem about a disastrous battle in the Crimean War. How do these war references affect our understanding of the nurse's work? Find and use specific words from the paragraph or poem to support your answer.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~6 min

Standard: RL.11-12.1; RL.11-12.4

Purpose: This question builds on the previous question by asking students to think about the effect of these words, but also pushes students to find their own examples of this language. It builds on Day 1 by

looking at how language, rather than plotting, shows that the nurse's job is complex.

Answer: By referring to war as Alcott describes what the nurses do, she makes it clear that the nurses' efforts are an important part of the fight against the South. She rewrites a poem about soldiers in war, replacing the soldiers with nurses, to make this point even more clear. Also, the nurses "skirmish" with utensils, "retreat" with "empty plates," and "march" as they take care of the men (all of which are war words) (9).

Look for students....

- Making a connection between nursing and serving the country.
- Using specific lines from the paragraph or poem.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- "What words in the paragraph might you also use to describe war?"
- Show or read students a part of the original poem (included below). Ask, "What parts did Alcott borrow and change to make this poem be about nursing?"
- "Why would Alcott want to describe being a nurse using the same words you would use to fight a battle? What connection is she trying to get you to make?"

Additional Notes:

- Important vocabulary:
 - sundered (10)
 - plied (10)
- It would help for students to see at least a part of Tennyson's "Charge of Light Brigade." Here is a segment that Alcott draws from:

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them

Volley'd and thunder'd;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd:

- To help students see that Alcott made choices here, ask, "How else could Alcott have chosen to describe feeding the soldiers? What other metaphors might have gotten the same message that it was 'a lively scene,' full of rushing and a little chaos? Why did she *not* choose those?"

Supporting Question 4

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Reread the last paragraph on page 12, which continues to the top of page 13, and find places where Alcott describes the surgeon's work with household metaphors. How does describing a man's work with this language add to the effect of using household metaphors?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5 min

Standard: RL.11-12.1; RL.11-12.4

Purpose: This question asks students to use the same skills as they used for questions 1-3, but more independently. It also helps move students from looking at specific examples of Alcott's language usage

to the bigger picture.

Answer: The doctor "seemed to regard a dilapidated body very much as I should have regarded a damaged garment" and is described as a "very unpleasant looking housewife" (12). This adds to the effect of using household metaphors because it's not just the caring work of nurses that has an analogy to the work of a housewife. The medical care profession is also similar to the normal things that women do.

Look for students....

- Quoting from the text.
- Making a connection between what a doctor does and what a housewife does.
- Explaining the impact of these choices, perhaps as expanding the type of work that is acceptable for women to participate in.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Prompt students to underline all of the phrases that contain household metaphors.
- "In what ways is the nurse's care in this episode different from the others in the text?"
- "What activities is Alcott connecting with these metaphors?"
- "What gender would Alcott, her readers, and perhaps even us today, associate with being a surgeon? Why does that make her choice to use household metaphors interesting?"

Additional Notes:

- Non-essential vocabulary:
 - festive
 - induce
 - dilapidated
 - uncanny

- ELLs or other students may not be familiar with the word "private" in the sense of a soldier.
- Remind students that "the Crimea" is the same war referenced in the last question.
- The line "for Dr. P....fell to work with a vigor which soon convinced me that I was a weaker vessel, though nothing would have induced me to confess it then" is also rich for a discussion about gender in Civil War hospitals (12). Consider discussing:
 - The phrase "weaker vessel," explaining that 'vessel' was a once-popular way to describe women. The word literally means 'a hollow container to be filled.' What assumptions about women does that phrase convey?
 - Why would the nurse not want to confess that she felt weaker?
- The following paragraph also has a very interesting discussion of gender when the nurse reflects on the patience of the patients: "It is all very well to talk of the patience of woman; and far be it from me to pluck that feather from her cap, for, heaven knows, she isn't allowed to wear many; but the patient endurance of these men, under trials of flesh, was truly wonderful" (13). Consider directing students' attention to this passage and discussing:
 - what Alcott means by "plucking that feather from her cap"
 - whether the patience of men and the patience of women here seems to be the same or different
 - whether this statement is pro-men, pro-women, or both

Supporting Question 5

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On page 7, a soldier says that the hospital work is unpleasant and difficult, perhaps even too much so for the women, when he says the cleaning up "isn't [jolly] for you ladies." How does the nurse respond? What does this response tell you about her opinion on this statement?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~3 min

Standard: RL.11-12.6; RI.11-12.1

Purpose: This question helps students build the context they need to understand Alcott's use of figurative language. Also, students often have trouble noticing what isn't in the text. This question guides them

to see the effect of saying nothing.

Answer: The nurse responds by changing the subject. We don't know whether she agrees or disagrees with the statement at this point.

Look for students....

- Recognizing that the nurse doesn't directly respond to that claim.
- Leaving matters uncertain.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- "Does the nurse's next line of 'Is this your first battle, Sergeant?' directly respond to the Sergeant?"
- "Do we know what the nurse thinks from this exchange?"

Additional Notes:

- Consider pushing students to think about the impact of this decision by asking, "Why might Alcott have chosen not to have the nurse respond directly to this concern here? How might the story be different if she had defended her place in the hospital at this point?"
- Consider priming students for the upcoming questions by asking them to infer what Alcott actually thought by asking, "What do you think the nurse and Alcott actually thought about whether the hospital was "jolly" or appropriate for women? What makes you say that?"
- Consider drawing students' attention to the preceding paragraph, where the 'marred and maimed' Sergeant is the one consoling the nurse and telling her not to 'fret' (7). Ask students what this exchange tells us about the traits and roles of men and women, even in a hospital. Students will explore the character of the Sergeant further in later days, but examining this relationship here also makes sense.



Supporting Question 6

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As we have seen, Alcott uses both language traditionally associated with women, and language traditionally associated with men, to describe the work that both the male doctors and female nurses are doing. How does the use of both help us understand Alcott's views about female nurses?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~4 min

Standard: RL.11-12.4

Purpose: This question brings together questions 1-4 to look at the overall effect of mingling these metaphors: they make the hospital a place for both women and men.

Question 5 should prepare students

to make this connection by reminding them that women in hospitals was contentious in the 1860s. As noted below, some teachers may want to skip this question.

Answer: Alcott seems to think that the hospital is an appropriate place for both women and men because the work isn't all that different from what they would be doing at home. We know this because she describes their work with household metaphors. She also seems to stress the value of this work to the war effort, perhaps because she wants to make sure everybody appreciates how important it is. Being a nurse is a way women can serve their country.

Look for students...

- Addressing the impact of both the household and the war metaphors directly.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Connect this back to the Sergeant's claim that the hospital "isn't for you ladies." Ask students if they think the nurse would actually agree with that claim and what makes them think so.
- Ask, "How do all of the household metaphors help us see that she thinks it's okay for women to be in the hospital?"
- Ask, "Why do you think she uses the war metaphors throughout? Why is it so important for her for readers to see the connection between serving in the hospital and serving the country?"

Additional Notes:

- For both advanced and struggling students, it may not be necessary to answer this question before going on to the culminating question:
 - Advanced students may not need this explicit direction to see they need to understand Alcott's views to address the day's culminating question. Instead, use

the extra time to look at other examples, as mentioned in previous teacher's notes.

- Struggling students may need more direction for both this question and the day's culminating question. Use the extra time to help students connect the language choices to the effect; in essence, give them the answer to this question so that they can use it to answer the culminating question. See the teacher's notes for the culminating question for more direction.

Focus Question

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<h1>Focus Question</h1>	Teaching notes

Focus Question

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How does Alcott use language choices to respond to concerns that female nurses are being "unwomanly" by serving as nurses?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 min

Standard: RL.11-12.4

Purpose: This TDQ focuses the students' look at the second major theme, gender, on the word and sentence level, and asks them to analyze the impact of specific decisions. Because Alcott is making a

sophisticated point about the role of women in the hospital, students are given the take-away in the question.

Answer:

Not everybody thinks that women belong in the hospital. One soldier says the hospital, while good for the men, "isn't for you ladies" * (7). The nurse doesn't respond to this claim directly, making the reader unsure what she thinks at that point. However, Alcott uses language associated with both men and women to describe the work of the hospital. She describes her task of washing the men as doing the "human wash" and the task of feeding the soldiers as the female "version of war-fare." She finishes describing the scene by adapting a poem about war to be about nursing (9). When describing the work of the male doctor, she does the same thing, but makes the gender roles more distinct: "He...seemed to regard a dilapidated body very much as I should have regarded a damaged garment" (12). By using these metaphors, Alcott is showing that the hospital is a place for both men and women and that the work of and in the hospital is part of the war effort.

Look for students....

- Quoting directly from the text.
- Explaining the effect of specific language choices, as discussed in the supporting questions.
- Inferring what beliefs Alcott actually held based on the language choices.

Additional Notes:

- Encourage students to review the text. Encourage them to use examples from the day's lesson, but also to consider other places Alcott uses the metaphors of war or domestic life to describe the hospital.
- Give students time to write a true paragraph in response to this answer. Understanding Alcott's complex views on female nurses is essential to answering

the culminating question; the thinking that comes through writing a formal response will be very helpful to students going forward.

- If you skipped supporting question 6 in order to support your students here, discuss:
 - Explain: "We know that even though some people don't think the hospital is appropriate for women, Alcott thinks it is."
 - Ask, "How do the household metaphors to describe what nurses do help make the hospital seem like an acceptable place for women?"
 - "How important to the war effort does Alcott think being a nurse is? What language choice that we looked at today helps you know this?"

After the Lesson

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<h1>After the Lesson</h1>	<h3>Teaching notes</h3>
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Comprehension Skill Video

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	<h3>Teaching notes</h3>
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Use this video as an intervention tool for students who struggle to answer the focus question. The video uses a metacognitive approach to model the targeted reading comprehension skills.

Visit <https://haywood.lzill.co/r/43045>

