

Day 4: 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're 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

Card 4 of 18

<p style="text-align: center;"> LearnZillion</p> <p>Name: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Student notes for: Hospital Sketches, Chapter III: A Day</p> <p>Day: 4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reread the interaction with Josephine Stover's soldier (p. 45). What does the nurse's response convey about the significance of physical wounds? What message does Alcott send to the readers by choosing to use the phrase "wound" in her response? 2. Reread the description of the dying soldier (p. 12). What aspects of his death does Alcott emphasize? Use specific lines from the text to support your answer. 3. In what ways does the nurse experience physical and emotional hardship during her day? Find specific examples of both in the text. 4. Compare the frequency and eagerness of male heroism to female heroism in the text. Based on what you've learned from this lesson so far, why might Alcott have chosen to emphasize one and downplay the other? 	<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 <p>record responses to the focus question.</p> <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: ~3 min

Notes:

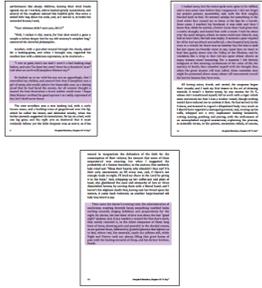
- Remind students that "Hospital Sketches Chapter III: A Day" is a heavily-crafted account of a Civil War hospital written by Louisa May Alcott, who actually was a Civil War nurse for a month and a half.

- Set the stage for the day:
 - Today, we'll look at Alcott's depiction of sacrifice for both men and women.
 - Sacrifice is an important part of "service" in a war.
 - Our focus is on figuring out what message she wanted to send readers, or, in other words, what her purpose was, and how that affected how she discussed sacrifice.
 - We're going to start by looking at sacrifice and then use what we see there, as well as from the past few days, to figure out Alcott's purposes.
- Make sure that each student has his or her copy of the story and a copy of the day's question sheet.
- This day uses the historical thinking tool of contextualization, which is looking at documents in terms of the situation in which they were written. Some students might benefit from directly discussing this approach, especially those who might not have done this sort of historical analysis in their social studies classes:
 - Explain that we can use the text to understand what was happening when it was written, and then use that knowledge to better understand the text.
 - Specifically, contextualization can help us understand purpose and point of view for a text that was written in a different time than ours.
 - There are three basic sets of questions for contextualization:
 - When and where was this document written? Was there a specific occasion or audience?
 - What was the same about that time and place and today? What was different?

- How might the circumstances in which this document was created affected its content?
- Many of the questions that we will ask and answer today are in this family of questions because ultimately, we're trying to understand why Alcott wrote this text and the context clearly plays a big part in this.
- While it obviously doesn't hurt to have knowledge of the Civil War, our close read of Alcott's story so far has given us enough understanding of her time period to use this approach. Students should not worry if they've never studied the Civil War or can't remember anything from it.

Introduction 2 of 3

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We will focus on how Alcott's purposes shape her depiction of sacrifice:

- Look at Josephine Skinner's man & the dying soldier closely
- Discuss the text as a whole
- Look at the end closely

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~3 min

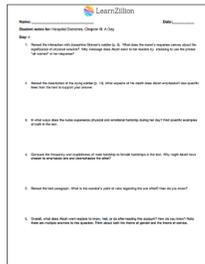
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Introduction 3 of 3

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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: ~3 min

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Exploring the Text

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<h1>Exploring the Text</h1>	Teaching notes

Supporting Question 1

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Reread the interaction with Josephine Skinner's soldier (p. 6). What does the nurse's response convey about the significance of physical wounds? What message does Alcott send to her readers by choosing to use the phrase "all women" in her response?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5 min

Standard: RL.11-12.4

Purpose: This question draws students to reexamine one type of male sacrifice. It also asks students to begin to think about the potential audience for the work, setting up later questions.

Answer: The nurse makes physical wounds something to be proud of rather than be embarrassed by. It almost sounds like the nurse is instructing readers to follow this example when she says "for all women thought a wound the best decoration a brave soldier could wear" (6).

Look for students....

- Understanding that the nurse's interpretation of physical wounds is supposed to be instructive.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- "Why is the soldier not excited about the scar? How does the nurse predict Josephine Skinner will react?"
- "Why does the nurse think that the physical wounds are important for women?"
- "If you were reading this during a war, how would you react to the phrase 'all women thought a wound the best decoration a brave soldier could wear'?"
- "The nurse is talking with the soldier in the story. However, with a phrase like 'all women,' who is Alcott talking with?"

Additional Notes:

- Consider connecting back to Day 3 by discussing how Alcott makes a narrative choice here: "The nurse is recounting what she said to the soldier, but through the structure of description and inner thought. How does using this structure rather than dialogue affect how we understand the message?"

Supporting Question 2

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Reread the description of the dying soldier (p. 12). What aspects of his death does Alcott emphasize? Use specific lines from the text to support your answer.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5 min

Standard: RL.11-12.3

Purpose: This question draws students to re-examine the most obvious moment of sacrifice in the story, but with a close look at how Alcott chooses to portray it. In the

day's focus question, they will think about why she decides on this portrayal.

Answer: Alcott seems to really focus on the loneliness of the soldiers' death. She reflects on the scene: "that hospital bed, lonely even in a crowd; for there was no familiar face for him to look his last upon; no friendly voice to say, Good bye..." (12). She seems to want him to be remembered and feels better after she imagines that "when the great muster roll was called, these nameless men might be promoted above many whose tall monuments record the barren honors they have won" (12).

Look for students....

- Drawing the big picture conclusion about Alcott's focus on either the loneliness or anonymity of the death.
- Quoting from the text.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Direct students to focus on the second half of the paragraph.
- "What traits do the items in this list describing his death have in common: 'that hospital bed, lonely even in a crowd; for there was no familiar face for him to look his last upon; no friendly voice to say, Good bye; no hand to lead him gently down into the Valley of the Shadow; and so he vanished...?'"
- "What does the nurse imagine at the end? What does this thought tell us about what upsets her most about the soldier's death?"

Additional Notes:

- This paragraph is full of oblique references. Students may have the gist but struggle to follow Alcott's precise references. Consider explaining:
 - "A better nurse than I" -- the Holy Spirit
 - "had given him a cooler draught, and healed him with a touch" -- had ended his life and suffering and taken him to heaven
 - "Valley of the Shadow" -- afterlife

- "when the great muster roll was called" -- another reference to Judgment Day
- Other vocabulary:
 - draught
 - requital

Supporting Question 3

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In what ways does the nurse experience physical and emotional hardship during her day? Find specific examples of both in the text.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~7 min

Standard: RL.11-12.1

Purpose: This question sets students up to compare how Alcott displays female sacrifice and service to how she displays the sacrifice of men. It also marks a shift into three questions that ask students for big-

picture

Answer: The nurse's job is emotionally hard because she is working with very injured men. She cries as she cleans the Sergeant with the gingerbread beard and "felt bitterly indignant at this seeming carelessness of the value of life" when the soldier dies (7; 12). It is also physically hard. She becomes tired when working with the surgeon, who "fell to work with a vigor which soon convinced [the nurse that she] was a weaker vessel" (12). From the beginning, she is warned that she "won't probably find time to sit down all day, and may think yourself fortunate if you get to bed by midnight" (1). We see that is true.

Look for students....

- Quoting or referencing specific cases, though perhaps not as many as in the sample answer.
- Using examples from across the text.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- In order to help students plan where to look for evidence, ask "Before we look for examples, what is your gut reaction to this question? What was hard for the nurse? What might be places where we could find good examples for this question?"
- Suggest students scan their annotations, strategically focusing on places that they think might provide good examples for this question.
- Students might struggle to find examples of physical hardship. Ask, "How does the nurse's roommate describe the job of being a nurse to our narrator on the first page? Based on the last paragraph of the entire story, is her description accurate?"

Additional Notes:

- Alcott's nurse is indirect in describing her tiredness; students might struggle with physical hardship.
- The answer provided above is the most obvious and simple example of emotional and physical hardship, but there are many more subtle ones, including the angst of serving the Rebel, the embarrassment of washing men, the smell of the hospital, and the filth and grime that is unavoidable. This question is a stepping stone to the next, more rich one; it is recommended you spend more time on the other questions rather than list the diversity of hardships for the nurse. However, there are many "correct" answers to this question.

Timing:

- If time is tight, consider skipping this question, though students will be less prepared for the following question comparing male sacrifice to female sacrifice in the text. Compensate by asking the class to discuss the question "In what ways does the nurse experience physical and emotional hardship during her day?" and not seek examples in the text.

Supporting Question 4

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Compare the frequency and explicitness of male hardship to female hardships in the text. Based on what you've seen from this text so far, why might Alcott have chosen to emphasize one and deemphasize the other?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 min

Standard: RL.11-12.5

Purpose: This question feeds directly into the culminating writing task. It also asks students to think about the whole text and connect those patterns to Alcott's purpose.

Answer: Alcott is much more explicit in describing the hardships of the soldiers. She also describes them more often. Perhaps Alcott is trying to focus on the men's suffering because it fits better with her depiction of them as brave heroes. It is also possible she does not want to focus on the nurse's suffering because she doesn't want the focus to be on nurses, or she doesn't want to make it seem like it's too hard for women.

Look for students....

- Looking through the text to answer this question, even if the process does not make it into the answer.
- Making connections to previously discussed themes to answer the "why."
- Providing a logical "why," even if there is not text-based evidence here (they will need to provide that later).

Guiding questions and prompts:

- "What does "explicit" mean in this question? What does "frequency" mean in this question?"
- "How could we "compare" the descriptions of suffering in terms of how explicit they are? In terms of how frequent they are?" For 'frequency,' consider simply counting -- it should become quickly apparent that there are more examples. For something more qualitative like how 'explicit' mentions are, students could discuss what seems more dramatic and clear and explain their reasoning.
- Guide students to scan their texts and annotations looking for and comparing examples as they planned above. Consider splitting the text into smaller chunks and pooling findings so that students can complete this review more quickly.
- "Based on what we've seen, whose suffering is the *focus* of this story? Why do you think so?"
- "Overall, how does Alcott portray the Union soldiers? Why might this message make her want to spend more words describing their suffering?"

- If students need more help after the previous question, ask, "How might showing their suffering make the soldiers *more* heroic?"
- "Overall, what is Alcott's message about female nurses? Why might this message make her want to downplay their suffering?"
- If students need more help after the previous question, ask, "How might showing their suffering make people in the 1860s *less* comfortable with female nurses?"

Additional Notes:

- Consider skipping the second part of the question for advanced students. All students will address the "why" question as part of the day's focus question, and advanced students may not need the extra guidance here in order to think through how Alcott's purposes shape her writing in this example.
- Consider rewording and splitting this up into two questions for struggling students:
 - "Compare how frequent and how dramatic the examples of male hardship and female hardship are. How do you know?"
 - "Based on what Alcott's messages about men and women are, why did she choose to focus on one and not focus on the other?"

Supporting Question 5

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Overall, what does Alcott want readers to know, feel, or do after reading this account? How do you know? Note: there are multiple answers to this question. Think about both the theme of gender and the theme of service.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~8 min

Standard: RI.11-12.6

Purpose: This question serves as an opportunity to pull together thinking from this day, as well as the previous three, to articulate Alcott's purposes in writing.

Answer: Alcott has a few goals. She wants people to know about what goes in to fighting a war; she talks about how the soldiers are a better source than the newspapers. She also wants to make people feel more comfortable with and value female nurses, because of all of the metaphors she makes about war. Overall, she's trying to be supportive of the war and make people feel proud of and respect the boys.

Look for students....

- Having multiple answers, such as informing about the war, persuading about women's roles, and making people more supportive of the war.
- Referencing things the text does that they've seen in today's and previous lessons, even if they don't directly quote.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- "What is Alcott's point of view about the male soldiers? What makes you think so? What feelings does she want her readers to have about them?"
- "What is Alcott's view about female nurses? What does she want her readers to believe about female nurses? What makes you think so?"
- "Think about the context. The war has been going on for two years, and it isn't clear that the North is going to win. There's already been a huge loss of life. How might other people in the North be feeling about the war? How does this context help us understand what one of Alcott's purposes in writing this text? Where do you see evidence of this purpose?"
- "Think about the people who are not participating in the war. What might they learn through reading this story? Where is there evidence in the text about helping people on the homefront understand the war?"

Additional Notes:

- Encourage students to come up with multiple answers.
- Not all students will need to answer this question to be ready to connect the theme of sacrifice to Alcott's purposes in writing, but most students will benefit from explicitly listing Alcott's purposes.
- To save time, have students list the purposes but discuss the "How do you know?" question as a group.

Focus Question

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<h1>Focus Question</h1>	Teaching notes

Focus Question

Card 16 of 18

What are Alcott's purposes in writing this text, and how do those affect her depiction of sacrifice?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 min

Standard: RI.11-12.6

Purpose: The previous days worked with the idea of "service"; Day 4 looks at the sacrifice that is part of that service for both genders. It also moves students from looking at individual choices Alcott made to

thinking about the big picture of why she made her choices. This focus reflects the fact that while this text is literature, it is also historical, written by a person in a particular time for an audience, and that context influences the content.

Answer:

Alcott wants to inform her readers about day-to-day life in a war hospital, defend women's place in the hospital, remind readers of the heroism of Union soldiers, and generally promote the war effort. These goals influence her depiction of "sacrifice." First, while she honors the physical sacrifices soldiers made, she downplays their lasting impact in order to instruct her readers to still honor them. The nurse assures a wounded man that if his beloved was "a girl of sense, she would admire the honorable scar, as a lasting proof that he had faced the enemy, for all women thought a wound the best decoration a brave soldier could wear" (6). By saying "all women," Alcott speaks to the reader as well, offering advice. When discussing a soldier sacrificing his life, she dwells on the loneliness of it: "for there was no familiar face for him to look his last upon; no friendly voice to say, Good bye; no hand to lead him gently down into the Valley of the Shadow" (12). Alcott thus reminds her readers about all of the "nameless men" (12). In order to make her service more acceptable, she downplays her sacrifices as a female, but it is clear the work takes an emotional and physical toll. She mentions the "shores so many women stand at lamenting," which are the sorrows they feel about death (12). Overall, while she certainly recognizes and honors the sacrifices, even ending the story with the word "Death," her intention to boost honor of war means she views them as heroic rather than depressing.

Look for students....

- Connecting each of the purposes to a specific example of sacrifice.
- Using specific examples from the text as discussed throughout the day.

- Coming up with multiple examples.

After the Lesson

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<h1>After the Lesson</h1>	Teaching notes

Comprehension Skill Video

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<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"><p>Core Lesson Ask ourselves, "Based on these decisions and what we know about the context, what does the author want readers to know, believe, or do after reading this text?"</p><p></p><p>Visit https://haywood.lzill.co/r/43048</p></div>	Teaching notes
	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.