

Creating a Historical Thesis statement: The History of Nursing in the United States

the-sis: a statement or theory that is put forward as a premise to be maintained or proved

I cannot think of another profession that has been as dominated by women that has the level of respect given the nursing profession. I am certainly proud to know that the respect I enjoy as a member of the field today has come from the hard work of nurses before me.

Grade Level: Grades 7, 8, 9 10

Description: Using the NWHM *History of Nursing Timeline* and supplemental web resources, students will collate significant ideas and facts and write a cohesive thesis statement to introduce the assigned historical topic. Their statement will present historical and contemporary evidence connected to the evolution of the nursing profession in the United States (18th – 21st century).

Time Frame: One to two class sessions; can be assigned as homework.

Lesson Objectives

Working independently or collaboratively, students will study the web based resources provided to identify important events, people, and ideas that influenced, progressed, or changed the nursing profession in the United States from the Colonial era to present day.

Students will **reflect**, **analyze** and **synthesize** significant information taken from source materials and select one “foundation” word from the list provided to use as the premise for their thesis statement. Students may select a word not on the list provided; however they should defend that decision.

Students will **present and support** their thesis statement in a **cohesive** and **factual** statement using information and knowledge gained from their **research**. Students will be able to cite which sources they selected.

Materials:

Unpacking the Box: Ideas to Consider guidelines

Foundation Words

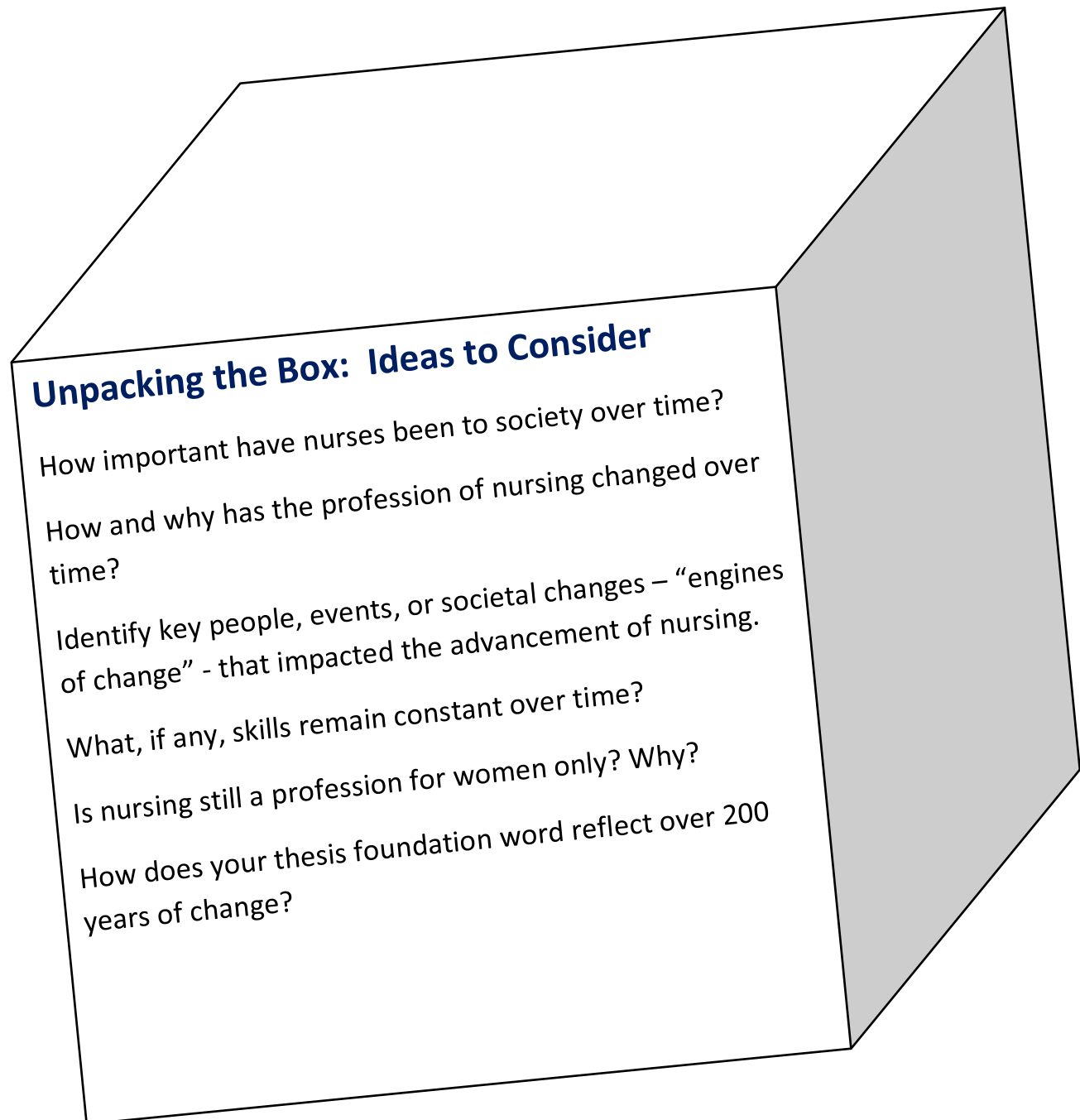
Graphic Organizer worksheet

Required and suggested resources

Historical Overview (optional)

Lesson Materials: Unpacking the Box: Ideas to Consider

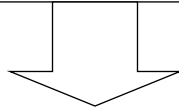
Fun facts: The median annual wage for registered nurses was \$68,450 in May 2016. Nursing is one of the professions with expected 19% job growth by 2022. Approximately 6% of nurses in the United States are male.



Lesson Materials: Graphic Organizer

Foundation Word: _____

Thesis Statement:



Timeline Key Points

21st Century Nursing Field Key Points

Nursing as a Career in the 21st Century
Key Points



Other Sources

Lesson Materials: Foundation Words

Thesis Foundation Words (Select one):

ad·vance

make or cause to make progress

bet·ter

improve on or surpass (an existing or previous level or achievement)

en·hance

intensify, increase, or further improve the quality, value, or extent of

dom·i·nate

have a commanding influence on; exercise control over

em·pow·er

make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights

e·volve

develop gradually, especially from a simple to a more complex form.

prog·ress

Development towards an improved or more advanced condition

Role •

the behavior expected of an individual who occupies a given social position or status

RX Prescription

Lesson Materials: Internet Research Sources, Part I

National Women's History Museum

Include a **minimum of four references** from the Timeline:

<http://www.womenhistory.org/exhibits/timeline-history-nursing>:

Include a **minimum of one** referenced source from NWHM interviews with nurses to shape and support your thesis statement.

<http://www.womenshistory.org/articles/nursing-career-21st-century>

Use a **minimum of two** reference sources from the overview and biographies on the NWHM web site.

<http://nwhm.org/education-resources/biographies/clara-bartongraphies>

<http://nwhm.org/education-resources/biographies/elizabeth-blackwell>

<http://nwhm.org/education-resources/biographies/dorothea-dix>

<http://nwhm.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-mahoney>

The Evolution of Nursing <http://www.womenshistory.org/articles/evolution-nursing>

RX Prescription

Lesson Materials: Internet Research Sources Part II

Overview of Professional Nursing:

Include a minimum of **two facts** to support your thesis statement.

Read the professional overview of the 21st century nursing field. Consider if the nursing profession has evolved: educational qualifications? Duties? Specialization? and salary as you shape and defend your thesis statement. From the article, do you think nurses have to have a strong knowledge of science? Math? Writing and communication? Statistics? Chemistry? Other knowledge base? Why?

<https://www.registerednursing.org/nursing-careers/>

Additional Resources

Include a **minimum of two facts** gathered from one or more of the additional resources listed:

<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/02/world-war-i-medicine/517656/>

<https://www.onlinenursingdegrees.org/nursingfacts/workplace-stats.htm>

<https://dailynurse.com/key-facts-nursing-history-every-nurse-know/>

<https://www.nursebuff.com/future-of-nursing/>

<https://www.onlinenursingdegrees.org/nursingfacts/nurses-in-war.htm>

<http://researchguides.ebling.library.wisc.edu/c.php?g=293228&p=1953289>

<https://www.loc.gov/vets/stories/ex-war-womenatwar.html>

<http://libcdm1.uncg.edu/cdm/search/collection/WVHP/field/descri/searchterm/interview>

<http://coph.fullerton.edu/collections/finding%20aid-Army%20Nurse%20Corps%20in%20the%20Vietnam>

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/ANCWebsite/anchoe.html>

vnaa.org/what-is-a-vn (Visiting Nurse Association)

<https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/?s=nurses>

<https://www.nurse.com/blog/2017/03/17/making-the-case-for-more-men-in-nursing/>

OR Research and share information about the history of nursing that you want to know more about. The list above represents a fraction of sources available.

Procedures:

Getting Started:

Discuss with your students that while it may seem strange in our modern world; for thousands of years people were born at home, died at home and, if they became ill, were treated at home. Trained doctors were rare in early America. Most people lived in small communities where basic medical knowledge and care was handed down by generation. Women played an essential role; they were the primary caregivers and “keepers” of medical knowledge and they were the midwives that helped bring new life into the community. Their skills and knowledge were largely passed down or from learning from other women. Nursing schools did not appear in the United States until after the Civil War. If time allows, give each student or group a copy of the historical overview provided with the lesson plan materials.

In this lesson, students will explore the history of the nursing profession in the United States as a basis for creating a **thesis statement** introducing a historical topic.

Before giving students the lesson materials, discuss that a thesis statement is a concise summary or main point of research paper or essay. Generally, it is one to two sentences, but for this assignment; the student’s thesis can be up to 300 words. Their challenge in creating a thesis statement for this assignment is to choose one word from the list of “foundational words” provided that they feel best describes their key points. They may select a word not on the list provided; however, they must defend that decision.

Before beginning their research, ask students to review the *Unpacking the Box: Ideas to Consider* guidelines. As a class, discuss how these questions can help guide research. Make a list of any additional ideas or questions the students suggest.

1. Give each student or collaborative work group a copy of:
 1. Unpacking the Box: Ideas to Consider
 2. The list of Foundation Words
 3. Graphic organizer worksheet
 4. List of required and additional sources
2. Explain the research parameters: (see Lesson Resources for links).

If working collaboratively, students may assign specific research tasks to group members. Before doing so, they should outline a matrix for research and reporting to provide consistency in gathering, collating and sharing research

Students will review the History of Nursing timeline using a **minimum of four** timeline entries; presenting a cohesive and compelling connection to their thesis.

Students will include a **minimum of one** referenced source from NWHM interviews with nurses to support their thesis statement.

Students will read and use a **minimum of two** reference sources from the Evolution of Nursing overview and biographies on the NWHM web site and article.

Students will read the professional overview of the 21st century nursing field and include a **minimum of two facts** to defend their thesis statement. Suggested guidelines are included on the resources sheet.

Last students will include a **minimum of two facts** gathered from one or more of the additional resources listed. They are not limited to the sites referenced. **If their research or interest leads them to specific questions or topics; they are free to use resources they select to reference their interests.**

Assessment

Students will present their thesis statement to the class. If working collaboratively, assign one group member as the spokesperson. Their thesis does not need to cite every source used; however, students should be prepared to discuss how the resources they used helped to shape their ideas and perceptions. What evidence and facts were particularly influential? How does the thesis statement reflect the foundation word they selected?

Consider the question: Why do they think women have dominated the nursing profession?

Future Research/ Resources

After completing the project, as a class the students will discuss the purpose of a thesis statement and decide if selecting and working with a “foundation word” was useful.

Ask students will discuss “next steps” outlining what questions, research or information they would pursue if they were writing a thesis paper on the subject.

If they did not do so in their research, suggest that students look at job announcements for nurses today and compare those specifications to 18th and 19th century nurses’ roles.

Extend the Lesson: Invite a nurse to the class to discuss the range of specialties the nursing field offers today. What training and education is required to be a nurse?

Curriculum Standards

Common Core

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

C3

His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.

D2.His.16.3-5. Use evidence to develop a claim about the past.

D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

D2.His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past

D2.His.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

D3.3.3-5. Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources in response to compelling questions.

D3.4.3-5. Use evidence to develop claims in response to compelling questions.

D3.3.6-8. Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.

The History of Nursing in the United States

Brief Historical Overview

While it may seem strange in our modern world; for thousands of years people were born at home, died at home and, if they became ill, were treated at home. Trained doctors were rare in

early America. Most people lived in small communities where basic medical knowledge and care was handed down generation to generation. Women played an essential role; they were the primary caregivers and “keepers” of medical knowledge and they were the midwives that helped bring new life into the community. Their skills and knowledge was largely through passed down or from learning from other women.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, it is estimated only 200 doctors in the colonies had medical degrees. Nurses did not have degrees for the simple fact that there was no formal training for nurses until the mid-19th century. However, George Washington recognized the need to better the care for the sick and wounded and, in July 1775, the Continental Congress approved medical support for a Continental Army of 20,000 men. The plan called for one nurse for every ten patients and "that a matron be allotted to every hundred sick or wounded, who shall take care that the provisions are properly prepared; that the wards, beds, and utensils be kept in neat order; and that the most exact economy be observed in her department." (cite: <https://history.army.mil/books/anc-highlights/chrono.htm>)

While not professionally trained, the woman gained experience and knowledge and set the stage for expanding and standardizing the career of nursing. War creates necessity and medical treatment has always advanced and evolved through necessity. The Revolutionary War through Iraq and Afghanistan have advanced the practice and technology of medicine as well as the essential role and skill of the nursing profession. From the Revolutionary War through modern day, millions of women serving as nurses, increasing knowledge, training, and skill. Eventually, extraordinary nurses helped open the door to becoming ranking officers in the military. In 1970, Colonel Anna Mae Hayes, Chief of the Army Nurse Corps, became the first woman promoted to Brigadier General. Since the 18th century nurses have served near battlefields to care for the wounded first as caregivers and later as highly trained combat and surgical professionals. (<http://www.womenshistory.org/articles/evolution-nursing>)

Professionalizing the field of medicine happened over time. By the late 18th century, medical schools and structured medical training began to develop. In the United States, even as larger cities grew, hospitals were still rare before 1860; however, there were efforts to build professional knowledge in healthcare. In 1839, Dr. Joseph Warrington founded the Nurses Society in Philadelphia in an effort to improve the care of new mothers and infants. He published *The Nurses Guide* to help set standards and improve nursing. In 1861, Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to graduate medical school in the United States, created a nursing course to help train women serving as nurses for the Union Army. Both Dorthea Dix and Clara Barton also worked throughout the Civil War to establish standardized and professional care for Union soldiers. While Dorthea Dix required that nurses be over thirty and “plain”; thousands of women joined the cause as nurses; many of whom started the war with very little training.

In addition, nursing brought such volunteers as Louisa May Alcott and Walt Whitman. Whitman traveled to nurse his younger brother and then spent more than a year volunteering in Union Hospitals in Washington, DC caring for the wounded and, occasionally, writing to loved ones for them (<https://www.npr.org/2016/03/12/470214579/walt-whitmans-letter-for-a-dying-soldier-to-his-wife->)His poem, "The Wound Dresser", recounts nursing wounded and dying soldiers (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53027/the-wound-dresser>)

Catholic nuns, particularly the Sisters of Charity, played a key role in advancing nursing in the United States. They served in both the Civil War and again, at the request of the War Department, in the Spanish American War. After the Civil War, nuns were instrumental in opening almost 500 hospitals as well as nursing schools to standardize and professionalize nursing in the United States.

The social reform movement of the late 19th century, principally the Settlement House movement pioneered by Jane Addams in Chicago, played a significant role in advancing professional and training opportunities for women in the fields of social work and nursing. Within 30 years, there were over 400 settlement houses in 32 states. Lillian Wald founded the Henry Street Settlement House in 1892, and was instrumental in spurring public health care nursing in New York city. Working largely in immigrant and poor communities, reformers worked to improve education and healthcare in the poorest neighborhoods. The social reform movement also played a critical role in changing attitudes. While it was acceptable for women to nurse family and friends at home, many if not most Americans In the 18th and 19th centuries found it hard to accept women working outside of the home as anything other than teachers. It wasn't until after the Civil War that these attitudes gradually began to change. The Reform movement and the Suffrage movement began to impact the perception of women's roles.

With the number of hospitals and professionalized medical care growing by the late 1860s, healthcare began to move from the home into hospitals with skilled staff to care for and treat disease and illness. As the field advanced, the nursing profession evolved and grew. Two pioneers in professionalizing the field of medicine for women were Dr. Ann Preston and Dr. Maria Zakrzwska. Not only were they in the minority as women physicians, they founded women's hospitals run by and for women in addition to training female doctors and nurses.

Racial prejudice and segregation, particularly in the south, kept most African American women from becoming professional nurses. Like women of all races, African American women were the caretakers in their communities; however, until 1879, racial prejudice barred them from formal training. In 1879 Dr. Zakrzwska's nursing school broke a significant racial barrier when Mary Eliza Mahoney graduated and became the first African American professional nurse in the United States. Seven years later, in 1886, Spelman Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia opened and enrolled students in the first nursing program for African American women.

In the 20th and 21st centuries, medicine and medical treatment has been revolutionized by technology. Ideas, procedures, instruments, and technology that seem ordinary to us would have been inconceivable to 18th century medical professionals. Consider just a few of the advances that have radically changed medical care in the last century:

- Sanitation and sanitary procedures in hospitals and surgeries
- Clean water supplies
- Vaccines
- Blood typing
- Antibiotics
- Radiology – x-rays to cat-scans – to MRI
- Organ transplant
- Anesthetics
- Improved surgical procedures

Given the growth of medical knowledge and practice, doctors and nurses now focus their training and specialize in particular fields including: general practice, general surgery, pediatrics, neurology, pathology, obstetrics, cardiology, orthopedics, endocrinology, radiology, gynecology—to name just a few.

When looking at the advancements that have revolutionized medicine and nursing, it is important to remember the history and landmarks that brought the profession forward. Women started with medical practices that had been handed down for centuries as they were the caretakers of their communities. In many ways, that has not changed. Nurses today keep alive the tradition of community “caretakers,” who, through revolutionary advancements and technology, have become highly trained and skilled medical personnel using advancements in medicine that would astonish the women who paved the road in nursing for almost 200 years.