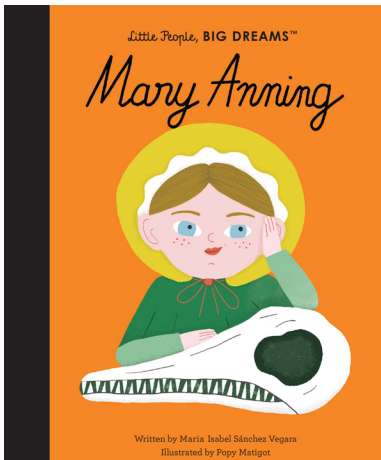


Little People, BIG DREAMS™

TEACHERS' GUIDE



Mary Anning
Little People, BIG DREAMS™
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LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

Mary Anning was born in England in 1799. She was the youngest of nine children and loved to spend time exploring nearby beaches for fossils with her father. When he died, she continued exploring and discovering. One of her discoveries, the first complete skeleton of an ichthyosaurus, was sold by Mary to help support her family and later put on display in a museum. Although she was not allowed to go to college because she was a woman, Mary continued reading, learning, and hunting for fossils. Even though it took a lifetime for her hard work to be recognized, Mary is now thought of as the Mother of Paleontology because of her contributions to science.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. What inspired Mary's love of paleontology?
2. How did Mary help her family?
3. How would Mary's life have been different if she were a man during the time period in which she lived?
4. What was Mary's first discovery?
5. Why is Mary a big dreamer that we should admire?

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Whenever her family was looking for Mary, they knew to look down at the beach where she would be searching for treasures or cleaning shells to sell to tourists (p. 5). This was a hobby for her, something that she really enjoyed doing in her free time. Share about your own hobbies with the students and ask them to share about theirs. What do they like about their hobbies and how did they discover them? How does it make them feel when they are doing them?
2. After Mary's father died, she went to work to help support her family (p. 8). Ask the students how they help at home. What chores do they do? What do their family members do to help them in return?
3. Mary wasn't allowed to go to school because she was a girl (p. 11). Ask students to share their

opinions of this. How would they feel if they weren't allowed to go to school? Should boys be able to do things girls are not allowed to do? Should girls be able to do things boys are not allowed to do?

4. A new species of ichthyosaur was named after Mary to honor her lifetime of work and discovery (p. 14). Ask the students what animal they would want to be named after them. What characteristics of this animal do they want to be known for?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Classroom "Dig": Mary discovered amazing things when digging in rocks and sand. Use large sensory tables or smaller tubs filled with sand and/or rocks. Before students arrive, bury different items in the sand/rocks. Provide students tools to mimic those used by Mary to dig for and clean their items, as well as notebooks and pencils to sketch their discoveries and write about them. Let students explore and have fun being paleontologists for the day!

2. Playdoh Paleontology: Provide students with Playdoh, toy dinosaurs, and other plastic animal figures. Show the students how to roll out the Playdoh and press the figure into it to create an imprint. Have students use the same notebook they used for the classroom dig to draw what the imprints look like and connect this activity to Mary's work with fossils.

3. Mary discovered the first complete skeleton of an ichthyosaurus, a creature that lived during the time of the dinosaurs (p. 10). When she put all of the pieces of its skeleton together, it was 17 feet long! In a large open space in the classroom or hallway, have a piece of tape on the floor that measures 17 feet long. Have the students use various non-standard measurements to measure it, such as their feet, their hands, pencils, etc. You can also have students lie next to the piece of tape to see how many of them it takes to equal the size of the ichthyosaurus. As the class measures together, keep a record of your measurements.

4. Mary read all she could about rocks and bones (p. 11) and used her research to inspire her curiosity. Have students choose a topic in which they are very interested. Take a class trip to the local library or school library and provide time for students to research their topics. Ask students to write or draw three discoveries they made about their topics, as well as one question they are still wondering about. Take time to share their discoveries and curiosities with each other either later in the day or on another day.

5. During the time Mary was alive, wealthy people had "curiosity cabinets" in their homes where they displayed their collectibles and special treasures. Ask students to bring in no more than three items from home that they would put in their own curiosity cabinet. Send an email or letter to families explaining this project and asking for their assistance. On the day the items are brought in, have a special "cabinet" for students to display their items and provide time for them to share about their items and why they are special to them.

