



Teacher Resource

# Elizabeth Kenny- Women's History Month

## Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What started Elizabeth Kenny's interest in the human body?
2. How did Elizabeth treat patients with polio?
3. In which country did the 'Kenny method' take off and voted her the most admired woman?
4. Why do you think Elizabeth Kenny is an important Australian?
5. What did you like about the BTN story?

## Activity: Personal Response

Respond to the BTN Elizabeth Kenny story as a class. Students will complete one or more of the following incomplete sentences:

- Elizabeth Kenny was an important Australian because...
- It was interesting to learn...
- These are five words that I would use to describe Elizabeth Kenny...
- This story made me feel...
- It is important to remember Elizabeth Kenny because...



### EPISODE 5

5th March 2024

#### KEY LEARNING

Students will recognise and celebrate Australian women who have made significant positive changes in society.

#### CURRICULUM

##### HASS – Year 3 and 4

Pose questions to investigate people, events, places and issues.

Locate and collect information and data from different sources, including observations.

##### HASS – Year 5 and 6

Develop appropriate questions to guide an inquiry about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges.

Locate and collect relevant information and data from primary sources and secondary sources.

##### History – Year 6

The contribution of individuals and groups to the development of Australian society since Federation.

##### HASS – Year 7

Construct significant questions and propositions to guide investigations about people, events, developments, places, systems and challenges.

## Activity: Step back in time...

Students will explore the life of Elizabeth Kenny to not only get an insight into her life, but to also gain a better understanding of what the times were like - including details about particular social, cultural, and historical perspectives.

Students will step back in time and imagine what life was like for Elizabeth Kenny. Students will find out as much as they can about Elizabeth, including her childhood, major events in her life, and learn more about her achievements and challenges.

### Listening

Start this activity by listening to the [ABC Fierce Girls podcast about Elizabeth Kenny](#) as a class. After listening to the podcast discuss what your student's reactions are to the story and how it made them feel.

- What is your initial response to Elizabeth Kenny's story?
- How did the stories about her life make you feel?
- What method did Elizabeth Kenny use to treat polio?
- What opposition did she face from the medical profession?



ABC Fierce Girls podcast – [Elizabeth Kenny](#)

### Writing

Students will then choose a point in time in Elizabeth Kenny's life, focussing on a particular event or moment in time. Students will then complete one of the following activities:

- Imagine you are Elizabeth Kenny. Write a letter from her perspective to either a friend or family member explaining how she feels and what she is going through.
- Imagine you are a patient with polio and being treated by Elizabeth Kenny. Write a letter to Elizabeth Kenny expressing your thanks for the treatment you received.
- One of Elizabeth Kenny's significant quotes was "It is better to be a lion for a day, than a sheep all your life". What do you think she meant by this? Think of a time when Elizabeth Kenny symbolised this and explain using your own words.

### Further Investigation

Students will choose one of the following activities to complete individually or in pairs:

- Identify aspects of Elizabeth Kenny's everyday life (from the past) that are similar and/or different from yours. How can you show that the present is different from or similar to the past?
- Find historical sources of information, for example, personal journals/diaries/memoirs, letters, newspaper and magazine articles, movies, music, photographs, artefacts. Examine each piece of information and identify if it is a primary or secondary source of information. Create a virtual excursion about Elizabeth Kenny using the historical information you find.

## Activity: Who inspires you?

### Class Discussion

Start the lesson by asking students which women past or present inspire them. It could be women they know in their family, the wider community or someone well-known.

- Which woman in your life do you look up to? Why?
- Which woman in your life inspires you?
- Think about a time a woman in your life helped you solve a problem. What was the problem, and how did she help you solve it?
- Think of a list of women trailblazers.
- What have people that are trailblazers got in common? Think of a list of traits.



## Activity: Research Project

In this activity students will recognise and celebrate Australian women who have made significant positive changes in society and understand the importance of their contributions. Ask students to brainstorm and list the names of individuals they know or have heard of who have made significant positive changes in society. Encourage them to think about different areas such as civil rights, environmental conservation, science, and more.

Start a class discussion using the following questions:

- Can you think of women, past or present, who have made a positive change in society? Think of people that inspire you or are your role models.
- What qualities make this person special?
- How did their actions make a difference?
- What are some common characteristics and actions of people that are changemakers?
- Who inspires you? Why?

Direct your students to the [BTN](#) website to find stories of trailblazing Australian women who've made an extraordinary contribution to society, including:

- [Nancy Bird Walton](#) – Aviation pioneer
- [Dorothy Hill](#) – Scientist
- [Edith Cowan](#) – Social reformer and politician
- [Faith Bandler](#) – Civil rights activist
- [Evonne Goolagong Cawley](#) – Tennis legend

Or visit the [ABC Fierce Girls](#) website to learn more about Australian women who dare to do things differently. From athletes to aviators, scientists to spies. From the deep blue sea to the dark, black skies.

Students will choose one trailblazing Australian woman they find inspiring and research and record information about the person. Some possible areas of research include:

- When and where were they born? Describe their family life growing up.
- What are some of their achievements? Choose one to explore in more detail.
- What inspired or motivated them?
- What are some of their values?
- What were some challenges they faced?
- How did they make an impact on people's lives?
- What do you admire about them?

Students will use a range of primary and secondary sources during their research including biographies, articles, letters, speeches, artworks, photographs, and news stories. To extend learning in this activity students will choose one of the following projects to complete.

### Biography

Create a biography about the person, which includes a timeline of important events in their life.

What are some of the key events in their life?

Write a summary for one key event, which answers the 5 W's – Who, What, Where, When and Why?

### Creative Writing

Who inspires you?

Write an original story (approx. 500-800 words) about an Australian girl, boy, woman or man you admire most.

They could be someone famous already, or someone you think the world should know more about!

### Portrait

Plan and create a portrait of the person or group. Think about the expressions, symbolism, and colours that reflect the person, their values, and their impact. Explore and experiment with different techniques and mediums to produce a portrait.

Present your portrait to the class, introducing who the person is, the impact they had and then explain your portrait and what each of the elements in the portrait mean. Organise a class exhibition of your artworks to share with the school and local community.

### Podcast

Write stories about people doing inspirational things in your community. Create a podcast using [PodOmatic](#), [Buzzsprout](#) to share your stories with the school community.

## Activity: International Women's Day

International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present and future. How does your school honour and celebrate the achievements of women all around the world? Go to the [UN International Women's Day](#) website for more information.



## Useful Websites

- [Women's History Month 2024](#) – BTN Newsbreak
- [Women in History Special 2020](#) – BTN
- [NAIDOC Indigenous Women](#) – BTN
- [Women's History Month 2020](#) – BTN
- [Australian Women in Politics](#) – BTN
- [Women's History Month](#) – Royal Australian Historical Society
- [Fierce Girls](#) – ABC

