Woman of the World: The Story of Nellie Bly

by Mike Peterson

based on Brooke Kroeger’s “Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Feminist, Reporter”
Illustrated by Christopher Baldwin

TEACHING GUIDE

by Lisa M. Sax

www.nelliebly.org
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About the Serial

“Woman of the World: The Story of Nellie Bly” is an unusual piece of literature for young people: A genuinely non-fictional biography. That is, the dialogue you read in this serial has not been invented, there are no fictionalized events and everything is presented in its proper chronology.

The main source for this serial has been Brooke Kroeger’s definitive biography, “Nellie Bly: Daredevil, Feminist, Reporter,” (Random House, New York, 1994). When we realized the extent to which we would be relying upon her research, we decided the most honest and efficient approach would be to simply contact Professor Kroeger and lay our plan before her. We were delighted when she endorsed the project and agreed to act as a mentor and guide, reading each chapter and helping assure the accuracy of this portrayal. We genuinely could not have done this without her.

Through the 14 chapters of this serial, your students will meet a very real person whose story is, we feel, inspirational not because we have depicted her as perfect, but because we have shown her as she was: Ambitious, impatient, headstrong and creative. Though we don’t use his words in our serial, one of Nellie’s classmates is quoted in Brooke Kroeger’s book as saying that, in her schooldays, the flamboyant Pink Cochran “acquired more conspicuous notice for riotous conduct than profound scholarship.”

We think that, if Nellie were in your classroom, she would be that challenging, creative, disruptive, delightful, infuriating student whom you so hope to reach, the one who risks a life without purpose but who holds so much promise if only the right push comes along at the right moment.

It is our sincere hope that all of your students will enjoy this story, will benefit from the many writing exercises based upon it and will be inspired by the very real woman they will meet.

But we especially hope it helps you reach that special kid who has “acquired more conspicuous notice for riotous conduct than profound scholarship.”

Two of them helped to create this serial.

Mike Peterson  Lisa M. Sax
author curriculum developer
How to use this guide

This guide is intended for teacher-use as a supplement with the reading serial.

Although its content and lessons about the newspaper industry are not exhaustive, it does offer a comprehensive range of learning. The reading serial serves as a vehicle of information about many aspects of the newspaper such as occupations, terminology, the writing process, the role of print media, and production.

The content of the reading serial allows students to examine historical perspectives representative of the time period. Through the adventures of Nellie Bly students will learn about events that helped shape the world as we know it. Students will examine the genre of biographical material and the use of primary resources and documents.

The suggested activities are designed to encourage critical analysis and synthesis of information. Critical thinking skills are promoted and expressed through extensive writing exercises allowing opportunities to assess and evaluate student-centered work. The recommended activities can be modified, adapted, and individualized by educators to serve their curricular needs and student interests.

The guide devotes two pages for each chapter. We recommend you duplicate the left-hand page for your students and use the right-hand page as your key, as well as a source of tips for teaching the chapter.

You will find two sets of questions for students, one set (“About the Story”) asking for specific factual information and literal meaning, and another (“Beyond the Story”) asking for reading comprehension skills and interpretative meaning. Questions, information and recommended activities on the right-hand page will allow you to go deeper into critical thinking work and creative efforts.

You will find exercises, resources and other information for the entire project at the back of this guide. Please contact us with any questions or comments!
Suggested Activities throughout the Unit:

Have students keep journals of terms and definitions.

Have students create a timeline of Nellie’s life, including world events and social-historical movements which occurred during Nellie’s lifetime. (Use our own timeline as a handout or as a key to evaluate student work!)

Have them keep a journal writing from Nellie’s perspective and recreating what they think her reactions to the events of each chapter would be.

Keep a portfolio of student work to exemplify their individual growth as writers.

Conduct a pre-and-post survey of newspaper interest and knowledge.

Additional exercises and a standards matrix are included in the back of this guide

Join us on the Internet!

We’ve created a special Web log of resources to help expand your enjoyment of this serial, as well as email links to allow your students to correspond with the serial author and with Nellie’s biographer. It’s easy to remember, too!

www.nelliebly.org
Chapter One:
The first chapter of a 14-part biography of America’s first investigative reporter, Nellie Bly.

About the Story
1. What was Pink’s real name?
2. When was Pink born?
3. How was Pink different from the other girls?
4. What city did Pink move to?
5. What name did Pink sign to her letter to the editor?
6. How did George Madden and Erasmus Wilson discover the identity of “Lonely Orphan Girl”? 
7. What pen name did the editors give Pink?

Beyond the Story
1. If Pink’s letter was so ungrammatical and poorly punctuated, why did Madden and Wilson take such interest in it?
2. Erasmus Wilson was a column writer. What kind of writing did he do?
3. Considering the time in which this story takes place, why might it be surprising that Pink went right to the newspaper office instead of writing another letter?

Today’s Editorial Briefing
Pink wrote opinion pieces on divorce and the hard life of a poor working girl. Study editorials and opinion columns in the newspaper to see how professional journalists make their arguments more convincing.

Then write an opinion piece on something you know and care about.
What historical social movements existed during Pink’s life? How were women generally regarded? How is this reflected in this chapter?

When Pink was told to write about what she knew, she wrote about two subjects. What were they?

What was Pink’s opinion about women in relation to working conditions, job opportunity, and the view that women should stay home? What was Pink’s position on divorce? Why do you think she felt so strongly about the subject?

How do today’s views of women in the workplace compare to those of Nellie’s era? Do you believe gender discrimination still exists? In what ways is this exemplified today?

Pink wrote a letter to the editor because she was upset with a column she had read. What do you think people who write letters to an editor expect to have happen?

Have you ever written a letter to the editor? If so, what motivated you to write?

### About Today’s Editorial Briefing

To reinforce fact vs. opinion, have students select a news story and an opinion piece from the editorial page and circle opinions and underline facts. Point out that opinions supported by fact tend to be more persuasive than those based entirely on emotion, but that both factors have a role in persuasive writing.

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### Understanding the Newspaper

To further extend understanding of the features of a newspaper, have students clip examples of different types of writing in the newspaper, such as column, letters to the editor, editorials and news stories. Note the differences in tone.

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### Extended Activity: (Career Building)

Pink had little experience writing and none reporting. Identify the education and experience qualifications expected of a reporter applying for a job.

Information on journalism careers can be found at these web sites:

- [http://www.asne.org/liosk/careers/index.htm](http://www.asne.org/liosk/careers/index.htm)

Students can browse actual newspaper job listings at the following web sites. Prompt them to take notice of jobs besides reporting and editing, and the differences in what is expected of applicants. Which jobs seem most appealing to them?

- [http://www.lee.net/careers/](http://www.lee.net/careers/)

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### About the Story

1. Elizabeth Jane Cochran (later Cochrane)
2. She was born May 5, 1864.
3. She dressed in pink and she didn’t always behave or get good grades in school.
5. Lonely Orphan Girl
6. They put an ad in the newspaper.
7. Nellie Bly

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### Beyond the Story

1. They were interested in how well she expressed herself, even though she didn’t know very much about grammar or punctuation. “What she has to say, she says it right out,” Madden commented. Consider the appeal of directness, compared to more diplomatic or fancy language. What is the difference between being “plain-spoken” and being rude? Ask students to share times when plain language was more helpful, and times when a gentler approach would have been preferable.

2. Erasmus Wilson was a writer who wrote opinion pieces in the format of a column. He expressed his opinion on the topic he was writing about.

3. At this time women did not have the right to vote nor were they expected to be assertive in public, particularly with strangers. It was unusual for women to hold professional positions and, as Pink learned, it was hard for a poor woman to find any sort of good job at all. Erasmus Wilson’s column specifically stated the popular opinion that the role of women should be to stay at home and take care of the household. He wrote that women should not work and expressed the view that women had limited capacities in the work place. For Pink to appear in the office showed some boldness on her part.
Chapter Two:
Angered by a newspaper column saying women shouldn’t work, Pink Cochrane wrote a letter to the editor, who gave her a reporting job and the pen name “Nellie Bly.”

About the Story
1. What topic did Nellie write a series of stories about?
2. Although the series of stories about the factories was a good series, what was lacking?
3. What were the typical kinds of stories women reporters usually wrote about in those days?
4. What causes did Nellie express concern about?
5. What country did Nellie decide to visit and report on?

Beyond the Story
1. What main lessons did Nellie learn about working at a newspaper?
2. Nellie’s series about the factories lacked criticism and basically just told about the factories and the women who worked in them. What kind of information would an experienced investigative reporter seek?
3. Nellie was assigned the task of writing stories about gardening and fashion. What makes a feature story different than a news story?

Today’s Editorial Briefing
Last week, you wrote an opinion piece about a topic you already knew about. Now, like Nellie, it’s time to become more professional! Choose a current issue in the news and read what has been written about it in the paper. Take notes to keep track of the various points of view, the arguments surrounding the issue, and types of coverage it has received. Check other media, like television stations, for their coverage, too.

Then write an opinion column based on what you have learned.
What role does media play in influencing public opinion? Does media have the power to encourage the passage of laws? Discuss the nature of media and its role to inform the public.

Sometimes editorials endorse political candidates, speak against legislative actions, or express an opinion about a community issue. Do you think newspaper editorials change people’s opinions about things they feel very strongly about? How might a newspaper’s decision to cover or not cover a particular issue, like poor working conditions, tend to influence public opinion?

Nellie learned that if she generated original ideas she would be more likely to have the opportunity to write about her ideas. How do you generate ideas for research projects, papers, assignments? What are some tools you use to stimulate ideas?

What causes do you support? Are there laws that you believe should be changed? Are there current situations you feel strongly about?

**Taking it further**

About Today’s Editorial Briefing

Opinion pieces, like editorials have varying purposes. Some serve to explain the significance behind a news event (to interpret); some point out benefits or harm and urge action by readers (influence action); some praise a person or group (praise); and others serve to evoke humor (to entertain). Look at the columns and editorials you selected and determine the purpose of each one. While you are writing your opinion column decide what your purpose will be.

Understanding the Newspaper

What is a **byline**? Is a **byline** always necessary? The byline tells who wrote the story. Sometimes two reporters collaborate on a story so both of their names are listed. Bylines are not used for editorials because editorials represent the view of the newspaper as a whole. Some newspapers do not put bylines on very short reports or articles based entirely on a press release.

**EXTENDED ACTIVITY:**

**SKILLS BUILDING**

Nellie’s initial letter to the editor was passionate and powerful, but lacked grammar and punctuation. She is now writing and reporting regularly. Discuss the definition of grammar and conduct a formal grammar lesson based on chapter two. For example, have students compile a word list from the chapter and change the words in the story. Have students classify the words with names from traditional grammar (noun, verb, adjective, etc.).

Identify certain elements of grammatical usage and conventions for sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization and ask students to find examples of them in the newspaper.

**About the Story**

1. Young women in factories
2. The stories simply told the factory management’s point of view, without any additional information.
3. Gardening and fashion
4. Problems of poor women and children
5. Mexico

**Beyond the story**

1. (A) Sometimes you have to write about things you may not be interested in but you make the story interesting anyway. (B) If you generate an idea and pitch it to the editor you may be able to write about it.

2. An experienced investigative reporter might have sought more information about the working conditions and how it affected the lives of the women. Details such as the number of injuries or fatalities due to poor conditions might have been an angle or a reporter might have been interested in the number of minors employed, possible use of physical abuse, etc. See the “reporter’s notebook” for tips.

3. A feature story is an article written about interesting things, people and events but are not really “news”. Unlike a news story, a feature story does not always have to be published at a particular time. However, if the feature story is about an event happening at a particular time, the story may have to be published on a specific day.

A news story is about things and events that have just happened and contains facts and not the opinions of the writer. The timing and placement of a news story is very important. Editors usually determine the importance of the story and discuss where the story would best be placed in the newspaper.
3

Chapter Three:
Nellie Bly wanted to write about something exciting, so she persuaded her editors to let her go to Mexico.

**About the Story**

1. Why did Nellie believe it would be difficult for Americans to believe that writers in Mexico would not publish anything negative about the Mexican government or its officials?

2. What happened to the editor who wrote an editorial criticizing the Mexican government?

3. Why did Nellie leave Mexico although she had planned to stay longer?

4. What type of assignments did Nellie receive upon her return to Pittsburgh?

5. Where did Nellie tell the editors she was going?

**Beyond the Story**

1. One of the finest aspects of Nellie’s writing is her ability to capture “color”, what does this phrase mean? What details reflect Nellie’s use of “color” in her writing.

2. How and why were travel stories written differently then than they are now? What changes in society make this type of coverage different today? How do changes in technology effect this coverage?

3. What progression and improvement do you see in Nellie’s talents as a reporter?

4. How did censorship and political views influence Nellie’s writing while she was in Mexico?

**Today’s Editorial Briefing**

*Discuss the right to disagree with the government and find articles/news stories revealing people or groups that disagree with laws and decisions enforced with the government. Write one editorial in support of the government law or condition and one against. Use other media sources such as the internet to gather statistics, percentages or other details to support your argument. Read both pieces aloud and ask students to determine which argument is stronger, more persuasive. Can they tell which one expresses your personal view?*
How different would your life be without freedom of speech and freedom of the press? How different might our history be?

Why is freedom of interference from the government a necessary part of the First Amendment to the U.S. constitution? Who does it protect? How does it relate to the newspaper industry?

What is censorship? How do you feel about censorship? Can you give examples of censorship in today's society?

**The First Amendment to the Constitution**

affords us freedom of religion, speech, the press, assembly, and to petition. Freedom of the Press is the right to publish facts, ideas, and opinions without government or private interference. However, there are restrictions established by laws pertaining to libelous statements, invasion of privacy, and obscenity. Newspapers have a social responsibility to balance freedom and restrictions under the rules of the law. They need to consider the feelings of their readers in deciding how to balance freedom and responsibility. The newspaper is a good tool to use to illustrate the concepts and issues related to First Amendment. Most newspapers believe it is their responsibility to publish important news even if it offends some person or group.

**Beyond Today’s Editorial Briefing**

*Imagine you live in a time unprotected by freedom of speech and freedom of press. Record the number of stories and articles over a week and tally how many of them would not be published. Explain why your selections would not be printed. A variation of this activity is to divide students into groups and have each choose a special interest group to represent. Have each group cut out or X-out anything in the newspaper which their special interest group may disagree with or be offended by.*

**About the Story**

1. Americans are used to free speech and free press.

2. He was arrested.

3. The Mexican government newspapers attacked her for being disloyal and suggested she be arrested.

4. She was assigned to write about theater and arts, which were typically considered “women’s features”.

5. She said she was heading for New York.

**Beyond the Story**

1. Colorful writing refers to her use of fine details to enrich her writing by appealing to the reader’s senses. She noticed details such as how the haystacks were shaped or how burros were driven.

2. In the days before movies and television and photographs in the newspaper, reporters described foreign lands and foreign people as strange and very different, making their stories unusual, exciting and memorable. As improvements in transportation and communications technology came along, people were more familiar with the world outside their community, so it simply describing different people and places as strange was no longer effective. Reporters had to search more for things that struck their audiences as truly unusual. In addition, as people got to know people of different races, religions and cultures, they were less interested in seeing them portrayed as odd, menacing or comical. Today, travel writers show how, though people are different in dress or language, they are very much alike inside.

3. Improvement of Nellie’s reporting ability is demonstrated by her understanding the concept of networking. She barely spoke Spanish but had learned an important rule: If you don’t know something, find out who does. She also starts to use much more detail in her writing.

4. Nellie’s writing is skewed by censorship and politics because she must write in an acceptable manner to appease the Mexican government. Her writing changes once she leaves Mexico and writes from the states where she is protected by freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

**EXTENDED ACTIVITY:**

*(CAREER/SKILLS BUILDING)*

Have students write a letter to one of the editors from Nellie’s point of view. Have another person respond to the letter as one of the New York editors might have.

Career development extension:
Business letter writing, Resumes, Cover letters, Job Skills
Chapter Four:
After completing her series on Mexico, Nellie is unhappy to find herself once again assigned to write about “women’s subjects.” So she quits her job in Pittsburgh and heads for New York.

About the Story
1. How did Nellie find a way to meet with the editors of papers in New York?
2. Which paper did Nellie really want to be a reporter for?
3. What important story had Colonel John Cockerill of the World told Nellie he was thinking about?
4. What does the word “asylum” mean?
5. What did the newspapers do to express their concern about rumors of mistreatment of poor people sent to “The Women’s Lunatic Asylum”?

Beyond the Story
1. Nellie’s stories were sometimes picked up by the syndicates, groups of newspapers that shared stories. What do you think that means to a young reporter like Nellie?
2. Describe the general view of women expressed by the editors of many of New York papers.
3. Why did the editors of The World decide to have a reporter pretend to be poor and mentally ill? What did they expect to discover?
4. How will this assignment be different than the story about the factories in Pittsburgh? Why?

Today’s Editorial Briefing
Divide your classroom into three groups, and choose a well-known fictional story. Depending on which group you are in, write a news story based on this fictional story as if you (1) got all your information from the villain, (2) got all your information from the hero(ine) or (3) investigated both sides. Read your stories aloud and compare them.
Do you believe Nellie really received a letter from a young woman seeking advice about newspaper careers?

What do you think Nellie will encounter on her assignment at the hospital?

Why is the assignment considered very dangerous? What kind of reporting would you term this? Do you see this kind of reporting often today?

From what you have learned about Nellie, why do you think this assignment would appeal to her?

Although the word “asylum” means place of safety, what images or thoughts does the word evoke?

Do you think women were treated fairly?

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**Putting it in perspective**

Invite a guidance counselor from your school or a mental health professional from the community to visit your classroom and talk about how mentally ill people have been treated in the past, and how they are treated today. Talk about ways in which society can be more helpful or less helpful in its attitude towards the mentally ill. Have students write a letter, working as a group, to thank the presenter and share their reactions to the information.

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**Understanding the Newspaper**

What is **syndication**? When an artist (columnist, cartoonist) is in syndication, he/she works for a company that distributes his/her work for a fee to various media outlets. Look in your newspaper and find examples of syndicated features. In Nellie’s day, this was a much more informal procedure. Today, syndicates are large, well-organized companies.

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**A good editorial:**

1. Uses concise words.
2. Is logical from one thought to the next.
3. Makes the reader think.
4. Has a direct opening sentence.
5. Makes the writer’s thoughts clear to the reader.
6. Does not talk down or preach to readers.
8. Lets readers know how their lives are affected.
9. Is conversational and reads as if someone were speaking.
10. Is clear and simple.

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**Understanding the Story**

1. She met with the editors while on assignment to write about the best way for young women reporters to find work at newspapers.

2. The World.

3. He told Nellie he was thinking about a story about “The Women’s Lunatic Asylum” on Blackwell’s Island.

4. The word means a place of safety.

5. They wrote editorials calling for investigations. (See note at left)

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**Beyond the story**

1. It’s very flattering to have your stories reprinted in other newspapers, because it means they think you are doing good work, too. It also means that readers in other cities will see your work and may even become familiar with your byline. It will also help for other editors to be seeing your work if you want to change jobs.

2. Women were generally viewed as delicate, inaccurate, and unable to write about anything other than “women’s subjects”.

3. The editors expected to find the truth if they sent a reporter undercover. They expected to find injustices and abuse of patients on Blackwell’s Island.

4. When Nellie toured the factories in Pittsburgh, the owners told her just what they wanted her to know and showed her just what they wanted her to see. For this story, however, the people in charge of the asylum won’t even know she is there as a reporter. She will get a much more honest view of conditions there.

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**EXTENDED ACTIVITY:**

**(SKILLS / CAREER BUILDING)**

As Nellie was job hunting she was almost certainly showing her portfolio, samples of her work. Often a resume is requested from prospective employers. Create a resume for Nellie based on the information you have gathered and the things you have learned about her up to this point.

Look in today’s classified and find job listings that might be of interest to Nellie if she lived today. Write a cover letter tailored to the classified job listing you selected to accompany her mock resume.
Chapter Five:
Nellie has a chance to work for Joseph Pulitzer’s newspaper, the World, if she is willing to pose as a poor, mentally ill woman and investigate conditions at the hospital on Blackwell’s Island.

About the Story

1. Who did Nellie go to for advice before posing as a poor, mentally ill woman?
2. How did Nellie act in order to convince the boarding house residents that she was mentally ill?
3. Why did the judge express concern about Nellie?
4. How did Nellie lead the judge to believe she was from Cuba?
5. What was the doctors’ impression of Nellie?
6. Once declared insane where was Nellie sent?

Beyond the Story

1. Nellie was granted immunity. What does immunity mean? How important was it for Nellie to discuss this with the assistant district attorney?

Today’s Editorial Briefing

The judge wanted reporters to be present because he believed Nellie must be missed by her family and if the newspaper published an article about her someone would surely come forth and claim her as a family member. Write a news article about the appearance of the young woman. Remember photographs were not used then so newspapers relied on illustrations and catchy leads to get their attention. Don’t forget the essential details of a news story -- the 5 W’s and How.
Do you think it was wise of Nellie to discuss her plans with the assistant district attorney before acting on them? What does this say about her character?

Why do you think the assistant district attorney decided to allow Nellie to continue with her plan after discussing the possible dangers?

Were you surprised by Nellie’s ability to convince the doctors that she was insane?

Nellie noticed that some of the women immigrants were diagnosed as insane due to a language barrier. How do you think these women felt to be unfairly treated and judged solely on the basis of their inability to speak English?

Beyond Today’s Editorial Briefing

The classified advertisement section of the newspaper lists lost and found items, pets, and sometimes even people. Sometimes people that have lost touch with one another will place an ad with a photograph. A good reporter finds story ideas in many places. Look at the classified ads in the lost and found section. Find a listing that could have a story behind it and use your imagination to create a story. OR Think about the missing people whose families sought them at the asylum, and write a letter to a friend or relative with whom you have not been in touch.

Understanding the Newspaper

What is a lead? The lead (also spelled ‘lede’) is the first sentence or two of a story. It can be a simple summary of the facts, or a tantalizing hint about the story, but it must draw the reader’s interest. Leads should be concise and written in a way that will entice the reader into exploring the story further.

The 5 W’s and How of the inverted triangle

Many news stories are written using the inverted triangle style. The main details that answer “who, what, when, where” are contained in the lead paragraph. Additional details answering “why and how” follow the lead and usually are not as critical to the story. Feature stories and opinion stories (editorials, columns, reviews) do not usually use this writing style.

About the Story

1. New York Assistant District Attorney Henry Macdona.
2. She spoke of “crazy” people, said everything was sad, sat on the stairs all night rather than going to bed, and claimed she couldn’t remember anything.
3. The judge noticed that she was fairly well-dressed and assumed she must have a family somewhere worrying about her.
4. She used the Spanish she had learned in Mexico.
5. The doctor believed she was on drugs.
6. Blackwell’s Island

Beyond the story

1. Immunity in this case refers to being exempt, or released from any legal action from Nellie’s deceptions in her undercover investigation of Blackwell’s Island. It was very wise for Nellie to have discussed her assignment with the assistant district attorney before embarking on the assignment as she might have gotten in trouble for lying to the police, judge and doctors. A successful lawsuit would undercut the effect of her story by making her look dishonest.

2. She felt the nurses and doctors would treat her differently if they knew she was a reporter rather than a regular patient. If they were aware of her mission to expose any injustices she would get a false impression of what was really happening at the asylum.

3. The judge wished reporters were present because he believed they would be able to find out something about her. He believed she must have a family somewhere that worried about her.

4. The doctors took her pulse, looked at her tongue, examined her eyes, listened to her heart, and asked her a few questions. When she replied that she didn’t have a job or know where she was from, she was declared insane.

EXTENDED ACTIVITY: (CITIZENSHIP BUILDING)

Pretend you are a reporter about to embark on an investigative mission. Write a proposal to the district attorney requesting immunity. Explain what you expect to find, why it is important, and why immunity should be granted. You will need to convince the DA that the deception you plan is the only way to get this important information!
In this chapter we learn that the mentally-ill were mistreated and their rights were violated. The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution provides a legal basis for the establishment of laws pertaining to equality and fairness. The laws prompted by the 14th Amendment protect many people.

Review a classic fairy tale or story that you are familiar with. Often you will discover that the rights of a character are violated. Write a version of the story as if it were taking place today, with the protections our law provides for people and animals. (Will your story be a silly example of being “politically correct” or a straightforward one of being “fair”? Discuss the difference.)

1. How did Nellie describe the setting of the asylum when she first arrived?
2. What conditions were reported on by Nellie?
3. What did Nellie fear could happen if she acted violently?
4. Who came to the visitor’s area and could have revealed Nellie’s true identity?
5. How many days did Nellie stay on Blackwell’s Island?

Beyond the Story

1. How and why are the mentally-ill treated differently today than they were in the past?
2. Was everyone sent to Blackwell’s Island mentally-ill?
3. Why did reporters come to Blackwell’s Island from time to time?
4. How did Nellie feel when she left the asylum?
5. In what ways was the asylum deceptive?
How do you think Nellie felt as she entered the asylum?

How did you feel when you read about the treatment of the mentally-ill at the asylum?

Are you aware of advancements in the medical field that have helped the mentally-ill?

Can you name examples of changes society has made to protect people such as the disabled, the elderly, the sick?

In what ways did Nellie’s investigation help immigrants?

Do you believe investigative work is justifiable?

Is Nellie’s theory that people behave differently if they are aware of being observed supported?

**Beyond Today’s Editorial Briefing**

Look in the newspaper for stories related to equality and fairness. Sometimes you will find stories about the enactment or modification of laws pertaining to the 14th amendment. Find a story that interests you and write a mock letter to the editor about it.

**Understanding the Newspaper**

What is a “Letter to the Editor”? Readers are invited to comment on articles, issues, events, and how the newspaper covers them. Most newspapers limit the length of letters and the number of letters an individual can write in order to allow the newspaper to publish as many letters as possible. Letters are edited for libel, taste, and relevance. In some cases editors respond with an editor's note following the letter to clarify a reader’s point or to correct misinformation.

**Extended Activity: (Cultural Connections)**

There were many immigrants in New York City in the 19th century. Ethnic and cultural diversity continue to be a factor in American life, both in the city and in the country. Identify the various ethnicities represented in your classroom and mark them on a map. How many nations of the world are represented in your class? Create a posterboard display of various cultural items associated with these ethnic groups.

Nellie discovered that a poor person who did not speak English could be labeled as mentally ill and sent to Blackwell’s Island. What embarrassing, funny or dangerous situations might still occur today from language barriers? Would anyone like to share a true story from their own family history or travel experience?

During Nellie’s times there were few methods for assisting the mentally ill. Keeping them in hospitals was intended as much to keep them from disturbing other people as it was to keep them safe or to help them recover. Laws regarding the treatment of mentally-ill people were not yet established. Today there are many places and modes of treatment for people suffering mental illness. Our society is more adept at handling these issues and advancements in the medical field have given doctors more options. We are also more accepting of mental illness and mentally ill people.

No, according to Nellie’s investigation some of the women sent there were poor, had nowhere to go, or were unable to communicate with doctors and nurses.

Reporter came searching for missing wives, sisters, or daughters.

Nellie felt selfish for leaving the women at Blackwell’s Island. She knew some of them did not belong there nor did she want to leave them to continue to suffer. However, she also knew she was going to write an expose on what she experienced. She hoped it would prompt changes in conditions at the asylum.

The setting was beautiful. Patients were bathed and given clean clothes when visitors were expected.
Chapter Seven:

Nellie was able to spend 10 days in the mental hospital on Blackwell’s Island, reporting on the bad treatment of poor patients. Now she’s out, and so is her story.

About the Story

1. How did Nellie become known as the World’s fearless young reporter?

2. Why were Nellie’s series about Blackwell’s Island considered important as well as exciting?

3. What phrase was used to describe female reporters who did attention-getting, popular feature stories like Nellie’s?

4. What was the name of the book that interested Nellie? Who wrote it?

5. What idea did Nellie pitch to her editors?

Beyond the Story

1. How does this chapter exemplify the power of the media? In what way did Nellie’s reporting influence society?

2. How did Nellie promote herself within the industry?

3. What examples are given to earn Nellie the label “stunt girl reporter”?

4. Did Nellie only write investigative reports?

5. Why did Nellie want to attempt to break the record set by the fictional character, Phileas Fogg?

6. What reasons did the editors give Nellie regarding their preference to send a man instead of a woman?

Today’s Editorial Briefing

Look through the newspaper and clip articles depicting poor conditions that exist in foreign nations. Write a proposal requesting the support for conducting an investigation. Be sure to include a description of how you plan to go undercover. For example, how will you dress, how will you gain entry, how long do you believe the investigation will take, and what you expect to find. Write an investigative report of what you discover. Follow this task with a proposal seeking reform based on your investigation.
Why do you think readers wanted more of Nellie’s undercover work? How different do you think her reporting was from most reporting of the time?

What kind of news stories do you like to read most? Which sections of the newspaper do you read?

Nellie’s fame was not only based on her reporting, she also developed a knack for making herself the star of each of her stories. Do you think this was a wise tactic?

How do you think this will impact her future?

What modern news personalities do you consider famous? What is your opinion of Pulitzer’s idea to create competition?

How does this chapter reflect the view that men were viewed as superior to women? How do you think that view affected Nellie?

Others Who Crusaded for Justice

Have students research other writers who conducted investigative work similar to Nellie’s, or who wrote of social injustice. Jacob Riis and Upton Sinclair are two popular writers who spoke against poor conditions for the working class. Have students look in a library card catalogue, reference book or on-line for these authors and write brief synopses of their work. Riis’s books, “How the Other Half Lives” and “The Making of an American” would be excellent companions to this serial and are written at a comparable level.

Newspapers and Democracy

"The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers and be capable of reading them." -- Thomas Jefferson

Both Pulitzer and Hearst published newspapers for people who were not particularly rich or well-educated. Some newspapers are more or less intellectual and serious than others. In what way do various types of newspapers carry out Jefferson’s vision of democracy?

EXTENDED ACTIVITY:
(RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW SKILLS)

Nellie became a celebrity in journalism at a time when women were not fully recognized for their talents. Create a list of women who have become celebrities or are recognized as pioneers in other fields such as medicine, sports, business, etc.

In 1888, Nellie attempted to interview all living First Ladies. Who would she have tried to interview for the story? If you were to conduct a similar interview now, who would your list need to include? What contributions have these First Ladies made to our society? Using at least three sources, gather information about living First Ladies and make a list of questions that you would ask each one, and other questions that you would want to ask all of them for your story.

ABOUT THE STORY

1. Nellie’s stories included her byline.

2. Her series focused attention on the asylum and prompted reforms.

3. “stunt girl reporters”


5. She wanted to break Fogg’s record, and file stories from exotic ports as she went.

BEYOND THE STORY

1. Nellie’s stories of the abuses on Blackwell’s Island hastened change and improvement. The power of the media is revealed through the prompt action taken because of Nellie’s expose.

2. Nellie promoted herself by making herself the star of each story so that readers felt they knew her.

3. She posed as a domestic worker, she worked in a factory, she posed as a poor, unwed mother; she learned to fence, she exposed a fake hypnotist and appeared in the chorus line of a Broadway play. She also posed as a concerned married woman to expose bribery in the state capital.

4. No, Nellie also wrote other stories. For example, in this chapter we learn that she attempted to interview all the living First Ladies for a story prior to the 1888 presidential elections.

5. She wanted to do a story that would set her above the other “stunt girl reporters.”

6. They said a young woman couldn’t go without a chaperone, and she would need so much luggage that she wouldn’t travel fast enough. Also, Nellie didn’t speak enough languages.
Chapter Eight:

Nellie has become famous, but now other “stunt girl reporters” are being hired and competing with her. She has an idea for a spectacular story, but the editors aren’t sure she can do it.

About the Story

1. What was one of the first things Nellie did to prepare for the trip?
2. How many days did Nellie pack for?
3. What year did Nellie begin the trip around the world?
4. What famous person requested a visit from Nellie?
5. According to Verne, what was the inspiration behind his idea to write “Around the World in 80 Days”?

Beyond the Story

1. Although Nellie really wanted to visit the Vernes, why did she almost decline? What did she fear?
2. How was Nellie able to communicate with The World while she was overseas?
3. Why was Nellie somewhat delayed at the telegraph station? What does that say about America’s standing in the world at that time?
4. How could modern technology have helped Nellie communicate throughout her travels in this chapter?
5. Why was Nellie so specific that her dress be made to last for “79” days? What does this tell you about Nellie’s attitude about a challenge?

Today’s Editorial Briefing

Look in the newspaper for articles written about foreign lands. Use the internet and find out where the land is located, what language is mostly spoken, what the climate is like and what the distance is from your school. Based on the article and the information you discover, discuss what someone travelling to that area might need and what to be aware of when travelling to that location. Orally present your research using visual materials to illustrate location, attire, weather, etc.
**Taking it further**

Would you be excited to accept the assignment of traveling around the world?

Do you have a passport? Why are passports necessary? Have you ever visited a foreign country where you did not need a passport?

What is an embassy? Where do they exist and what is the purpose of an embassy?

Do you think Nellie made a good impression on the Vernes?

Have you ever been to a foreign place where your language was not spoken? How did you communicate with others?

Nellie’s trip is a literal example of “life imitating art.” What is the metaphorical meaning of the expression? Can you cite examples of life imitating art in today’s newspaper? What about art imitating life?

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**Beyond Today’s Editorial Briefing**

Imagine you are Nellie Bly and have to pack a light travel bag for a long trip. Look through all sections of the paper for display advertisements and/or classified advertisements with items you could use on your trip. Total the costs for all items and write a rationale for each of your selections. List them in order of importance, so that, if you have to leave any behind, you will start at the bottom of your list. (But is that the order in which you would pack them in a small bag?)

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**Understanding the Newspaper**

The internet is widely used by people in the newspaper industry. Reporters and writers can go on-line to conduct research and gather critical information. Access to official government documents complete with statistics and percentages help reporters reduce the amount of time used to familiarize themselves with a topic of interest and can help support a position. Technological advances in communication allow reporters to file stories electronically from virtually anywhere in the world.

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**Extended Activity:**

(Skill Building)

Use an encyclopedia to research the places that Nellie visits. Compare this information with what you learned while completing “Today’s Editorial Briefing.” Which sources do you feel are more accurate? Why?

Map the locations that Nellie has travelled to and determine the mileage. Create mathematical word problems. For example, replace steamship and train travel with plane travel at varying speeds. Calculate and solve.

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**About the Story**

1. She went to a dressmaker to have a dress made that would last for the entire length of the trip.

2. 79

3. 1889

4. Jules Verne

5. He told Nellie he got the idea for his novel from a newspaper article.

**Beyond the Story**

1. Nellie wanted to visit Mr. and Mrs. Verne but was afraid she might miss a connection and delay her trip.

2. Nellie communicated with The World through telegraphs.

3. Nellie was delayed at the telegraph station because it took the telegraph operator a few minutes to figure out where New York was and how to route a cable to arrive there. This indicates that New York was not as widely known as it is today. It reveals that communication between countries was minimal at that time and that the United States did not dominate world politics and economies as it does today.

4. She might have used e-mail to file her stories, or she could have phoned them in. She might also have done live radio interviews by phone, or used a portable satellite dish or wireless Internet connection to report live on television. (Would her story have been as interesting, though?)

5. Nellie was very confident that she would indeed meet the challenge and make it in less than 80 days. She refused to prepare for anything except success. (Do you think this kind of attitude helps bring about success?)
Chapter Nine:
Nellie has crossed the Atlantic and met Jules Verne in France. But, as she is coming out of the telegraph office in Brindisi, Italy, she hears the sound of a ship’s whistle as it pulls away.

**About the Story**

1. How did some tourists get around Port Said?
2. What did Nellie see when she left the tourist area of Port Said and went where tourists don’t usually go?
3. After leaving Port Said, which canal did Nellie travel through?
4. Why did the ship have to move slowly in the canal?
5. What is Nellie’s next destination?

**Beyond the Story**

1. What did Nellie mean when she said she thought that, “... a stick beats more ugliness into a person than it ever beats out?”

2. What is meant by Nellie’s musing, “feasting my eyes on what were to me peculiarities of a peculiar people?” What does the word peculiarities mean? What may she have found peculiar? Why would she find these things peculiar?

3. What realization did Nellie have about herself and the trip by the end of this chapter?

4. What detail of the ships passage throughout the Suez Canal indicates that this story takes place long ago?

**Today’s Editorial Briefing**

Imagine that you are a business reporter in the year just before the Suez Canal opened. Using the information gathered in the “Extended Activity,” and imaginary interviews with business leaders, write an article about new canal and the impact it will have on business. Make sure you cover the advantages to different businesses of using the canal rather than overland routes or sailing around Africa. What types of businesses will you interview in connection with this story?
How do you think Nellie felt at the beginning of her trip when it was about schedules and not about people or countries?

What incidences in this chapter reveal Nellie’s compassionate nature?

Why do you think Nellie chose to walk through Port Said rather than take a ride on a donkey?

Why might things not seem as peculiar to a modern day traveler?

Nellie realizes by the chapter’s end that she cannot control all aspects of her journey. She laughs at herself for her own bad-temper and frustration. Have you had a similar experience?

### Taking it Further

**Peculiar is as peculiar does**

Imagine how different life in America is to foreign people. People often forget how challenging it is to understand another culture’s traditions, values, language and expressions. Read your newspaper’s sports section and examine the way language is used. There are many examples of simile, metaphor, personification, puns, and figures of speech. Rewrite a short sports story in plain language so someone not familiar with the literary devices used could make sense of the article. Compare the literal version to the original. Which do you prefer? Why?

### Understanding the Newspaper

As Nellie dashes around the world, she’ll stop in places like Brindisi to cable home her current location and report any problems she may have. But she won’t file full-length stories until she’s back in the United States. Even with the invention of telegraphs and the laying of trans-oceanic cables, long stories from overseas were rare and confined to major events. But telegraphs were important in many businesses, and sending Morse code became a common office skill. During one stage play, an actor playing a telegrapher reportedly tapped out a very different message than was called for in the script, provoking a burst of laughter from several former office boys in the audience. A telegraph office in the White House basement had to be moved away from the press room because so many reporters had the skills to quietly eavesdrop on the cables arriving next door.

### About the Story

1. Some took rides on donkeys.
2. She saw women in veils, fishermen capturing a crocodile and firewood being carried on a string of camels.
3. The Suez Canal
4. Waves from ships passing through too quickly had washed in enough sand to reduce it from 325 feet to only 195 feet wide.
5. Hong Kong

### Beyond the Story

1. Nellie refused to beat the beggars with a stick because she thought it cruel. The term “ugly” has a meaning beyond “physically unattractive.” It also means to be unpleasant and mean, so that a dog who bites is sometimes called “an ugly dog” no matter what it looks like. Nellie believed that people treated cruelly become angry, resentful and more prone to violence than people treated decently and kindly.

2. Peculiar is an adjective which can mean unusual, eccentric, strange or odd. It also means belonging distinctively or especially to one person, group, or kind. Peculiarity is a noun which can refer to quirks, eccentricities; or notable, distinctive features; or the quality or state of being peculiar. What Nellie saw at Port Said was peculiar to her because it was not what she was used to seeing. For example, seeing women in veils, fishermen capturing crocodiles, and watching a string of camels carrying firewood are not things she would have seen in Pittsburgh or New York.

3. She realized that her frustration about things out of her control made her behavior appear foolish and bad-tempered.

4. It is stated that the ship Nellie was on had an electric light to show the way at night but other ships had to stop for fear of running aground.

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**Extended Activity:**

(Skill Building)

Research the development of the Suez Canal. Report the solutions to the problem that existed, the modifications, the use of the Canal, and its dimensions.

How did merchandise and travelers get from Europe to India and China before the creation of the Suez Canal? What sorts of merchandise would be easier to transport by ship, instead of overland? What would be the benefits to travelers of one means of transportation rather than the other?
1. What was the nation of China trying to prevent the European nations from doing?

2. What restriction did the law just passed by the United States place on Chinese people?

3. What is said of the attitude of the Chinese people toward their government?

4. What information shocked Nellie when first arriving in Hong Kong?

5. Where did Nellie travel to after Hong Kong?

6. What bay did Nellie’s ship anchor in on the morning of January 21st?

Beyond the Story

1. How different was Nellie’s experience in Hong Kong compared to Yokohama?

2. Why were Westerners hated by the Chinese during this time period? What was happening throughout the world at this time?

3. Why was Elizabeth Bisland sent to make the same trip as Nellie?

4. Why was the ship’s bill of health such an important document in those days?

Today’s Editorial Briefing

Interview someone in your family or community who is from another country or has spent a significant period of time in another country. Ask them to discuss the cultural differences in food, language, traditions, holidays, government rules, climate, music, etc. Develop an outline of the main points, then write up the interview in your choice of a question-and-answer format or a less formal style.
Was it fair for America to pass a law to keep Chinese people from coming? Why do you think a law was passed to keep Chinese people from coming to America?

Do you feel that the political and economic differences between China and Japan at the time Nellie visited contributed to the way she felt about them?

Remember when Nellie wrote that she felt that “a stick beats more ugliness into a person than it ever beats out.” How might that idea apply to the treatment of criminals in China?

How do you think Nellie reacted when she learned of the missing bill of health which could delay her voyage?

Do you think Nellie will beat the record?

**Beyond Today’s Editorial Briefing**

Americans speak of a “melting pot” in which different peoples contribute some things from their culture, but also change to form a new American identity in which people are very much alike. Canadians speak of a “cultural mosaic” in which people keep their own culture but are still part of the national identity. Explain each of these two metaphors, then find examples in the newspaper of various cultures’ unique contributions to the community. Are they part of a “melting pot” or of a “cultural mosaic” approach?

**National pride and the face of tourism**

In 1898, Nellie was not seeing China at its best. The Manchu dynasty had lost wars to the European powers and was forced to make many humiliating and expensive concessions in both trade and in political autonomy. Maintaining control of a resentful people meant further repression that, in the following years, brought armed rebellion, military action by the Western powers and then defeat by the Japanese and more loss of territory.

Meanwhile, she was seeing Japan just as it was arriving on the scene as a world power. Not only was it becoming a major economic player, but would soon defeat China in war, then turn around and stun with world with the quick destruction of Russia’s western naval fleet.

Compare modern nations with strong and weak economies, and greater or lesser national sovereignty. Which would be safer and more pleasant to visit?

**About the Story**

1. Taking over its territory and selling drugs to its people.
2. The law prohibited Chinese from coming to America
3. They were poor and angry, and ready to rebel against their government.
4. Elizabeth Bisland had set out to beat her.
5. Japan
6. San Francisco Bay

**Beyond the Story**

1. Nellie’s experience in Yokohama was pleasant compared to the time spent in Hong Kong and Canton. The Chinese people were poor, angry and ready to rebel against their government. Nellie was warned of hostility against Westerners and Nellie found it dirty and crowded. She enjoyed Yokohama and was impressed with how the Japanese took Western ideas and adopted them to work in their culture. She found the Japanese people cheerful, modern, and charming.

2. Westerners were hated during that time because European nations were trying to take over the nation’s territory and the Chinese could not win the wars against the foreigners. Also, the United States had just passed a law to keep Chinese people from coming to America.

3. Elizabeth Bisland was sent by a magazine to beat Nellie probably hoping to capitalize on her fame and her idea to beat the fictional character.

4. Diseases could be carried from one place to the next and to prevent epidemics it was necessary to prove that everyone on board a vessel was free of disease. There were often no vaccines for diseases from foreign countries, and because of the isolation of a time when transportation was slower and international travel less common, people had little natural resistance to strange germs.

**Extended Activity:**

(Cultural Connections)

Nellie celebrated New Year’s Eve in Hong Kong. Find out what holidays are celebrated in Japan and in China. Compare patriotic celebrations and national holidays of the US, Japan, and China. How many of them existed when Nellie went around the world?

How would you explain our holidays to someone from another culture? List some holiday traditions a visitor from another country would enjoy. List some that would seem silly or bizarre. Write a detailed explanation of three traditions for someone from another culture. Read them aloud for the class to evaluate.
Chapter Eleven:
Nellie made it to San Francisco on time despite storms. But they’ve lost the bill of health and without it, nobody will be allowed off the ship until a new one arrives from Japan!

**About the Story**

1. According to the stationmaster in Columbus the crowds for Nellie were larger than they had been for which presidents?

2. When did Nellie arrive in Jersey City?

3. How many days did her voyage take?

4. How many entries had The World received in response to a contest to guess exactly how long her trip would take?

5. In what way did The World benefit from Nellie’s voyage?


**Beyond the Story**

1. How was Nellie received by Americans upon return to her homeland?

2. How does Nellie alert readers of her own fame and popularity?

3. What detail is given that tells readers of Nellie’s worth as a celebrity?

4. What were the implications for The World in terms of higher newsstand sales? What impact does sales have on a newspaper?

5. Why did Nellie decide to leave The World for another publication?

**Marketing**

Create a display advertisement for one of the products mentioned in this chapter (Nellie Bly cap, drinking glass, board game). To prepare for this exercise, think about the language and design of an effective advertisement and look in your newspaper for ads that appeal to you. (Visit www.nelliebly.org to see scans of the real board game and trading cards!)
**Taking it Further**

Do you think Nellie’s trip is fairly matched to the voyage of the fictional character, Fogg?

How would you describe the marketing surrounding Nellie’s voyage?

Why do you think readers were so interested in Nellie’s trip?

Nellie spoke to filled auditoriums. Have you ever had to speak to a large crowd? How do you feel being in the public eye?

**Beyond Today’s Briefing**

Discuss the relationship of advertising and editorial content. What kind of advertising and promotional tie-ins could compromise a newspaper’s reputation for fairness and objectivity? Within the industry, papers are sometimes criticized for fluffy coverage of new store openings or for too close promotional ties with sports franchises, especially when stadium projects are likely to be voted on. There is also discomfort when TV journalists become personalities, appearing on talk shows or even in motion pictures, or when journalists accept money for making speeches to groups that they also cover as reporters. Are there journalists today whose fame is similar to Nellie’s?

**Understanding the Newspaper**

What is a **news conference**? A news conference, sometimes called a press conference, is an event held by individuals, groups or organizations that have a message they wish to deliver to more than one media organization at once. The events are usually marked by a presentation by whomever called the news conference and the distribution of relevant background material. The presentation is usually followed by an opportunity for members of the media to ask questions of the participants.

**Advertising and the Newspaper**:

A newspaper makes most of its money through advertisements. Advertisements are paid for by advertisers who pay to show their products or services in the newspaper. There are four basic types of advertisements: retail/display ads including national ads, legal ads and classified ads.

Retail or display ads are found throughout the paper. They often use art to display their products or services. Classified ads are grouped together by classification: cars for sale, houses for rent and so forth, and are usually found in the back of the paper.

Legal ads are placed by governments, utility companies and sometimes by individuals to inform the public about important matters. Legal ads are required by law as an effective way of letting people know things that may effect their lives, and the law also tells newspapers how much they can charge for the ads.

**About the Story**

1. Cleveland and Harrison
2. January 25, 1890
3. 72 days
4. Over half a million entries.
5. It enjoyed some of its best newsstand sales ever.

**Beyond the Story**

1. She was greeted warmly.

2. Nellie points out her popularity with her story about her visit to the Chicago Board of Trade. She also mentions that the stationmaster in Columbus said the crowds for Nellie were larger than they had been for Presidents Cleveland or Harrison.

3. One hundred souvenir photos of Nellie sold for $5 each.

4. While newsstand sales produce revenue on their own, they are more important than that for a newspaper’s overall financial success. Newspapers base their advertising rates on circulation. If a newspaper can tell a potential advertiser that a greater number of people read the newspaper they can charge that much more money. Advertisements produce most of the money that a newspaper makes.

5. She left to write newspaper serial stories for young readers.

**Extended Activity**

(MEDIA CONCEPT BUILDING)

Advertising is all around us. List catchy slogans and advertising campaigns that you think are successful. Discuss the product or service, its intended audience, and what you consider appealing. Clip magazine articles and compare with others to demonstrate the elements used in advertising.

To tie-in traditional grammar, have students list the adjectives used in advertising and create new slogans.
Chapter Twelve
Nellie returned from her trip around the world to find fame and applause everywhere but at her own workplace. So she quit and signed a contract to write serial stories for young readers.

About the Story

1. What new type of writing did Nellie attempt?
2. What did Nellie choose to write about upon her return to The World?
3. What did Nellie travel to Illinois to write about?
4. What industry was George Pullman involved in?
5. What did President Cleveland express concern about during the strike?

Beyond the Story

1. What were some of the reasons given to explain why workers might decide to strike?

2. What are the implications of the laws which existed during the 19th century in regard to strikes and treatment of strikers?

3. What did Nellie attempt to do as a reporter that was different than what other reporters were doing at the time? What does this say about her growth as a reporter?

4. Why did Nellie expect to speak out against the strikers in Illinois?

5. Explain the Pullman workers’ reasons for striking and discuss the impact of the strike on the American people.

Today’s Editorial Briefing

Find news stories about issues that could cause workers to want to strike or clip articles about current strikes. Discuss why workers might strike, who would be affected, the effect of a strike on the community, and what possible solutions exist. Then create an editorial cartoon about one such situation. (After learning more, Nellie changed her mind about who she favored. Did you?)
What is the difference between fiction writing and non-fiction writing? What is the difference between biographical and autobiographical work?

Why was 1893 a bad year for workers and for business?

What was happening in the world at the time?

Do you think Emma Goldman should have been arrested?

Why do people sometimes decide to strike? Why would strikers become violent and beat up the workers hired as replacements?

Beyond Today’s Editorial Briefing

In Nellie’s day, most towns had more than one newspaper, one backed by Democratic Party interests, the other by the Republicans. They often delighted in taking opposing views on controversial subjects. During a strike, you could expect one paper to be sympathetic to strikers and the other to take the side of the factory owners. Today, most towns have one paper that strives to serve the entire community. Accordingly, divisive commentary is less frequent and there is an attempt to represent both sides.

Understanding the Newspaper

**Headline:** The headline tells what the story is about. It uses big letters and just a few words so readers can decide quickly if they are interested in the story and want to read it.

**Front Page:** The most important news of the day goes on the front page, or page one. Broadsheet papers are folded in half, horizontally and the most important news goes on the top half, “above the fold.” Tabloid papers are folded vertically.

**Editorial Cartoons:** Editorial cartoons (also called “political cartoons”) are different from cartoons on the comics page. They tell how the cartoonist feels about various current matters (and may use sarcasm and irony to make a point). Like a column, an editorial cartoon is the work of a particular person with a particular point of view.

**EXTENDED ACTIVITY:** (SKILL BUILDING)

Nellie’s interview with Emma Goldman ran on the front page with a main headline promoting her return to the newspaper and a smaller “dek hed” saying what the story was about. Read stories from the front page of today’s paper and summarize the main point. Create both main headlines and “dek heds” to go with the news stories.

**ABOUT THE STORY**

1. She attempted fiction writing. She wrote serialized stories.
2. She wrote about poor working people.
3. The Pullman strike
4. The railroad industry
5. He feared the mail would not get through.

**BEYOND THE STORY**

1. Workers might strike because of lowered wages or less number of workers doing the same job.

2. The laws did not protect the workers in terms of how workers should be treated, or what was fair and legal during a strike.

3. Nellie attempted to ask questions during her interviews to allow readers to read the opinions for themselves. She didn’t give up expressing her own opinions within her stories, but she tried to allow the subjects of her coverage to be seen clearly; she obeyed the rule of “show, don’t tell.”

4. Nellie expected to speak out against the strikers because she didn’t believe workers should make a circus of themselves. She believed workers could handle their grievances in a more dignified manner.

5. The Pullman workers went on strike because when Pullman cut their wages by 25 percent, he didn’t cut the rent on their company home. And if they moved out of Pullman to live in a nearby town with lowered rents, they would lose their jobs at the Pullman factory. The impact on America at the time was explained by President Cleveland who feared that the trains must run otherwise, the mail would not get through. It also hindered other railroad workers because they refused to work with any train that had Pullman cars on it.
Chapter Thirteen:
Nellie quit reporting to write children’s serial stories, but she didn’t turn out to be good at fiction. She went back to The World and was sent to Chicago to cover a railroad workers strike.

**About the Story**

1. Where did Nellie go to visit a successful model city?
2. Where did Nellie visit and report on the bad effects gambling was having on the city?
3. What major change occurred in Nellie’s personal life in 1895?
4. On what prior experience did Nellie base her ideas of how to treat her workers?
5. On what date did Austria declare war on Serbia and Germany invade Luxembourg?

**Beyond the Story**

1. What is a model city?
2. How did Nellie’s bold and stubborn nature serve her well as a reporter but worked against her in other ways?
3. How did Nellie continue her humanitarian efforts?
4. How did Nellie capitalize on her fame while running the Iron Clad Manufacturing Company?

**Today’s Editorial Briefing**

*Study the wedding and engagement announcements in the newspaper. Create a wedding announcement for Nellie and Robert Seaman based on the biographical information you have.*

*Nellie is a celebrity. Her wedding to Robert Seaman will be of interest to people outside of her community. Write a news article about the event.*
What do you think Nellie expected to be doing at this stage of her life?

What business principles do you think Nellie applied to the Iron Clad Manufacturing Company that she may have developed while reporting on the Pullman Strike?

How would you characterize Nellie’s life at this point?

What do you think the bad effects were when Nellie reported on gambling in Saratoga Springs? Do you think people still have the same views regarding gambling? Can you state pros and cons that gambling might have on a community? Do you think gambling is beneficial or detrimental?

What do you think Nellie experienced as she boarded the ship to cross the Atlantic Ocean?

What do you think Nellie will do next?

### Business stories are everybody’s business!

Some years after the wedding, Robert Seaman’s business is forced to close. The Iron Clad Manufacturing Company employed many people and its dissolution certainly had an impact on the community. Find news stories about business closings locally or nationally. What happens when a corporation lays off workers or closes down entirely? How are people besides the company’s own workers affected? How is the economy affected? Have you or your family been personally affected by a business closing?

### Nellie visits Saratoga

“Formerly men of wealth and social position, statesmen, philosophers, students and artists gathered here to drink the waters that nature forces through a hundred fissures and enjoy the crisp, invigorating air and the picturesque scenery which have united to make Saratoga America’s most famous summer resort. They came to ride, to drive, to dress and to secure that freedom that gives perfect rest and brings back bodily health and vigor.

“Now the great summer population of Saratoga is largely composed of those who gather here to gamble or to live off those who gamble. From one of the most reputable and most exclusive of American watering places, it has been transformed into the wickedest and the wildest.”

How do you think people in Saratoga Springs felt when they read Nellie Bly’s story in The World? Would some people there have been happy to see it? Why? Find a story in today’s paper that would make some readers happy and others furious.

### About the Story

1. Illinois
2. Saratoga Springs
3. Nellie married Robert Seaman
4. The Pullman strike
5. July 28, 1914

### Beyond the story

1. It is a planned community designed to accommodate workers of a company. It is complete with houses, schools, churches and parks for the workers.

2. Nellie’s “bold and stubborn nature” was useful when it gave her the courage to face danger and confront dishonest people as a reporter. But she became belligerent in court while trying to get money back from the people who had stolen it. She lost her temper and refused to cooperate with people and with the courts. She damaged her own case by not being more reasonable and less suspicious.

3. Nellie continued her humanitarian efforts by investigating and writing about the Cook County Jail in Chicago. After her story appeared in the paper, improvements were made.

4. The advertisements for the company said, “The Iron Clad Factories are the largest of their kind and are owned exclusively by Nellie Bly, the only woman in the world personally managing industries of such a magnitude.”

### Extended Activity: (Skill Building)

Imagine that you are building a major factory and wish to locate it in a new area. Design a model city for your workers, using graph paper, rulers, pencils. Be sure to include the important parts of a city (e.g., airport, hospital, parks, thoroughfares). Work in small groups and present the urban plan. Be prepared to explain your choices and listen to critiques written by your classmates about the practicality or your model city. Print a city map from an on-line source and compare to your own. (Those who have played Sim City may be asked to comment on what happens to a city when taxes are unrealistically lowered or unnecessarily raised!)
Chapter Fourteen

Trusting the wrong people left Nellie’s business in ruins. She went to Europe to find help and to get away from legal problems. But just as she left, World War I started.

About the Story

1. Which war occurred while Nellie was married and retired from the newspaper?
2. What story did Nellie cover from Austria in 1914?
3. What caused Nellie to no longer work as a reporter in Austria?
4. What was Nellie forced to do upon her return to America?
5. When did Nellie die?

Beyond the Story

1. How did Nellie’s writing style reflect her use of color when reporting from Austria?
2. What is implied about Nellie in the passage about her detainment as a possible spy?
3. How had newspaper reporting changed since Nellie first began her career?
4. What detail is given about Nellie’s advice column revealing her popularity?
5. How is Nellie’s financial status revealed in the passage about her life with Dorothy?
6. How is Nellie’s character and life characterized by Arthur Brisbane?

Today’s Editorial Briefing

Write an obituary for Nellie Bly based on the information you have read about her life. Study the obituaries in your newspaper to use as a model. Follow this with a news article on Nellie’s death since she was a public figure.

Compare the illustration for this chapter with the illustration for Chapter One. Why do you think Christopher Baldwin drew what he did?
TAKING IT FURTHER

How different might have Nellie’s life been if she had been raised after women had the right to vote?

Nellie is considered a historic figure. Who do you consider a female historic figure and why?

Why do you think Nellie was interested in helping poor families and poor orphaned children?

What organizations to help people are you familiar with? Which ones do you think Nellie would support?

What would you like to be remembered for?

What kind of good deeds do you perform?

Where do we get world and national news from?

About Today’s Editorial Briefing

Pretend you are someone whom Nellie has helped and write an elegy, a short poem, about Nellie’s life and how her reporting benefited you. Look in the classified section to find examples of poems written in memorium to others.

Understanding the Newspaper

What is an obituary? An obituary (“obit”) is a notice placed by a funeral home to announce someone’s death. Until recently, obituaries were considered news and, at most newspapers, subject to the same rules as any news stories. Each newspaper had its own style (rules) about things like what terms could be used, how many surviving relatives could be listed and whether or not hobbies and interests could be mentioned. Today, many papers consider obituaries a type of ad. Families pay to have obits in the paper, but, in return, they can make them much more personal than in the days when they were “news items.”

Where does world and national news come from?

News from outside the region, state and nation is often sent from the Associated Press and other wire services, and important news happening in your area may be sent to the wire services. “Wire service” is a term for any organization that gathers news and sends out articles electronically to subscribing members such as newspapers, television stations, etc.

The Associated Press is the oldest cooperative newsgathering organization in the world. Founded in 1848, it relies on member news organizations and its own reporters stationed in bureaus around the globe to provide 24-hour news coverage to newspapers, television stations and radio stations.

Extended Activity: (Math Skill Building)

Nellie covered World War I, which was, of course, world news. Look in the newspaper and determine which stories are world news, national news and local news. Calculate the percentage of each category. Express the percentages in fractions, pie graphs, bar graphs, line graphs.

About the Story

1. The Spanish-American War
2. World War I
3. The U.S. entered World War I
4. She had to close down what remained of the Iron Clad Manufacturing Company.
5. January 27, 1922

Beyond the Story

1. When Nellie reported from Austria she included small details. She wrote of Hungarian soldiers making tea in their trenches and of the horrors of men dying of cholera in the frozen mud.
2. Nellie implies that she is known by everyone in America.
3. Stunt reporting was something of the past.
4. Not only is it stated that letters poured in for Nellie but it is also stated that her advice column was featured in a prominent position in the newspaper. In addition, people waited in the lobby of her hotel to ask for her help.
5. It is revealed in the detail that she lived in a single room.
6. Brisbane characterizes Nellie as “The Best Reporter in America.” He notes that although she died with little money her life was useful and she earned the respect and affection of many through good deeds. Brisbane says that Nellie’s work she did with the poor, and particularly for poor children, was the most important to her.
End of Unit Culminating Activity Suggestions

To incorporate drama and arts have students write a script of the story and perform it.

Create a song about Nellie Bly’s life using newspaper terminology.

Develop an “Around The World in 72 Days” game board. For ideas, visit www.nelliebly.org for a link to a site that shows the original game.

Using the link on that site to see scans of Nellie Bly trading cards as models, develop similar advertising and trading cards for some of today’s network correspondents and other highly visible journalists.

Develop a game formatted like the popular game show “Jeopardy” and base the questions on the serial. Use categories such as: newspapers, history at the time, Nellie’s career, Nellie’s trip. Have students use low order questions for least amount of money and higher order questions for higher amount of money.

Create a poem related to Nellie’s life.

Have students illustrate each chapter of the serial explaining their choice of drawings.

Have students draw a silhouette of Nellie on newsprint. Fill in the drawing with words from newspapers describing Nellie Bly.

Have students write autobiographies. They may also try writing fictionalized autobiographies.

Create mock newspapers relating to this unit of study. Divide the classroom into small groups. Have each member of the group self-select and submit a piece of writing to exemplify their knowledge of various newspaper features. For example, select a column, an editorial, a feature story, a news story, an obituary, and advertisements. Have each group work together to decide placement of the writing pieces based on their knowledge and share the completed project with whole class.

End of Unit Topic Question Suggestions

Describe how Nellie’s views were or were not influenced by the events and attitudes which existed during her life.

Compare and contrast Nellie’s early writing style with her later work. Discuss Nellie’s growth as a writer and a reporter as demonstrated through the serial.

Write a critical analysis of Nellie’s personal life as it reflected on her professional life.

Select an event or topic Nellie wrote about and discuss the impact her reporting may or may not have had.
Glossary

advice column  A feature in which readers submit questions or problems to a columnist for advice.

Associated Press  A major wire service (see)

autobiography  A self-written biography

biography  A written account of a person’s life.

broadsheet  A newspaper in which the paper is folded in half, horizontally.

by-line  The by-line tells who wrote the story.

circulation  The number of newspapers sold each day. The circulation department is in charge of taking orders for papers and making sure they are delivered, as well as keeping track of how many papers were sold.

classified ad  Advertisements in a section of the paper divided into classifications such as “Automobiles for Sale,” “Help Wanted” or “Homes for Rent.” Many individuals place classified ads, but they are also used by Realtors, automobile dealers, auction houses and other businesses.

column  A column is an opinion article that tells how a particular writer feels about something. The word also applies to the vertical blocks of print on a newspaper.

copy  The words that go into the paper. Stories, cutlines, columns and all other written material to be printed are “copy.”

dateline  The dateline at the beginning of a story tells where the story takes place or where it was written. In Nellie’s day, it also told when the story was written, since stories were often mailed to the paper and might be several days or even weeks old by the time they appeared in the newspaper.

dek hed  A smaller headline below the main hed. It provides extra information to interest readers in the story.

display ads  Display ads get their name from their use of artwork to attract attention. Unlike classified ads, display ads are scattered throughout the newspaper.

editor  Editors are managers in the newsroom, selecting and assigning stories, deciding layout and making sure copy is grammatical, clear and suitable for print. Editors may also lay out pages, act as supervisors over other newsroom personnel, write editorials and provide coaching for reporters.

editorials  An editorial is an opinion piece that tells how the people who run the newspaper feel about an issue. Editorials appear on the editorial page, but, unlike columns, do not give the writer’s name, because they represent the entire newspaper and not just one person.

feature story  Feature stories are articles about things that are not “news” in the sense of being events that are happening immediately, like a fire or a bank robbery, but are interesting to read about. While news stories have to be written and published as soon as they happen, most feature stories don’t have to be written about at any particular time, unless they have to do with a news story, or an event, anniversary or holiday that will take place over a limited period of time.

front page  The first page of a newspaper which contains the most important news.

headline  The headline (or “hed”) tells what the story is about. It uses big letters and just a few words so readers can decide quickly if they are interested in the story.
lead: The first sentence of a story, it “leads” the reader into the story. The lead sets the mood for the rest of the story and needs to be interesting enough to make people want to read the story. Sometimes spelled “lede”. In a news story, the lead should contain the most important information.

legal ads: Ads placed by governments, utility companies and sometimes by individuals to inform the public about important matters.

news conference: Sometimes called a “press conference”, is an event held by individuals, groups or organizations that have a message they wish to deliver to more than one media organization. Information may also be handed out in a “news release.”

news story: News stories are about things that just happened and that people need to read about soon. News stories are about facts, but sometimes contain the opinions of people who are involved in the story. A news story should never contain the opinions of the writer, however.

obituary: A notice of someone’s death that includes a brief biography. A “death notice” simply contains the information of the death, without the biographical material.

pen name: a fictional name used to protect a writer’s privacy. Few reputable news organizations permit writers to use pen names or “pseudonyms” today, but they were once common.

political cartoons: Like a column, political (or “editorial) cartoons tell how the individual cartoonist feels about various current events or trends.

publisher: The head of the entire newspaper, including news, advertising, circulation, business and production departments.

“stunt” reporting: A style of feature writing that creates exciting stories that put the reporter in unusual and often dramatic situations. Although modern news organizations would not want to use this 19th century term, creating “stars” out of reporters by featuring them in attention-getting features is still a very popular audience-building strategy.

syndicates: In Nellie’s time, syndicates were informal groups of newspapers that shared news and feature stories. Today, syndicates are major businesses that not only share material among subscribing papers but create comic strips, advice columns and other features for sale to newspapers.

tabloid: A newspaper of small format folded vertically opening from left to right. Tabloids have a reputation for sensational stories and, though many tabloid-format newspapers are quite dignified and responsible in their coverage, the term “tabloid” carries a strong sense of exploitive, gossipy news coverage.

wire service: With the invention of the telegraph, newspapers were able to share stories almost instantaneously, and “syndicates” became formal organizations like Reuters and the Associated Press to select, edit and distribute stories to a national and international membership. Today, of course, “wire” services are wireless and use the Internet and satellite dishes!
Search and find each word; explain its relation to the Nellie Bly serial

ads  cochrane  news
asylum  column  pink
bisland  editor  pulitzer
brindisi  grammar  pullman
byline  headline  reporter
censorship  immunity  verne
The following matrix is based on English language arts learning standards set forth by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

**Reading**

- Chapters: 4, 5, 6, 10
- Chapters: 3, 4, 6, 10
- Chapters: 5, 8, 11
- Chapters: 6

**Writing**

- Chapters: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12
- Chapters: 6, 7
- Chapters: 3, 6, 8, 9
- Chapters: 5, 6, 9

**Listening and Speaking**

- Chapters: 2, 8, 11
- Chapters: 4, 6, 10
- Chapters: 4, 6, 9
- Chapters: 3, 5, 8, 10, 11

### English Language Arts Extended Activity

**News-Related Briefing**

- Chapters: 3, 5, 8, 10, 11
- Chapters: 4, 6, 10

**Reading and Language Arts Matrix**

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<th>Reading</th>
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**Extended Activity**

- Chapters: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12

**News-Related Activity**

- Chapters: 6, 7, 8, 12

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The following matrix is based on English language arts learning standards set forth by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association.