

Ether anesthesia demonstration

1846 | Grade 2 · Read & notice

Words to know

science — study of the natural world using observation and evidence

care — attention and help for someone or something

discover — find out something new to the person looking

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

Doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital used ether during a public surgical demonstration. It helped show that surgery could occur with less pain. Many people contributed to the development of anesthesia.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. What happened in this reading? Tell one fact.
2. Who or what is this reading mostly about?
3. Choose a word from the word bank. Explain it in your own words.
4. Look at the picture and its caption. What does it help you notice? Is it from the time of the event?

Follow-up reading: Women's rights convention in Worcester

1850

People met in Worcester to discuss women's rights. Lucy Stone was among the speakers. They asked for changes in voting, education, and work. The national convention was one event in a long struggle.

How are the two readings alike or different? Tell a partner one connection. Which event came first?

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.2.1: ask and answer questions; RI.2.2: identify a main topic; RI.2.7: use images and words; W.2.2 and SL.2.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: Doctors at Massachusetts General Hospital used ether during a public surgical demonstration. It helped show that surgery could occur with less pain. Many people contributed to the development of anesthesia. This October demonstration became a major medical milestone, but it was not the first attempt to reduce surgical pain. Historical medical study should recognize collaboration and avoid offering treatment instructions.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.