

Ether anesthesia demonstration

1846 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

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.

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.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

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.

The meeting followed earlier organizing, including Seneca Falls. Activists sometimes disagreed about priorities and the effects of race and gender. A demand for rights differs from a right's later legal recognition.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

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.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: 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.