

# Study Guide For Teachers

**Anne Pasquale**  
*in*  
***The Incomparable Nellie Bly:  
America's First Woman Reporter***  
presented by

**Young Audiences**  
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## **ABOUT THE PROGRAM**

Actress Anne Pasquale brings Nellie Bly, the renowned stunt reporter of the 1890's New York World, back from the past. Through story, song and participatory re-enactments students are engaged by the tale of this legendary woman and her world. They learn how Bly's provocative reporting style changed the face of women in journalism forever. They are inspired by this woman who gave voice to the causes of countless Americans from the immigrant wage earner, to Susan B. Anthony, and much more. Nellie Bly is a hands-on encounter with 19th-century America through the eyes of one of it's most compassionate and heroic journalists.

Grades: K - 9  
250 Audience Limit

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS**

Women in the United States have traditionally had more freedom than their counterparts in other areas of the world such as Europe and Asia. This is a direct result of women being an integral part of creating a new nation, settling an untamed wilderness, and fervently working for such causes as anti-slavery, child labor laws and women's suffrage.

Discuss how today's women's lives are different from those living one hundred and two hundred years ago.

## **LEARNING GOALS**

1. To have children experience a hands-on encounter with nineteenth-century America by recreating the major events in the life of one of it's most heroic journalists.
2. To make children aware of the important differences between everyday life of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries
3. To highlight the role of women in society both now and in the past.

## **BEFORE THE PROGRAM**

Introduce Nellie Bly to the children by emphasizing how unusual her feats were in 1890. Your students will have the chance to meet the famous daredevil reporter from 1890 who:

- traveled around the world in 72 days;
- journeyed to Mexico and became one of America's first female foreign correspondents;
- championed the causes of the working girl;
- feigned insanity and penned the work *Ten Days in the Madhouse*;
- personally interviewed Susan B. Anthony

## AFTER THE PROGRAM

1. Nellie Bly was a stunt reporter. This meant that in order to write her stories she would actually take on the life of her subject. Ask the students to engage in some stunt reporting of their own. Have them observe each other or a person they very much admire or wish to know more about. Then have them mimic that person in lifestyle and or dress. Then have them write a story from their new perspective. Here are some possible headlines: Life at my best friend's house. Kindergarten, the real story.

2. Women have come a long way since Nellie's time. They have the right to vote, they may own property, they can even run for public office. Name some of the other liberties that women of our century experience in contrast to those of the past. In dress, in occupation, etc.

3. A female reporter was not a common sight in Nellie's time. Name several other occupations that were virtually "off limits" to women during this time.

4. Have the students look around the room. How many everyday objects and amenities would have been part of Nellie's world? How many would have been different?

5. Have students conduct an entire class period as if they were living in the nineteenth century. What would be done differently? What would be the same?

## RESOURCES

Cohn, Amy L., *From Sea to Shining Sea*, New York: Scholastic Inc., 1993.

Daniels, Roger, *Coming to America*, New York: Harper Collins, 1990.

Ehrlich, Elizabeth, *Nellie Bly*, New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1989.

Kroeger, Erooke, *Nellie Bly*, New York: Times Eooks, 1994

Margetson, Stella, *Leisure & Pleasure in the 19th Century*, New York: Coward McCann, Inc., 1969.

Rappaport, Doreen, *American Women: Their Lives in Their Words*, New York: Harper Trophy, 1992.

## DEFINITIONS, PEOPLE, AND PLACES

**Abolitionist:** A person who lobbied for the legal extinction of slavery.

**Anthony, Susan B.:** The subject of one of Ms. Bly's character profiles for The World. Ms. Anthony was at the time a former abolitionist who had become one of the leading figures in the women's suffrage movement.

**Blackwell's Island:** This location presently referred to as Roosevelt's Island, was the site for several asylums for the insane. It was just one of these institutions that was investigated by Ms. Bly and became the subject of her expose, *Ten Days in The Madhouse*.

**Box Factories:** Workplaces, which employed numerous immigrant and unskilled women offering inadequate working conditions and using child labor. These establishments were investigated and exposed by Ms. Bly for publication in the Pittsburgh Dispatch. It was these articles which earned her the title: Guardian of the working girl.

**Cochran, Elizabeth:** Nellie Bly's birth name, which she retained prior to her working for The Pittsburgh Dispatch. It was George Madden who renamed Elizabeth, Nellie, taking the name from a popular Stephen Foster tune.

**Corset:** A shaped close-fitting undergarment. Worn by women in the nineteenth century.

**Ellis Island:** The site of a formal naval arsenal that became an immigrant reception center. It is located at the southern-most tip of Manhattan.

**Immigrant:** A person who comes to a country in order to take up permanent residence.

**Liberty:** Freedom from control, interference, obligation, and/or restriction.

## ARTIST INFORMATION

Actress and writer Anne Pasquale has been performing and writing for children's audiences for over a decade. She is a founding member of the Patchiddy Players Children's Theatre. A member of The Actor's Studio, Anne has appeared in numerous Off-Broadway productions such as "Fallen Angels," "Life at the Bottom" and "Challenge Her." Anne's guitar accompanist, Paul O'Keefe's stage credits include Godspell, Groundhog and Job. He has shared the stage with such well-known names as Patty Duke. Barbara Cook. The Drifters and The Shirelles.