

9.3

TYPE OF ACTIVITY

Listening,
information search
and debate

LEVEL

Advanced

TIME

50–60 minutes

AIMS

To gain an
understanding of
important
individuals in British
history

VOCABULARY

aristocratic, hot air
balloon, impact,
influence

PREPARATION

One photocopy of
the worksheet for
each learner.
Display pictures of
famous or important
British historical
figures.

People who changed British history

Warmer

Ask learners if they can think of famous British 'history makers' (either internationally or within the UK). Write their names up on the board. Elicit from the whole group what kind of information they'd like to know about them. Write up some of these questions on the board, e.g. *When was this person born? What special thing(s) are they remembered for? What impact did this have on the UK or the world at large?* Prompt with a picture of a well-known British person, if required, e.g. *He published 'On the Origin of Species' outlining his theory of evolution in 1859 (Darwin); She ruled over the British Empire from 1837 (Queen Victoria).*

39–40 Give out one copy of the worksheet to each learner. Focus learners on the introductory paragraph. Ask them what makes a person a 'history maker' (possible answers include: *scientific discovery, medical advancement, political change, revolution, war, writing, philosophy, leadership, exploration*). Write their responses on the board.

Tell learners they are going to hear two short biographies on history makers. They listen and take notes on their names and what they did, compare notes and listen again. Learners give their opinion of the two people, check answers and feed back to the class.

Answers

	Person	What he/she did	Why he/she is important
1	Alexander Fleming	Discovered the bacteria which was developed as penicillin	His work led to development of anti-bacterial drugs.
2	Mary Seacole	Nurse in the Crimean War	One of the first prominent black female Britons to develop nursing as a profession.

In groups of four, learners do the balloon debate. They read through the names and descriptions (or research them on the Internet). They discuss who they consider the most important individuals. Each group chooses one man and one woman in their balloon and they prepare to explain their reasoning to the class. Encourage debate and questions from the rest of the class. Alternatively, each learner can be assigned a figure who they have to represent as the most important.

Other famous people of importance

William Blake: writer, painter, visionary and human rights campaigner

Winston Churchill: leader of the UK during the Second World War

Queen Boudica: queen of the Iceni and Eastern England, fought against Roman occupation

Isambard Kingdom Brunel: designer and civil engineer

Geoffrey Chaucer: writer, poet, philosopher and diplomat

Queen Elizabeth I: voted greatest monarch of all time, in 2002 poll

Admiral Lord Nelson: celebrated military leader

Florence Nightingale: nurse and healthcare campaigner

Alan Turing: codebreaking mathematician and "father of computer science"

James Watt: inventor of steam power

Others: David Attenborough, John Logie Baird, Tim Berners-Lee, Harvey William Caxton, Edward Elgar, JK Rowling, William Tyndale

Extension

Learners can research the background of a different person from the suggestions above. Alternatively, learners could research a historic period of time, e.g. the Industrial Revolution; the reign of Henry VIII/Elizabeth I/Charles II/Queen Victoria; World War 1 or 2; the Highland Clearances; the potato famine in Ireland; the Glorious Revolution; the Norman Conquest; the English Civil War; the slave trade.

Who would you consider a 'history maker'? Listen to two people saying who they think is the most important British person in history. Take notes on each: who is the person, what did they do and why does the speaker consider them to be important?

