

INFORMATIONAL READING
COMPREHENSION

Biography of Dorothea Dix

Continue reading. Then, answer the questions that follow.

**GALVANIZED BY SUCCESS**

Fueled by the triumph in Massachusetts, Dorothea Dix expanded her efforts to neighboring states. She soon achieved similar reforms in places like Rhode Island and New York.

In 1848, Dorothea Dix took her cause to Washington, D.C. She set out to convince the U.S. Congress to create a large public fund to be used for the benefit of mentally ill people and others in need of help. Both the Senate and House of Representatives passed the bill, but President Franklin Pierce vetoed it.

Though disappointed, Dorothea Dix wasn't **deterred**. She continued her reform efforts at the state and international levels. She traveled throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. She even met with the pope! As a result of her continued advocacy, many places in the U.S. and beyond built brand-new hospitals designed for the treatment of mentally ill patients. Others expanded and improved existing hospitals to **elevate** the level of care for the residents. Sixty years before women even had the right to vote in the United States, Dorothea Dix influenced changes in mental health care that ultimately improved understanding and treatment of people suffering from mental illness.

STRICT SERVICE

Dorothea Dix's commitment to serving others extended beyond her activism for the mentally ill. Soon after the start of the American Civil War in 1861, she volunteered for service in the Union Army. She was appointed as the superintendent of nurses. Her duties included setting up and managing operations for field hospitals and recruiting and training nurses. Unsurprisingly, Dorothea Dix brought her high standards to the post and set strict requirements for the nurses whom she supervised. She worked tirelessly not only to care for the patients but also to bring respect to the nursing profession. Dorothea Dix intended to elevate doctors' respect for female nurses. While her approach and rigid policies sometimes caused resentment, she remained as determined as ever to help others and bring about positive change.

SANCTUARY

After the war, Dorothea Dix spent the remaining decades of her life continuing to lobby for the causes she believed in. She lived out her final years, from 1881-1887, in quarters set aside for her in one of the hospitals she had helped establish in New Jersey. She lived there not as a patient but as the revered advocate who had made such a **sanctuary** a reality for so many others.



Answer the questions about the biography. **Sample answers**

1. What are **two** central ideas in the passage?

- A. Dorothea Dix's high standards and persistence helped her succeed in making positive change.
- B. Dorothea Dix continued to work even when she was in poor health.
- C. Dorothea Dix wrote letters to lawmakers sixty years before women could vote in the United States.
- D. Dorothea Dix's efforts helped to improve the treatment of people suffering from mental illness.
- E. Dorothea Dix's strict requirements were unpopular but ultimately helped the nursing profession.

2. What is the overall organization of the passage?

- A. cause and effect
- B. order of importance
- C. chronological order
- D. compare and contrast

INFORMATIONAL READING COMPREHENSION:

Biography of Dorothea Dix



Keep going! Answer the questions about the biography. **Sample answers**

3. Explain how the **Stunned by Experience** section contributes to the development of Dorothea Dix's story.
The section shows the key event that changed Dorothea Dix's focus from education to helping people with mental illness. As she became aware of the serious problems facing the mentally ill, she started to fight for better conditions for them.
4. What details in the passage support the claim that Dorothea Dix was a "dedicated . . . humanitarian" with "extraordinary determination and persistence"? Give at least **two** supporting ideas.
- When she couldn't run her schools for girls, she wrote textbooks instead.**
 - When the Massachusetts legislature rejected her ideas for reform, she kept fighting and eventually got them to expand and reform the state mental hospital.**
5. Write the letter of the correct definition next to each bold word based on context clues from the passage.
- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| <u>E</u> humanitarian | A. argue in support of a cause |
| <u>A</u> advocate | B. stopped from doing something |
| <u>B</u> deterred | C. raise in status or condition |
| <u>C</u> elevate | D. a place where someone or something is protected or given shelter |
| <u>D</u> sanctuary | E. a person who works to make other people's lives better |
6. Read the following paragraph from a different biography of Dorothea Dix and answer the question below.
- After closing her schools due to her illness, Dorothea Dix traveled to England with friends to recover. While there, she met several groups of advocates who wanted to improve the lives of the mentally ill. She returned home and took a post at a prison in Boston. Soon, she was also crusading for better treatment of those suffering with mental illness.
- In what key way does the paragraph relate to the information presented in the passage?
- It puts in doubt that Dorothea Dix wrote textbooks during her bouts of ill health.
 - It suggests that Dorothea Dix's awareness about treatment of the mentally ill started before her job at a prison.**
 - It questions whether Dorothea Dix was actually the reason conditions changed in hospitals in the U.S.
 - It contradicts the idea that people didn't like Dorothea Dix's strict ways and high standards.