

## Year 5 or 6 Lesson: Hidden Figures - Who was Lady Isabel Burton?

### Curriculum Links

- KS2 History: Significant individuals beyond 1066
- British Values/SMSC: Roles of men and women, fairness

### Objectives

- Know Isabel Burton
- Understand her role
- Recognise hidden figures

### Lesson Plan (60 mins)

#### Starter (10 mins)

**Think-Pair-Share** Show image of Richard Burton and ask: 🙌 “Who helps explorers succeed?”

Introduce idea of ‘hidden heroes’

#### Main Activity 1 (15 mins)

##### Watch episode (selected clips)

Students identify:

- What did Isabel do?
- How was her life different from men?

Teacher emphasises:

- Writing, travelling, supporting others

#### Main Activity 2 (20 mins)

**Role on the Wall Activity** Draw outline of Isabel:

- Inside: feelings (loyal, brave)
- Outside: actions (writing, travelling, helping)

#### Discussion (10 mins)

- Was Isabel just a helper or important in her own right?
- Would her life be different today?

#### Plenary (5 mins)

**Sentence completion:** “Lady Isabel Burton mattered because...”

#### Differentiation

- SEN: word bank (wife, writer, helper, traveller)
- Higher: compare Isabel vs Richard

## Year 10 or 11 Lesson: Lady Isabel Burton: Woman, Wife or Historical Agent?

### Curriculum Links

- GCSE History: Role of women / British society
- Themes: Gender, power, Victorian values

### Objectives

- Explain role
- Analyse gender expectations
- Evaluate significance

### Lesson Plan (60 mins)

#### Starter (10 mins)

**Statement debate:** “A wife’s role is to support her husband”

Students agree/disagree → link to Victorian beliefs

#### Main Activity 1 (15 mins)

##### Video analysis

Students categorise Isabel’s roles:

- Wife
- Writer
- Explorer
- Manager

#### Main Activity 2 (20 mins)

##### Case Study: Burning the Papers

Explain:

- Isabel destroyed some of Burton’s writings
- Motivations: religion, reputation, morality [[encyclopedia.com](https://www.encyclopedia.com)]

Students discuss:

- Was she right to do this?
- Whose history is it?

#### Main Activity 3 (10 mins)

**Exam-style question** “Explain why Lady Isabel Burton is significant”

### Plenary (5 mins)

**Continuum line:** Underrated ↔ Powerful figure

### Differentiation

- Scaffolded writing frames
- Challenge: link to wider women’s rights

## **Year 12 or 13 Lesson: Lady Isabel Burton: Gender, Power and Historical Memory**

### **Curriculum Links**

- A-Level History: Social history, gender, historiography
- Themes: Agency, narrative control, representation

### **Learning Objectives**

- Critically evaluate Isabel Burton's role
- Analyse how gender shaped her actions
- Assess how history is constructed and controlled

### **Lesson Plan (90 mins)**

#### **Starter (10 mins)**

Provocation: "Lady Isabel Burton shaped history more than Richard Burton"  
Students respond with justification

#### **Main Activity 1 (20 mins)**

**Advanced video analysis Focus:**

- How is Isabel portrayed?
- Passive vs active roles
- Narrative bias

#### **Main Activity 2 (25 mins)**

Historiography Task

Students examine:

- Traditional view → "devoted wife"
- Modern view → "historical agent"

**Context:**

- Victorian expectations of women's roles
- Limited recognition of female intellectual work

#### **Main Activity 3 (20 mins)**

Ethics Debate: Burning the Papers

Motion: "Isabel Burton was justified in destroying historical documents"

Students must consider:

- Religion vs scholarship
- Private vs public memory

## The Burtons: Fascinating in Life and Death, Episode II, Lady Isabel Burton

### Plenary Essay (15 mins)

"To what extent did Lady Isabel Burton control her husband's legacy?"

### Differentiation

- Academic reading extracts
- Structured essay scaffolds