

Ten Days in a Mad-House

Nellie Bly

How does Bly expose a system by showing how easily it accepts a performance?

TOTAL TIME	TUMBLETA PASSAGE LOCATION
30 minutes	Chapter IV - entering Bellevue / examination sequence

TEACHER SETUP

Open the work in the Enhanced Reader and cue the span using the START and END anchors below.

START	What a mysterious thing madness is.
END	I had passed the second examination.
PASSAGE ID	sec-bly-01

THE MOVE

Analyze how first-person reporting turns procedure into critique

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Bly’s investigation depends on a paradox: she must perform instability, but the institution’s quick acceptance of that performance becomes evidence about the institution itself. Her narration directs attention from her disguise to the confidence and procedures of the people judging her.

MARK

Underline what Bly deliberately does as part of her performance. Circle what officials infer from those actions. Box moments when procedure substitutes for investigation. Star one detail that most clearly shifts scrutiny from Bly to the system.

NOTICE

- What evidence do officials actually have?
- How does Bly distinguish her private awareness from the judgments made about her?
- Why does passing an examination function as criticism rather than success?

THINK

Answer provisionally: How does Bly expose a system by showing how easily it accepts a performance? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response. Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.

STRONG ANSWER

Bly exposes the system by showing that a controlled performance can satisfy its tests with surprisingly little resistance. Her first-person perspective lets readers compare what she knows she is doing with what officials confidently conclude, turning the examination process itself into the object of scrutiny.

EVIDENCE

Use one deliberate action by Bly and one official response that treats it as proof.

WATCH FOR

Do not treat the passage as a general history of mental health care. Keep the analysis on how the narrated examination reveals weak judgment.

SOLO

Read independently.

SUPPORTED

Narration + highlighting.

LISTENING

Listen; same evidence task.

STUDENT PAGE · GRADE 8 · LESSON 276

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WORK

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Your teacher will open or cue the work in the Enhanced Reader. Use the location and verbatim anchors below to confirm the assigned span.

START

What a mysterious thing madness is.

END

I had passed the second examination.

READ / LISTEN TO THE ASSIGNED PASSAGE SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration and highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the assigned passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. **MARK** Underline what Bly deliberately does as part of her performance. Circle what officials infer from those actions. Box moments when procedure substitutes for investigation. Star one detail that most clearly shifts scrutiny from Bly to the system.
2. **NOTICE** What evidence do officials actually have? How does Bly distinguish her private awareness from the judgments made about her? Why does passing an examination function as criticism rather than success?
3. **THINK** Answer provisionally: How does Bly expose a system by showing how easily it accepts a performance?
4. **WRITE** Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.
5. **CLOSE** Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and say why.