



Why are historical figures significant?

Background Information

Amy Johnson was a famous aviatrix who was born in 1903. She was most famous for her solo journey to Australia, which she completed in nineteen days. Her disappearance was surrounded in mystery as her plane crashed and she was never found. William Wilberforce was a British politician and a leader of the movement to abolish slavery. He was born in Kingston Upon Hull in East Yorkshire. William began his political career in 1780 and eventually succeeded in becoming a Member of Parliament. He contributed to many good causes, including the abolition of the slave trade.

In this unit the children will learn:

- How to identify how historians and archaeologists collect evidence.
- How values and beliefs change over time.
- Why Amy Johnson's life is significant.
- To identify different opinions about William Wilberforce's work.



Historical Skills and Concepts

- Use a range of sources to find out about a period
- Observe small details – artefacts, pictures
- Select and record information relevant to the study
- Identify some of the ways in which the past is represented

Key person – Amy Johnson



Timeline of Key Events

- 1759 - William Wilberforce was born.
- 1807 – Slave Trade Act passed.
- 1833 – Slavery Abolition Act passed.
- 1833 – William Wilberforce died.
- 1903 – Amy Johnson was born.
- 1930 – Amy Johnson flew solo to Australia.
- 1941 – Amy Johnson died.

Key person – William Wilberforce





Key facts

- **Amy Johnson** was born in Hull, East Riding, on 1st July, 1903.
- She attended Sheffield University, completing a degree in economics in 1923. After she finished university, Amy Johnson worked as a secretary for a solicitor in London. This is where her interest in flying first began.
- In 1928, she joined the London Aeroplane Club and she was determined to prove that women could fly just as well as men!
- In 1930, Amy Johnson aimed to beat the fastest record of flying to Australia in sixteen days at that time. In preparation for the journey, she bought herself a DH Gypsy Moth plane and nicknamed it 'Jason'. She completed the journey to Australia in nineteen days (5th – 19th May 1930) – she was the first ever woman to fly to Australia alone!
- Amy Johnson eventually joined the Air Transport Auxiliary, completing tasks for RAF bases.
- Amy's disappearance was surrounded by mystery – it is thought that she died on 5th January 1941 in London, after her plane crashed into the River Thames.
- **William Wilberforce** was born on 24th August, 1759.
- He was a Member of Parliament (MP) who fought for a lot of causes, such as improving education, ending child labour and ending the slave trade.
- William Wilberforce was also a founding member of the RSPCA.
- Not everyone agreed with his ideas regarding the abolition of the Slave Trade and he faced a lot of opposition.
- He campaigned for twenty-six years to end slavery and the Slave Trade Act was passed in 1807.
- The Slavery Abolition Bill was finally passed in 1833 – Wilberforce died three days later.

Key Vocabulary

- **Artefact** – an object made by a human being, typically one of cultural or historical interest.
- **Aviation** – refers to air transport and activities related to mechanical flight.
- **Aviatrix** – a woman who is a pilot.
- **Campaign** – a series of planned events which work towards a goal.
- **Career** - an occupation (job) that has opportunities for progression.
- **Chronology** - the arrangement of events or dates in the order of their occurrence.
- **Continent** – one of the main landmasses of the globe (for example, Europe).
- **Evidence** – an item or statement that gives reliable information about something (e.g. the past).
- **Historian** – a person who studies, writes about and is knowledgeable about the past.
- **Politician** – a person who is professionally involved in or elected into politics and government.
- **Slave trade** – the procurement, buying and selling of humans for slavery.
- **Vote** – a formal expression of opinion or choice, either positive or negative, made by an individual or body of individuals.