Lots of the activities and discussion topics in these teacher’s notes are deliberately left open to encourage pupils to develop independent thinking around the book. This will help pupils build confidence in their ability to problem solve as individuals and also as part of a group.
The Front Cover

What do you think was special about Marie Curie?

The Blurb

Is there anything that surprises you in the blurb?

What is the Nobel Prize?

Why do you think the blurb uses the adjective ‘courageous’ to describe Marie Curie?

The Endpapers

What do you think the shapes represent on the end papers?

Create your own design, when you have finished reading the book.

Looking at the illustration, what sort of things do you think Marie found interesting?

Why do you think Marie had no interest in becoming a princess?

If you were to make a vow to yourself, what would it be?
Marie was from a poor family but she was very smart. At school, she won a gold medal for her studies, which she kept in her drawer like treasure.

Marie wasn’t allowed to go to university in her home country. They only let in men. In order to study further, she would have to pack her bags, and move away to Paris.

Marie studied hard, learning maths and science in a new language – French! Soon, she became the best student in Paris.

Do you think your family background influences what you do in life?

Talk and then write about something that you have which you think of as a ‘treasure’ and explain why it is so special.

How do you think Marie felt about leaving her home in Poland to go to France?

Make a collection of words to describe the different feelings that she might have had.

Discuss whether you think women and men should be treated differently, giving reasons for your opinions.

What challenges did Marie face when studying in France?

Discuss whether you think people need shared interests if they are to develop good relationships.
Encerrados en un laboratorio, aquel joven matrimonio descubrió una cosa llamada radium and polonium. This was a thrilling breakthrough for the scientists. They won a Nobel Prize for their research! Marie became the first woman to receive this honour.

Un día Pierre sufrió un terrible accidente. La pobre Marie se quedó sola de repente. One day, Pierre suffered a terrible accident, and poor Marie was left alone.

Soon, Pierre and Marie loved each other, too. They married and became Madame and Monsieur Curie!

Why are they called Madame and Monsieur Curie?

Find out what radium and polonium are.

Why do you think ‘was such a thrilling moment for science’?

What was particularly important about Marie Curie winning the Nobel Prize?

How has the illustrator conveyed what has happened?

How do you think Marie Curie felt?
Marie siguió investigando con una pupa en su corazón. Le dieron un segundo Nobel y recibió una gran ovación.

With sorrow in her heart Marie worked harder than ever. She went on to be awarded a second Nobel Prize to great acclaim.

Pronto sus conocimientos se usaron en medicina. Curaban más soldados que cualquier aspirina.

When the war started, Marie’s work was used to help injured soldiers.

After the war was over, she helped many girls to study through her Parisian Institute. She taught them that in life there is nothing to be afraid of, only many things to learn, and many ways to help those in need.

How did Marie Curie deal with the grief of losing her husband?

How does the illustrator reflect this in the page design?

Find out which Nobel Prizes Marie Curie was awarded.

What do you notice about the audience?

How did Marie Curie’s discovery help injured soldiers in World War I?

What impact did Marie Curie’s determination and courage have on others?

Why do you think the illustrator chose to depict Marie Curie in this way in the illustration?

Rephrase Marie Curie’s advice in your own words.
Marie Curie was born Maria Salomea Skłodowska in Warsaw, Poland. She is most famous for winning two Nobel Prizes – one for Physics, and one for Chemistry. She was the first female scientist to win a Nobel Prize, and the only female, so far, to win two in different subjects. She was a remarkable child, with an incredible love of learning. She overcame the loss of her mother at the age of ten, to become a brilliant student. Despite Maria's talent, she wasn't allowed to go to the same university as her brother, because she was a girl. She worked as a teacher, and a governess, before moving to Paris to study – where she became Marie. It was at this time that she met Pierre Curie. They later married, and together, made the great scientific discovery of polonium and radium, and in 1903, they won the Nobel Prize for Physics. After the sudden loss of Pierre, who was killed in a road accident, Marie threw herself into work. She won a second Nobel Prize – this time for Chemistry – founded the Radium Institute at the University of Paris, and developed the use of X-rays to help injured soldiers in the First World War. Marie believed in the beauty of science, and that people would use science for good, not evil. She used all of her skills to search for knowledge, and her discoveries continue to help people with illnesses today.

What extra facts have you found out on these pages?

Find Warsaw and Paris on a map or globe. How many countries do you think Marie Curie would have had to travel through to go from Warsaw to Paris?

Create a timeline for Marie Curie’s life, showing the most important events and the dates of World War I.

You might find the video on this website interesting: quartokno.ws/2TgxRUZ
Be bold, be brave, dream BIG!
Discover inspirational lives from around the world.