

Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest ever Nobel Prize laureate.

Born: July 12, 1997 Mingora, Pakistan

Education: Edgbaston High School

Books: *I am Malala*

Parents: Tor Pekai Yousafzai

Ziauddin Yousafzai

Awards: Nobel Peace Prize,
Sakharov Prize and others



In 2014, Malala Yousafzai – was had been struggling for her own and other girls' education since the age of 9 years, became the youngest person to ever have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She became a household name after her campaigning for girls' rights to education led to an assassination attempt on her life. She was shot and seriously injured on her way to school.

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I come from a country which was created at midnight. When I almost died, it was just after midday.

One year ago, I left my home for school and never returned. I was shot in the head and I was flown out of Pakistan unconscious. Some people say I will never return home, but I believe firmly in my heart that I will. To be torn from the country that you love is not something to wish on anyone.

Now, every morning when I open my eyes, I long to see my old room full of my things, my clothes all over the floor and my school prizes on the shelves. Instead I am in a country which is five hours behind my beloved

Pakistan and my home in the Swat Valley. But my country is centuries behind this one. Here there is any convenience you can imagine. Water running from every tap, hot or cold as you wish; lights at the flick of a switch, day and night, no need for oil lamps; ovens to cook on that don't need anyone to fetch gas cylinders from the bazaar. Here everything is so modern one can even find food ready cooked in packets.

When I stand in front of my window and look out, I see tall buildings, long roads full of vehicles moving in orderly lines, neat green hedges and lawns, and tidy pavements to walk on. I close my eyes and for a moment I am back in my valley – the high, snow-topped mountains, green, waving fields and fresh, blue rivers – and my heart smiles when I look at the people of Swat. My mind transports me back to my school and there I am reunited with my friends and teachers. I meet my best friend Moniba and we sit together, talking and joking as if I had never left. Then I remember I am in Birmingham, England.

The day when everything changed was Tuesday, 9th October, 2012. It wasn't the best of days to start with as it was the middle of school exams, though as a bookish girl I didn't mind them as much as some of my classmates.

That morning we arrived in the narrow lane of Haji Baba Road in our usual procession of brightly painted rickshaws, sputtering diesel fumes, each one crammed with five or six girls. Our school has no sign and the ornamental brass door on a white wall across from the woodcutter's yard gives no sign of what lies beyond.



For us girls that doorway was like a magical entrance to our own special world. As we skipped through, we cast off our headscarves like winds puffing away clouds to make way for the sun, then ran helter-skelter up the steps. At the top of the steps was an open courtyard with doors to all the classrooms. We dumped our backpacks in our rooms then gathered for assembly under the sky, our backs to the mountains as we stood to attention.

I told my best friend Moniba everything. We'd lived on the same street when we were little and had been friends since primary school and we shared everything: Justin Bieber songs and Twilight movies, the best face-lightening creams. Her dream was to be a fashion designer although she knew her family would never agree to it, so she told everyone she wanted to be a doctor. It's hard for girls in our society to be anything other than teachers or doctors if they can work at all. I was different – I never hid my desire when I changed from wanting to be a doctor to wanting to be an inventor or a politician.

Adapted from Collins International Primary English Student Book 6

1. Fill in:

- a. Malala is from _____
- b. Malala is the youngest person to _____
- c. On her way to school Malala was _____

2. Some people say Malala will never return home. What do you think?

3. What does Malala do as soon as she wakes up?

4. 'But my country is centuries behind this one'.
Explain in your own words what Malala means.

5. The view outside Malala's window is different from the valley Malala imagines. Fill in the blanks to describe both views.

View outside Malala's window	View across Malala's valley

6. Malala says she is a 'bookish girl'. What does this mean?

7. How did the girls get to school?

8. 'For us girls that doorway was like a magical entrance to our own special world'.

What does this sentence indicate?

9. According to the text, what were girls in Malala's society expected to become when they grew up?

10. How can one tell that Malala has a better relationship with her parents than her friend Moniba has with hers?
