

## The girl they couldn't silence

### Level 1 • Elementary

#### 1 Warmer

Can you answer the following questions?

- Where are the main council chambers of the United Nations?
- In which two countries are the Taliban most active?

#### 2 Key words

- Write the key words from the article next to the definitions below. The paragraph numbers have been given to help you.

bullet

campaign

operations

death threats

silence

- kill someone so that they cannot say anything against you \_\_\_\_\_ (para 1)
- a series of actions intended to produce political or social change \_\_\_\_\_ (para 1)
- when doctors cut into someone's body for medical reasons \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
- a small piece of metal that is shot from a gun and causes serious damage to the person or thing it hits \_\_\_\_\_ (para 2)
- when someone says they will kill you \_\_\_\_\_ (para 7)

equality

extremists

personal revenge

petition

violence

- something that you do to hurt or punish someone because they have hurt you or someone else \_\_\_\_\_ (para 8)
- behaviour that tries to hurt or kill people \_\_\_\_\_ (para 9)
- people who have beliefs or opinions that most people think are very wrong \_\_\_\_\_ (para 10)
- having the same rights, status and opportunities \_\_\_\_\_ (para 11)
- a document signed by many people that asks someone in authority to do something \_\_\_\_\_ (para 12)

- Mark the main stressed syllable on each word, e.g. silence.

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#### **Malala delivers defiant riposte to Taliban militants as UN hails 'our hero'**

**Ed Pilkington in New York**  
**12 July, 2013**

- 1 The Taliban sent a gunman to shoot Malala Yousafzai in October 2012 as she went home on a bus after school. They wanted to silence the teenager and end her campaign for girls' education.
  - 2 Nine months and many operations later, she stood up at the United Nations on her 16th birthday. "They thought that the bullet would silence us. But they failed," she said.
  - 3 It was an unusual 16th birthday. Malala didn't blow out candles on a cake; she sat at the United Nation in the central seat where world leaders usually sit.
  - 4 She listened quietly as Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary-general, described her as "our hero, our champion"; and as the ex-British prime minister and now UN education envoy, Gordon Brown, said "the words the Taliban never wanted her to hear: happy 16th birthday, Malala".
  - 5 The event was named Malala Day after the girl from Mingora in Pakistan. She became famous after she wrote a blog for the BBC Urdu service – in the blog, she described her difficult experiences of trying to get an education under the power of the Taliban.
  - 6 When she was 11, she asked the US special representative to Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke, to help in her campaign against the Taliban, who wanted to stop education for girls. By 14, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, suggested her for the International Children's Peace Prize, and, by 15, she became the youngest Nobel Peace Prize nominee in history.
  - 7 Then she got death threats, and, on 9 October 2012, after a meeting of Pakistani Taliban leaders, the gunman came to kill her.
  - 8 She has had many operations in Pakistan and the UK after the shooting on the bus. She now lives with her family in Birmingham, England, and does what the Taliban tried to stop her doing: she goes to school every day. "I am not against anyone," she said.
- And she doesn't want "personal revenge against the Taliban or any other terrorist group."
- 9 Malala replied to the violence of the Taliban with words against bullets. "I do not even hate the Talib who shot me. Even if there was a gun in my hand and he stood in front of me, I would not shoot him."
  - 10 "The extremists are afraid of books and pens," the teenager continued. "The power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women. The power of the voice of women frightens them."
  - 11 She talked about the attack in June on a hospital in Quetta, capital of Baluchistan, and killings of female teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "That is why they are blasting schools every day – because they were and they are afraid of change, afraid of the equality that we will bring to our society."
  - 12 The "Stand with Malala" petition, that is asking for education for the 57 million children around the world who do not go to school, has got more than four million signatures – more than a million were added after Malala's speech.
  - 13 At the start of her speech, Malala said: "I don't know where to begin my speech. I don't know what people are expecting me to say." She did not have to worry.

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#### 3 Comprehension check

Complete the table with information from the text.

Malala	
full name	
age	
nationality	
where she lives now	
where she lived until 2012	
what happened to her in 2012	
what she is campaigning for	

#### 4 Further comprehension

Are these sentences true (T) or false (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

- On her birthday, Malala blew out 16 candles on her birthday cake at the UN.
- Malala wants to take personal revenge on the Taliban.
- She says the Taliban are afraid of women.
- She became famous when she made videos for the BBC.
- She has had many operations in hospitals in Pakistan and the UK.
- She now goes to school in England.
- Four million children around the world do not go to school.

#### 5 Quotes

Complete the quotes by Malala. Then discuss the quotes.

- They thought that the \_\_\_\_\_ would silence us. But they \_\_\_\_\_.
- I am not \_\_\_\_\_ anyone.
- I do not even \_\_\_\_\_ the Talib who \_\_\_\_\_ me.
- Even if there was a \_\_\_\_\_ in my hand and he stood in front of me, I would not \_\_\_\_\_ him.
- The extremists are \_\_\_\_\_ of books and pens.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ of the voice of women \_\_\_\_\_ them.

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#### 6 Discussion

- How do you feel when you read the story?
- Do you think Malala's campaign for education for all children will change anything in the world?

#### 7 Webquest

Read the quotes from Malala's speech at the UN below. Then listen to the speech online.

"We realize the importance of our voice when we are silenced."

"One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.  
Education is the only solution. Education first."

"This is what my soul is telling me: be peaceful and love everyone."

"We realized the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns.  
The extremists are afraid of books and pens."

"We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back."

"[Extremists] are afraid of change, afraid of the equality that we will bring into our society."

"Malala Day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman,  
every boy and every girl who has raised their voice for their rights."

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#### KEY

#### 1 Warmer

- New York City
- Afghanistan and Pakistan

#### 2 Key words

##### a. and b.

- silence
- campaign
- operations
- bullet
- death threats
- personal revenge
- violence
- extremists
- equality
- petition

#### 3 Comprehension check

Malala	
full name	Malala Yousafzai
age	16
nationality	Pakistani
where she lives now	Birmingham, England
where she lived until 2012	Pakistan
what happened to her in 2012	She was shot by the Taliban.
what she is campaigning for	girls' education

#### 4 Further comprehension

- F – She didn't blow out candles on a cake; she made a speech.
- F – Malala does not want to take personal revenge on the Taliban.
- T
- F – She became famous when she wrote a blog for the BBC.
- T
- T
- F – 57 million children around the world do not go to school.

#### 5 Quotes

- bullet; failed
- against
- hate; shot
- gun; shoot
- afraid
- power; frightens

#### 7 Webquest

**Teacher's note:** Malala's UN speech can be watched in full online. It is 17 minutes long. If time is short, you could set this task as homework.