



Malala Yousafzai

SPEAKING TRUTH

Watershed Moments
in Global Leadership

High School Curriculum for Young Leaders



Malala Yousafzai was born in the Swat Valley of Pakistan and lived in the city of Mingora until she was 15 years old, when her life dramatically changed. Malala wrote of the beauty of the valley and of her people: "...the high snow-topped mountains, green waving fields and fresh blue rivers – and my heart smiles when it looks at the people of Swat."¹

The Swat Valley is known for its unique place in Pakistan's history – as it was once separate from the country – and because it was a destination for tourists. In 1997, the Taliban came to Swat with their interpretation of *Shariat Ya Shaha-dat*, Sharia law or Martyrdom. With them, they brought not just sweeping changes for the lives of the Malala and her community, but also years of violence.

Malala describes her mother's family as one of "strong women" and "influential men" and her father's as being influenced by his life in a village and her grandfather's role as a theology teacher in a government school, an imam at a local mosque and his popularity for his speeches. Malala writes about how her paternal grandfather passed along "the greatest gift – the gift of education" and a "keen awareness of people's rights" to her father. These beliefs continue in the Yousafzai family and are core to the strong bond between Malala and her father.

Malala Yousafzai



At school reading a story: "All That Glitters Is Not Gold."²

¹ Excerpts and quotations, except where otherwise noted, taken from *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb. Copyright © 2013 by Salarzai Limited

² Photo and caption from *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb. Copyright © 2013 by Salarzai Limited

Malala attended the school founded by her father. On the day Malala was shot in 2012, she describes her arrival at school:

“Since the time of the Taliban, our school has had no sign and the ornamented brass door in a white wall gives no hint 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 head scarves and ran helter-skelter up the steps... Most of my classmates wanted to be doctors. It’s hard to imagine that anyone would see that as a threat. Yet outside the school lay not only the noise and craziness of Mingora, the main city of the province of Swat, but also those, like the Taliban, who think girls should not go to school.”

Malala’s family had received threats before she was shot, though Malala was more concerned about her father than herself. Her father was not just a campaigner for education, but also for the environment and peace in the valley. A friend of her father’s, Zahid Khan, had been shot on his way to prayers.

Malala told her best friend that she wasn’t scared, that the “Taliban have never come for a small girl.” Nonetheless, she ensured the gate at their home was locked every night and imagined what she would say to an attacker. “Maybe I’d take off my shoes and hit him. But then I’d think that if I did that, there would be no difference between me and a terrorist. It would be better to plead, ‘Okay, shoot me, but first listen to me. What you are doing is wrong. I’m not against you personally. I just want every girl to go to school.’”

In her book, Malala quotes Mahatma Ghandi: “Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.” Malala uses this and her belief in the importance of learning from one’s mistakes to contrast the Pashtunwali code of conduct for badal, or taking revenge for wrongs done. In fact, after she learned it was the Taliban who had shot her, she recalls, “My only regret was that I hadn’t had a chance to speak to them before they shot me. Now they’d never hear what I had to say. I didn’t even think a single bad thought about the man who shot me — I had no thoughts of revenge — I just wanted to go back to Swat. I wanted to go home.”

While Malala’s efforts hit the international headlines after the attack, Malala and her father had been faithful advocates of education for many years. Malala had won several awards, presented her views to the media in interviews and in her writings and visited cities throughout Pakistan supporting the right for all children – girls and boys – to receive education.

Malala remembers encouraging her father to give free tuition to the children she saw sifting through rubbish at land used as a dump in Mingora. Her father encouraged a wealthy philanthropist to pay for the production of a leaflet which asked, “Kia hasod e elumbachunka haf nahe? Is education not the right of these children?” Further, Malala remembers seeing a young girl selling oranges along the roadside and using a nail and a scrap of paper to account for her sales. Malala “vowed [she] would do everything in [her] power to help educate girls just like her. This was the war I was going to fight.”

But the awards and prizes worried her parents and for Malala served as a reminder “of the work still need[ing] to be done to achieve the goal of education for every boy and girl... This is the cause to which I want to devote my life.”

The foundations of Malala’s nonviolent advocacy efforts are rooted in her Islamic beliefs, and her respect for tolerance is evidenced in who and what she references as inspiration.

Malala mentions a poem written by her father, “The Relics of Butkara,” which describes how both a temple and a mosque can peacefully coexist, “When the voice of truth rises from the minarets, / The Buddha smiles, / And the broken chain of history reconnects.”

When Benazir Bhutto, a former prime minister of Pakistan, and the first woman leader of a Muslim nation in modern history, was assassinated upon her return to Pakistan, Malala said her heart said to her, “Why don’t you go there and fight for women’s rights?” Benazir Bhutto was Pakistan’s 11th prime minister, serving the country from 1988 to 1990 and again from 1993 to 1996. She returned to Pakistan from exile in December 1997, as a leading opposition candidate, and was assassinated. She often cautioned the world about the violent intentions of those “hijacking her Islamic faith.”³

Malala also takes inspiration from Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, and his hopes of creating a land of tolerance. Malala references the following quotation and paraphrases it in her own advocacy efforts: “No struggle can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women.”

Further, Malala writes of her inspiration from Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a Muslim who was moved by his faith to lead a life of nonviolence. He stated that, “Islam is amal, yakeen, muhabat (work, faith, and love), and without these the name ‘Muslim’ is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.”⁴ Khan met Gandhi and shared his beliefs in nonviolent action. Though many people have not heard of Khan, he was a significant leader in ending the British occupation of India – and was an advocate for education for all children – as one way to decrease the culture of violence.

On October 9, 2012, Malala was shot in the head on her way home from school while riding in her school bus. “I didn’t see the two young men step out into the road and bring the van to a sudden halt. I didn’t get a chance to answer their question, ‘Who is Malala?’ or I would have explained to them why they should let us girls go to school as well as their own sisters and daughters.” Two of Malala’s friends were also shot, one in the hand and the other in the arm. Both survived.

Four days later, Malala woke up and quickly realized she was no longer in her homeland. After surgery and treatment in Pakistan, Malala was flown, unaccompanied by her parents, to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, UK. As she tried to make sense of the situation, many questions flew through her “waking” brain. “Where was I? Who had brought me there? Where were my parents? Was my father alive? I was terrified.”

Her situation was explained to her in Urdu by Dr. Javid Kayani, who had been in Pakistan when she was shot and “was the reason why [she] was now in Birmingham.” Malala struggled to communicate, wanting to write and to speak. She asked for pen and paper, and initially used an alphabet board to spell out “father” and “country.” Her concern for her family, especially her father, was ever-present and she was finally convinced of their safety after seeing a recent photo of her father and a Pakistani military official from a Pakistani newspaper. There was a shawled figure sitting at the back, and Malala could see the woman’s feet. “That’s my mother!” Malala wrote.

³ Excerpted from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/farahnaz-ispahani/benazir-bhutto-jihadis_b_6373568.html

⁴ Eknath Easwaran, *Nonviolent Soldier of Islam*, Nilgiri Press, 1999, page 63.

As the situation became clear to Malala, she realized how lucky she was to be alive. She learned that the bullet had entered through the side of her left eye and had traveled to her left shoulder. Ehsanullah Ehsan, chief spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying that Malala was a symbol of the infidels and obscenity. However, other Islamic clerics in Pakistan issued a fatwa against the Taliban leaders and said there was no religious justification for shooting a schoolgirl.⁵

Malala believes that education is a basic right and that Islam gives that basic right to everyone. “Education is our right. Just as it is our right to sing and play. Islam has given us this right and says that every girl and boys should go to school. The Quran says we should seek knowledge, study hard, and learn the mysteries of our world.”

After many surgeries and months of recovery, Malala and her family now live in the United Kingdom. She has traveled to speak at the United Nations, attends school, and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, along with Kailash Satyarthi, who is a children’s rights advocate and an activist against child labor.

An excerpt from her speech at the UN in July, 2013, summarizes her faith and her motivation for continued advocacy.

“This is the compassion I have learned from Mohamed, the prophet of mercy, Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha. This is the legacy of change I have inherited from Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Mohammed Ali Jinnah. This is the philosophy of nonviolence that I have learned from Gandhi, Bacha Khan and Mother Teresa. And this is the forgiveness that I have learned from my father and from my mother. This is what my soul is telling me: be peaceful and love everyone.. Islam is a religion of peace, humanity and brotherhood. It is the duty and responsibility to get education for each child, that is what it says. Peace is a necessity for education.”

⁵ <http://www.malala.org/#main/malalas-story/>

Content Objectives

Students will develop a list of qualities that depict positive role models.

Students will identify positive role models relevant to their life experience.

Students will examine the role of mentors/role models in the experiences of Malala Yousafzai.

Role Models

Lesson Synopsis

Role Model Overview

Positive role models are important because they set examples for people to observe and pattern positive behaviors from. As people increase positive behaviors they also increase their feelings of self-worth. Patterning behaviors from positive role models can also help people build morals and positive values, teach them to set attainable goals, and provide direction in achieving those goals. Most importantly, positive role models provide a sense of hope and examples to prove that dreams and goals can be fulfilled.⁶

Begin class by explaining to students that today's topic is role models. Ask if anyone has a role model and why he/she is someone to look to for inspiration. What are the characteristics of a role model?

Have the class brainstorm a list of qualities after several students have shared their examples. Be sure to have an example in case students are reluctant to share.

Divide students into groups of 3-4 have the group decide on someone that meets the class's criteria for being a role model. Have each group write a series of 7 statements about the person without revealing who that person is. Access to the internet will assist students in creating interesting bio sketches of the people their group's select. Have each group share their profiles, one statement at a time. The other groups will have a chance to guess who the group is describing after each statement is read. The statements should begin with more obscure facts and build up to an obvious conclusion.

Example:

Nelson Mandela

1. His birth name meant troublemaker.
2. His favorite sport was boxing.
3. He was on the US terror watch list until 2008.
4. "I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul," is a line from one of his favorite poems "Invictus".
5. He was in jail longer than most of us have been alive.
6. He stood up against unjust government policies.
7. He was the first leader of color this nation ever had, with the initials NM.

⁶ (<http://www.siue.edu/SIPDC/Library/lesson%20plan/global6.pdf>)

After completing this activity students should have a list of characteristics and a list of individuals who embody those characteristics. Ask the class to reflect on why these people are important to us and how they serve as role models.

Some of the characteristics that should come from this activity and others that can be discussed with students

Role models are people who:

Feel a sense of duty to better “society” or work for the common good of the community

Are compassionate

Have developed powerful and effective habits of the mind and soul

Can work through challenges

Are committed to what he or she does regardless of consequences

Have the capacity to achieve goals and obtain self-fulfillment

Possess high standards and values

Are admired for courage and strength

Serve as models of forgiveness

Are trustworthy

Demonstrate humility, admit when they are wrong

Are wise

Understand the whole situation⁷

Students will now take a look at the impact role models had on the life of Malala Yousafzai.

Begin with the article by the Barna Group about parents as role models. Ask students if they agree or disagree with the research group's findings on role models. Share with students that Malala identifies her father as a role model.

⁷ <http://www.siue.edu/SIPDC/Library/lesson%20plan/global6.pdf>

Youths who have positive role models are more likely to do well in school and have higher self-esteem.⁸

The Barna Group released a new study regarding the role models of teenagers and their importance. The sample group of teenagers, ages 13 to 17, were asked to identify the person they admire most today as a role model, other than their parents.

The survey results indicated that most teenagers consider their relatives as their top influence. Family members were admired most by 37 percent of teenagers.

Next to family, teens cited their role models as a teacher/coach (11 percent), friends (9 percent) and a pastor or religious leader that they know personally (6 percent). A majority of teens indicated these people as role models due to a personal connection, friendship or interaction.

Parents as Role Models



Although a wide range of reasons were given as to why the teens indicated a particular role model, the most common (26 percent) was the personality traits of that person. The characteristics mentioned most often were caring about others, being loving and polite, and being fun. Another reason suggested was that the teen would like to "follow in the footsteps" of their chosen role model (22 percent).

Other reasons for their selections included the role models' encouragement for the teen (11 percent), the role model accomplished his or her goals (13 percent), and the fact that the role model overcame adversity (9 percent), among many others.

The fact that the role model maintained a strong faith (6 percent) was also a deciding factor in the teenagers' responses.



⁸ (<http://www.16thcircuit.org/parents-as-role-models>)

Relatives were most often admired, according to the study, because of goals accomplished, personality traits, and overcoming adversity, while friends were most highly regarded because of the encouragement and support they provide the teen.⁹

In her book, Malala writes that her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, believed that lack of education is the root of all of Pakistan's problems and that he wanted to "encourage independent thought" in his own school.¹⁰ After his own education, college, and teaching at other



schools, Malala's father and a friend started their own school. The Khushal School was named after one of Malala's father's heroes, Khushal Khan Khattak, a warrior and a poet, who tried to unify the Pashtun tribes against the Moghuls in the seventeenth century.

As a young man, Mr. Yousafzai had learned to be a passionate nationalist in part by reciting the verse of Khushal Khan Khattak. Yousafzai served on the city's Qaumi Jirga, or assembly of elders, was active on the valley's Global Peace Council, and "fought" regular battles with the army and the local authorities over the conditions in the city. Yousafzai wrapped himself in optimism, convinced that he could make a difference in the city by applying the principles of peaceful dissent promoted by the 20th-century Pashtun leader Abdul Ghaffar (Bacha) Khan, known as "the Frontier Gandhi" and "the Non-Violent Soldier of Islam," a man also referenced by Malala as one of her inspirations.¹¹

Malala writes in her book that her father said, "...all he had ever wanted was to create a school in which children could learn. We had been left with no choice but to get involved in politics and campaign for education." "My only ambition," he said, "is to educate my children and my nation as much as I am able. But when half of your leaders tell lies and the other half is negotiating with the Taliban, there is nowhere to go. One has to speak out."¹²

⁹ http://rss.ag.org/articles/detail.cfm?RSS_RSSContentID=18444&RSS_OriginatingChannelID=1184&RSS_OriginatingRSSFeedID=3359&RSS_Source=search

¹⁰ Excerpts and quotations, except where otherwise noted, taken from *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb. Copyright © 2013 by Salarzai Limited

¹¹ Excerpts from <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/2013/04/malala-yousafzai-pakistan-profile>

¹² Excerpts and quotations, except where otherwise noted, taken from *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb. Copyright © 2013 by Salarzai Limited

Content Objectives

Students will explore the role of faith in accomplishing a goal.

Students will examine the strength derived from a person's connection to the spiritual.

Students will connect the values derived from beliefs to action.

Synopsis of Lesson

Begin by using the Girls Education PowerPoint to introduce the issue to which Malala Yousafzai has devoted her life.

Ask the class to brainstorm what motivates Malala Yousafzai to take action on behalf of girls' education. List the ideas on the board. Have students number these motives from most influential to least influential. Follow up by asking them to explain their lists.

Ask students to consider the role of education as it relates to religion. What role does education play in religion?



Have Faith

The Importance of Education in Islam

Malala's actions are rooted in the belief that education is a basic right of both boys and girls and that it is a responsibility within Islam to both seek and educate all children. Let's take a look some Islamic basis for her beliefs.

Farah Onaid writes, "Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh), came at a time when the Arab society, like so many patriarchal societies at that time, was rife with abhorrent practices against girls. He preached Islam, liberating women and girls in every walk of life, education being a prime aspect."¹³ She writes about the importance of female education in Islam, referencing verses of Quran and hadith, authentic traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and a short portrayal of his wives' level of education.

Onaid references the first verses of the Quran and how they begin with a significant word.

"Read. Read in the name of thy Lord who created; [He] created the human being from blood clot. Read in the name of thy Lord who taught by the pen: [He] taught the human being what he did not know." – Quran, 96: 1-5

The first word "read" is translated from "*Iqra*" in Arabic and that implies the concepts of "learning," "exploring" and "seeking enlightenment."¹⁴ Onaid writes, "These verses address humankind to seek knowledge and delve in critical thinking. The emphasis laid in the acquisition of knowledge, in the above verses, surpasses any statement or action denying girls' the right to education. Had these verses only been for men, it would be inconceivable to imagine the extent of progression that the society made in a mere twenty-three years — the entire duration of the revelation of the Quran."

¹³ <http://www.whyislam.org/social-values-in-islam/social-ties/the-importance-of-girls-education-in-islam/>

¹⁴ http://www.academia.edu/7500137/Importance_of_Education_in_the_Light_of_Islam_An_Overview

Onaid references the following verse, (*This is a Book (the Quran) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember.* (38:29), and continues her interpretation, “It is important to mention that the word ‘men’ in the above verse refers to humankind as it does so in several other places in the Quran when God addresses humanity. These and other verses inform the readers that engaging in critical thinking is a moral obligation on both men and women. The Quran repetitively reminds people to ponder, think, analyze, thus using their mind power to contemplate and understand, whilst making no distinction between men and women.”

In examining some hadith, Onaid again highlights the importance of education for all Muslims and identifies themes around education in Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said: “*The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim.*”

“If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge, the inhabitants of the heavens and the Earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the learned man over the devout is like that of the moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion.”

Onaid writes, “From the first Hadith we infer that education is not a right but a responsibility on every Muslim, male or female . . . The third Hadith speaks volumes about the superiority of the person who seeks knowledge over the one who does not. The reference here to superiority is to the person who seeks knowledge, man or woman.”

Finally Onaid examines the intellectual abilities of the wife of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Khadijah.

She writes, “**Khadijah Binte Khuwaylid**, the first wife of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was a wealthy tradeswoman, the richest woman in Mecca at the time, who exported goods as far away as Syria. To manage her large business, she employed several males and to do so then in Arabia, necessitated that you have a high level of understanding and wisdom.”

There are additional references to the importance of seeking knowledge in Islam.

The Prophet of Islam (pbuh) has also emphasized the importance of seeking knowledge in different ways:

- **Time:** “Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave.”
- **Place:** “Seek knowledge even if it is far as China.”
- **Gender:** “Seeking of knowledge is a duty of every Muslim.”
- **Source:** “Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, he should take it even if finds it in the mouth of a *mushrik*.”¹⁵

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) also said: “*Acquire knowledge and impart it to the people,*”¹⁶ and in reference to those providing knowledge to others, the Prophet said: “*God, His angels and*

¹⁵ Meaning polytheist; <http://www.al-islam.org/articles/education-in-islam-sayyid-muhammad-rizvi>

¹⁶ Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 107

all those in Heavens and on Earth, even ants in their hills and fish in the water, call down blessings on those who instruct others in beneficial knowledge.”¹⁷

Many assert that Islam affirms the right to education for all without gender discrimination.¹⁸

For example the Qur’an says, “Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing (in prayer) during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord (like one who disbelieves)? Say: “Are those who know equal to those who know not?”“It is only men of understanding who will remember.” This verse includes both men and women and indicates that both will be judged by their knowledge and understanding.¹⁹

¹⁷ Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 422

¹⁸ http://www.academia.edu/7500137/Importance_of_Education_in_the_Light_of_Islam_An_Overview

¹⁹ Ibid.

Content Objectives

Students will experience the importance of individuals coming together to accomplish a goal.

Students will connect the collective action of individuals to change.

Synopsis of Lesson

The following activity will introduce students to action and their individual roles in making something happen.



Take Action

Rainmaker

Have students sit at their desks or on the floor, with their hands free and the feet firmly planted on the floor. Introduce the activity by saying that the group is going to create something greater than each individual could on his/her own.

Split the group into 6 sections and explain that each section will have a task to do. Going around the room, model for each section what they are to do, give them an opportunity to practice, then move on to the next section until all 6 sections have practiced.

Section actions:

1. Say “Shhhh...” like the wind blowing through trees
2. Rub your palms together
3. Snap your fingers
4. Clap your hands
5. Slap the tops of your legs
6. Stomp your feet.

Tell each of the 6 sections to do their action when you point to them and to keep doing it until you point to them a second time. Begin with section 1 and work your way to section 6, then end the “rainstorm” in reverse.

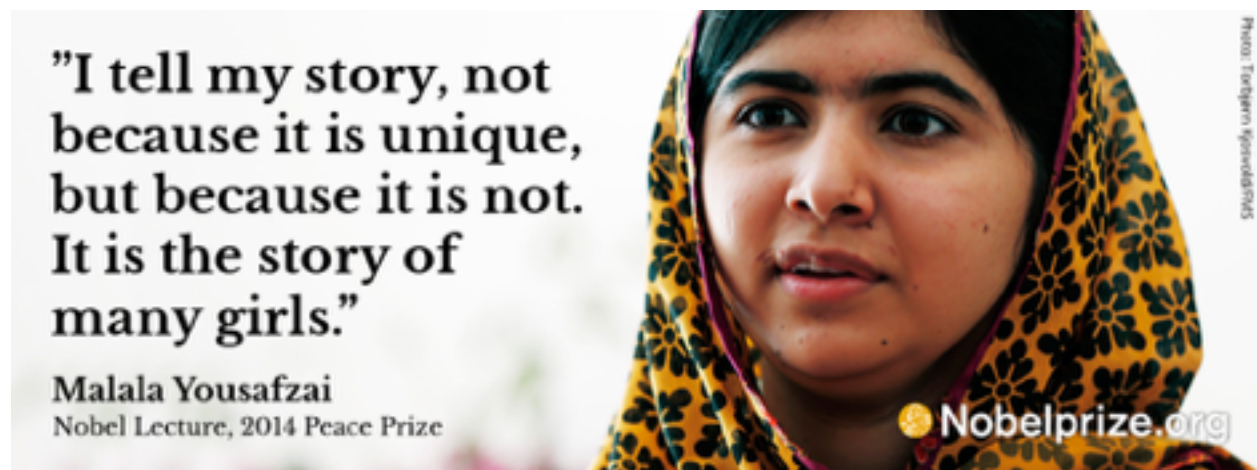
Once the rainstorm has subsided, debrief with students on the importance of each individual in accomplishing the task. Ask them if they have ever cooperated with others to get something done they couldn't on their own.

Can you name moments in history when people have gotten together to initiate change?

Examples: Anti-apartheid movement, Arab Spring, Civil Rights Movement, women's suffrage

Provide students with a copy of Malala's speech when she accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 (provided) or choose to watch the 28-minute speech as a class (both video and text available at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/yousafzai-lecture.html).

Nobel Lecture by Malala Yousafzai Oslo, 10 December 2014



Bismillah hir rahman ir rahim.

In the name of God, the most merciful, the most beneficent.

Your Majesties, Your royal highnesses, distinguished members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee,

Dear sisters and brothers, today is a day of great happiness for me. I am humbled that the Nobel Committee has selected me for this precious award.

Thank you to everyone for your continued support and love. Thank you for the letters and cards that I still receive from all around the world. Your kind and encouraging words strengthens and inspires me.

I would like to thank my parents for their unconditional love. Thank you to my father for not clipping my wings and for letting me fly. Thank you to my mother for inspiring me to be patient and to always speak the truth – which we strongly believe is the true message of Islam. And also thank you to all my wonderful teachers, who inspired me to believe in myself and be brave.

I am proud, well in fact, I am very proud to be the first Pashtun, the first Pakistani, and the youngest person to receive this award. Along with that, along with that, I am pretty certain that I am also the first recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize who still fights with her younger brothers. I want there to be peace everywhere, but my brothers and I are still working on that.

I am also honoured to receive this award together with Kailash Satyarthi, who has been a champion for children's rights for a long time. Twice as long, in fact, than I have been alive. I am proud that we can work together, we can work together and show the world that an Indian and a Pakistani, they can work together and achieve their goals of children's rights.

Dear brothers and sisters, I was named after the inspirational Malalai of Maiwand who is the Pashtun Joan of Arc. The word Malala means “grief stricken”, “sad”, but in order to lend some happiness to it, my grandfather would always call me Malala – “The happiest girl in the world” and today I am very happy that we are together fighting for an important cause.

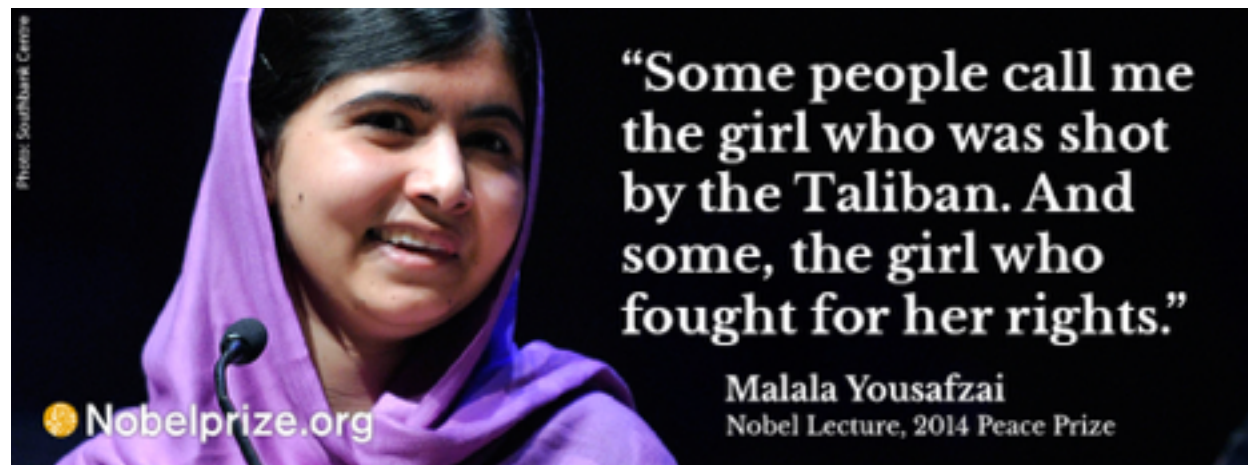
This award is not just for me. It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change.

I am here to stand up for their rights, to raise their voice... it is not time to pity them. It is not time to pity them. It is time to take action so it becomes the last time, the last time, so it becomes the last time that we see a child deprived of education.

I have found that people describe me in many different ways.

Some people call me the girl who was shot by the Taliban.

And some, the girl who fought for her rights.



Some people call me a “Nobel Laureate” now.

However, my brothers still call me that annoying bossy sister. As far as I know, I am just a committed and even stubborn person who wants to see every child getting quality education, who wants to see women having equal rights and who wants peace in every corner of the world.

Education is one of the blessings of life—and one of its necessities. That has been my experience during the 17 years of my life. In my paradise home, Swat, I always loved learning and discovering new things. I remember when my friends and I would decorate our hands with henna on special occasions. And instead of drawing flowers and patterns we would paint our hands with mathematical formulas and equations.

We had a thirst for education, we had a thirst for education because our future was right there in that classroom. We would sit and learn and read together. We loved to wear neat and tidy school uniforms and we would sit there with big dreams in our eyes. We wanted to make our parents proud and prove that we could also excel in our studies and achieve those goals, which some people think only boys can.

But things did not remain the same. When I was in Swat, which was a place of tourism and beauty, suddenly changed into a place of terrorism. I was just ten that more than 400 schools were destroyed. Women were flogged. People were killed. And our beautiful dreams turned into nightmares.

Education went from being a right to being a crime.

Girls were stopped from going to school.

When my world suddenly changed, my priorities changed too.

I had two options. One was to remain silent and wait to be killed. And the second was to speak up and then be killed.

I chose the second one. I decided to speak up.

We could not just stand by and see those injustices of the terrorists denying our rights, ruthlessly killing people and misusing the name of Islam. We decided to raise our voice and tell them: Have you not learnt, have you not learnt that in the Holy Quran Allah says: if you kill one person it is as if you kill the whole humanity?

Do you not know that Mohammad, peace be upon him, the prophet of mercy, he says, “do not harm yourself or others”.

And do you not know that the very first word of the Holy Quran is the word “iqra”, which means ‘read’?”?

The terrorists tried to stop us and attacked me and my friends who are here today, on our school bus in 2012, but neither their ideas nor their bullets could win.

We survived. And since that day, our voices have grown louder and louder.

I tell my story, not because it is unique, but because it is not.

It is the story of many girls.

Today, I tell their stories too. I have brought with me some of my sisters from Pakistan, from Nigeria and from Syria, who share this story. My brave sisters Shazia and Kainat who were also shot that day on our school bus. But they have not stopped learning. And my brave sister Kainat Soomro who went through severe abuse and extreme violence, even her brother was killed, but she did not succumb.

Also my sisters here, whom I have met during my Malala Fund campaign. My 16-year-old courageous sister, Mezon from Syria, who now lives in Jordan as refugee and goes from tent to tent encouraging girls and boys to learn. And my sister Amina, from the North of Nigeria, where Boko Haram threatens, and stops girls and even kidnaps girls, just for wanting to go to school.

Though I appear as one girl, though I appear as one girl, one person, who is 5 foot 2 inches tall, if you include my high heels. (It means I am 5 foot only) I am not a lone voice, I am not a lone voice, I am many.



I am Malala. But I am also Shazia.

I am Kainat.

I am Kainat Soomro.

I am Mezon.

I am Amina. I am those 66 million girls who are deprived of education. And today I am not raising my voice, it is the voice of those 66 million girls.

Sometimes people like to ask me why should girls go to school, why is it important for them. But I think the more important question is why shouldn't they, why shouldn't they have this right to go to school.

Dear sisters and brothers, today, in half of the world, we see rapid progress and development. However, there are many countries where millions still suffer from the very old problems of war, poverty, and injustice.

We still see conflicts in which innocent people lose their lives and children become orphans. We see many people becoming refugees in Syria, Gaza and Iraq. In Afghanistan, we see families being killed in suicide attacks and bomb blasts.

Many children in Africa do not have access to education because of poverty. And as I said, we still see, we still see girls who have no freedom to go to school in the north of Nigeria.

Many children in countries like Pakistan and India, as Kailash Satyarthi mentioned, many children, especially in India and Pakistan are deprived of their right to education because of social taboos, or they have been forced into child marriage or into child labour.

One of my very good school friends, the same age as me, who had always been a bold and confident girl, dreamed of becoming a doctor. But her dream remained a dream. At the age of 12, she was forced to get married. And then soon she had a son, she had a child when she herself was still a child – only 14. I know that she could have been a very good doctor.

But she couldn't ... because she was a girl.

Her story is why I dedicate the Nobel Peace Prize money to the Malala Fund, to help give girls quality education, everywhere, anywhere in the world and to raise their voices. The first place this funding will go to is where my heart is, to build schools in Pakistan—especially in my home of Swat and Shangla.

In my own village, there is still no secondary school for girls. And it is my wish and my commitment, and now my challenge to build one so that my friends and my sisters can go there to school and get quality education and to get this opportunity to fulfill their dreams.

This is where I will begin, but it is not where I will stop. I will continue this fight until I see every child, every child in school.

Dear brothers and sisters, great people, who brought change, like Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa and Aung San Suu Kyi, once stood here on this stage. I hope the steps that Kailash Satyarthi and I have taken so far and will take on this journey will also bring change – lasting change.

My great hope is that this will be the last time, this will be the last time we must fight for education. Let's solve this once and for all.

We have already taken many steps. Now it is time to take a leap.

It is not time to tell the world leaders to realise how important education is – they already know it – their own children are in good schools. Now it is time to call them to take action for the rest of the world's children.

We ask the world leaders to unite and make education their top priority.

Fifteen years ago, the world leaders decided on a set of global goals, the Millennium Development Goals. In the years that have followed, we have seen some progress. The number of children out of school has been halved, as Kailash Satyarthi said. However, the world focused only on primary education, and progress did not reach everyone.

In year 2015, representatives from all around the world will meet in the United Nations to set the next set of goals, the Sustainable Development Goals. This will set the world's ambition for the next generations.

The world can no longer accept, the world can no longer accept that basic education is enough. Why do leaders accept that for children in developing countries, only basic literacy is sufficient, when their own children do homework in Algebra, Mathematics, Science and Physics?

Leaders must seize this opportunity to guarantee a free, quality, primary and secondary education for every child.

Some will say this is impractical, or too expensive, or too hard. Or maybe even impossible. But it is time the world thinks bigger.

Dear sisters and brothers, the so-called world of adults may understand it, but we children don't. Why is it that countries which we call “strong” are so powerful in creating wars but are so weak in bringing peace? Why is it that giving guns is so easy but giving books is so hard? Why is it, why is it that making tanks is so easy, but building schools is so hard?

We are living in the modern age and we believe that nothing is impossible. We have reached the moon 45 years ago and maybe will soon land on Mars. Then, in this 21st century, we must be able to give every child quality education.

Dear sisters and brothers, dear fellow children, we must work... not wait. Not just the politicians and the world leaders, we all need to contribute. Me. You. We. It is our duty.

Let us become the first generation to decide to be the last, let us become the first generation that decides to be the last that sees empty classrooms, lost childhoods, and wasted potentials.

Let this be the last time that a girl or a boy spends their childhood in a factory.

Let this be the last time that a girl is forced into early child marriage.

Let this be the last time that a child loses life in war.

Let this be the last time that we see a child out of school.

Let this end with us.

Let's begin this ending ... together ... today ... right here, right now. Let's begin this ending now.

Thank you so much.

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In groups of 3 to 5, ask students to read Malala’s speech and then respond to the questions:

Have you ever been moved to act because of something you believed?

What are the risks that come with taking action?

Are those risks easier to manage if you act as a member of a group?

The following conversation can occur as a whole class or by dividing the class up into smaller groups and then having those groups report out. Have students brainstorm issues that they care about. Why do they care? What can they do to impact that issue? Do they have any role models who can serve as inspiration for their action? Why haven’t they done anything before about this issue?

Create a master list of concerns; offer students the opportunity to “make a difference” on one or more of the issues. At this point, the class may begin working in smaller groups or tackling one concern collectively. Remind students to consider why they have this concern, if there are role models whose actions can help them plan their own courses of action, and what resources they can draw upon for strength as they move forward to make a difference.

Fund for the Future of Our Children (FFC) has supported student activism for the past decade through the awarding of micro-grants. Examples of student-led initiatives, a micro-grant application and inspiration can be found at www.futureofchildren.net.

FFC will award up to 10 matching grants of \$1,000 each, up to \$10,000, where teacher-sponsored student projects have already raised at least \$1,000 on their own. FFC will highlight all matching grant recipients on its website to serve as role models for other youth activists.

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