

Malala Yousafzai

Malala Yousafzai was born in the Swat Valley, a tribal area of Pakistan. Her father ran a school in the town of Mingora. A group of Islamist militants called the Taliban took over her region. They wanted to see society conform to their vision of what an Islamic society should look like. One aspect of their vision was to see the control of women and girls and the prohibition of girls' education. Malala and her father disagreed and she spoke out, describing the violence and barbarity that the Taliban were inflicting on Swat valley. When Malala was 15 she was shot in the head by the Taliban. She was brought to hospital in Birmingham where she recovered. She has since won a Nobel Peace Prize, written and spoken to a global audience and earned a degree in PPE from Oxford. She has set up the Malala Fund to fight for girls' education around the world. The information in this pack comes from her autobiography *I am Malala* (2013).

1. Swat Valley

Malala is a Pashtun of Swat Valley. Reading her autobiography it is clear that this is a huge part of her identity. She feels very rooted in this place and culture. She describes Swat as 'the most beautiful place in the world' and 'a heavenly kingdom of mountains, gushing waterfalls and crystal clear lakes' (p. 11). The Pashtuns are an ethnic group who have traditionally lived in the region between Afghanistan and North West Pakistan. The language, Pashto, is a Persian language. Pashtuns make up around 40% of Afghanistan's population. The border between Pakistan and Afghanistan designated by the British Empire does not make much sense to Pashtuns. The British Empire occupied India for 200 years until India gained independence in 1947. The land of Pakistan was created in 1947 in an act called Partition. A new land was carved out of India for Indian Muslims, whereas the newly-reduced India was for Hindus. Swat became part of Pakistan in 1969. As Malala notes, 'like all Swatis I thought of myself first as Swati and then Pashtun, before Pakistani' (p. 20). When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 Pashtuns and Pakistanis heavily identified with Afghanistan, many fighting to defend their neighbour.

In the 11th Century a neighbouring Afghan king invaded, bringing Islam. Before that the region had been largely Buddhist. Malala remembers stories of over a thousand Buddhist monasteries all over Swat. Although these no longer remain, she and her friends would often find Buddha statues in the countryside when on picnics or exploring.

The Pashtun are very traditional; men and women are seen in different ways. When children are born, traditionally only the baby boys are celebrated. As Malala explains...

When I was born, people in our village commiserated with my mother and nobody congratulated my father... I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are simply hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children. (p. 9)

However Ziauddin, Malala's father, broke with tradition by joyfully welcoming his new daughter. A cousin came to visit and brought a large family tree of their clan. This family tree only showed the males. Ziauddin added Malala's name in pen, to the astonishment of his cousin.

As Malala grew up she did not cover her face in public and wore clothes she liked. Many women existed behind closed doors, hidden from the world; not talking to any male in public and covering their faces when they ventured outside to shop. This is Pashtunwali, the code of the Pashtuns. Although some people challenged Ziauddin about Malala's public behaviour, he did not ask her to stop. Other women were not so lucky. Girls could be given as a gift to another tribe to resolve a dispute, and girls were sometimes killed by their family for ignoring Pashtunwali.

Sometimes at night Malala's family and friends would gather together to eat and tell stories of ancient Pashtun warriors, kings and heroic acts. Pashtun people love to hear speeches, poetry and stories. Malala's grandfather, a theology teacher and imam, was famous for his speeches, people would come from far and wide to hear him speak. Pashtun history is a history of invasion, bravery, passion and loyalty to the Pashtunwali.

Pashtun are incredibly generous and hospitable. Any visitor must be fed and cared for with no questions asked. Malala's mother, Tor Pekai, was always visiting sick friends and relations, feeding or supporting poorer members of the community and persuading Ziauddin to allow children to attend his school for free. Some of these children came to live with Malala's family so they could be properly fed and cared for. Even though Malala's family were not rich, like all Pashtun, they would never turn anyone away.

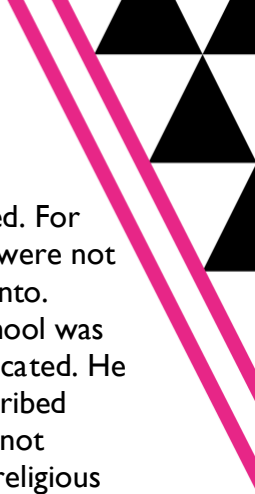
LESSON 1:

Where in the world

- a) Introduce the place Malala is from: the Swat Valley. Show images of the places Malala knows; Mingora, her father's school and the countryside.
Show a few minutes of this 11- minute video to get a sense of Mingora:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOaNO6_KVlg
- b) Find a travel vlog on Swat valley to show the scenery and local life. This 6 -minute one is good:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGT9u7kh9Bg>
- c) Read the info sheet 'I Who are the Pashtuns'. Ask students to highlight THREE different groups who have invaded Afghanistan.
- d) Read about Pashtunwali on the factfile. Pashtunwali, or the Pashtun code, has survived through centuries of invasion and shifting imperial powers in the region. Ask students to think about how important Pashtunwali might have been to the Pashtun people over the centuries.
- e) The PPT 'I Where in the World' offers further information about Malala's background. Image searches are suggested.
- f) You will read that Pashtunwali is patrilinear- inheritance is measured through the male line. Read on the PowerPoint about Ziauddin's actions when Malala was born. Ask students to suggest what made this action unexpected or radical according to Pashtunwali.
- g) This clip offers a summary of the events surrounding Malala's life with a focus on the expectations for a women in Pashtun culture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnloKzEAX7o>

2. Fundamentalism (Taliban)

Lots has happened in Pakistan's short history. Before Malala was born a general called Zia ul- Haq seized power and executed the elected leader of Pakistan. To try to gain support for his rule Genera Zia presented himself as a devoted Muslim. This involved sending 100,000 'prayer inspectors' all over the country, including to remote towns like Malala's. Local religious teachers, called mullahs, suddenly had a lot more influence. Zia was combining commitment to Islam with loyalty to his rule.



Under this growing influence of government-approved Islam, women's agency in society reduced. For example, a woman's testimony in a court of law was seen as worth half of a man's and women were not allowed to open bank accounts without male permission. This was the world Malala was born into. Ziauddin, Malala's father, was building towards his dream of running a successful school. His school was growing and doing well. However a mullah in the village did not like the fact that girls were educated. He thought once the girls became teenagers they should be at home behind closed doors. He described Ziauddin's school as haram and said it brought shame to the neighbourhood. The mullah could not persuade Ziauddin to close the doors of the school to girls. One night he sent more powerful religious men, some of whom were part of an organization called the Taliban. The word talib means 'student' in Arabic. The Taliban present themselves as students of Islam. The Taliban representatives argued that to allow girls to be educated in public is haram. Ziauddin argued back, showing his knowledge of Islam and the Qur'an. The Taliban men were surprised that he was well-educated in religion. However this did not assuage the situation. There was a growing desire among local religious teachers and the Taliban to see an end to girls' education for good.

The influence of the Taliban was growing. Malala was ten years old when the Taliban moved into the Swat valley. The Taliban insisted that men wore traditional loose shirts and trousers rather than Western-style T-shirts and jeans. Music was banned. Images of women on billboards were pulled down or covered in paint. Women were only allowed in public with a male companion, their faces and bodies covered. Although the Taliban made life harder for people, they also helped. When a terrible earthquake caused widespread destruction and suffering, the local Taliban where a visible presence, doing whatever they could to help. They carried medicine and food into the mountains on foot, dug through rubble with their hands to rescue survivors and carried the injured on stretchers to medical centres. The government seemed far away and unconcerned.

The local Taliban started a radio station and their ideas spread into peoples' homes. The Taliban's leader in Swat, Mullah Fazlullah, presented himself as a devout Muslim and gave lots of advice as to living a good life. He suggested that listening to music, watching movies and dancing was sinful, and these actions could have caused the earthquake as a punishment from God. Mullah Fazlullah's radio show was popular. Many people burned or threw away their TVs, stereos and tapes. Mullah Fazlullah would praise and encourage people through his broadcasts.

Although Fazlullah was demanding his message was also attractive, especially to women. People wanted guidance as to being good Muslims. Every evening Fazlullah would praise local people by name who had made improvements, such as men who stopped smoking or wearing Western-style clothes or hair, and women who adopted more traditional gender norms such as deferring to men at home and wearing a veil in public. Many women would send money to Fazlullah, hoping to please God. Fazlullah also praised people who took their daughters out of school or female school teachers who gave up their jobs. He argued that educating girls is haram, insisting that it could lead to hell.

Taliban men began to patrol the streets, becoming known as the 'morality police'. Men could be beaten or whipped for wearing their beard too short or having music tapes in their car. Women were too scared to be seen outside. Taliban violence against local politicians increased, including car bombs, suicide bombs, kidnapping and beating. Local Islamic leaders did not speak out against the violence and control.

For a thousand years Buddhist statues and monuments could be found all over Swat. The area is Muslim now but in the past Swat was largely Buddhist. The Taliban began to destroy these ancient Buddhist monuments, even blowing up a mountainside with massive Buddhas carved into it. Local people tried to hide priceless ancient artefacts from museums, scared all cultural and historical treasures would be destroyed. The Taliban stole emeralds from the famous emerald mines of Swat to buy guns. They degraded the natural world, cutting down forests and poisoning rivers. They would burst into peoples' houses at

night to make sure they weren't watching TV or playing board games. Anyone who argued with them risked being killed. Schools were targeted and many were blown up. Many men joined the Taliban for status and power. Politicians and religious leaders either supported them or kept quiet. The Taliban always maintained their insistence against girls' education and women's freedom. Allowing women to make their own free choices was painted as against God, the Qur'an and Islam, and a sure route to hell. More and more parents withdrew their girls from school, either through a desire to be good Muslims or through fear of the consequences.

Throughout the Taliban's control of Swat Malala and Ziauddin Yousafzai spoke out in favour of girls' education. Malala became well known locally and globally through her blog and radio interviews. On 9th October 2012 she was sitting on her school bus when armed men burst on, asking 'who is Malala'. 'I am Malala' she replied. They shot her in the head. She was 15 years old.

LESSON 2:

Fundamentalism

- a) Students have learned a little bit about Malala, her homeland of Swat valley and the Pashtun culture. To remind them about Malala's story so far, watch this clip:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cugl-eTOVSk>
- b) Find an image of Taliban burning TVs. There is a space to display this on the PowerPoint, '2 Fundamentalism'. Ask students to suggest what they think is happening here. Show the following slide to give basic information about the situation.

This might seem incomprehensible to students. In fact the Taliban are a fundamentalist group. Fundamentalism is a way of thinking that can be seen in all religions and many other worldviews, such as atheism. Fundamentalism is often marked by literal-mindedness and a claim to be the only truth. Sometimes, as in the Taliban's case, a fundamentalist group can be so sure of their own interpretation that they justify violence towards those who disagree with them. However the vast majority of fundamentalist groups will not use violence.

The word 'fundamentalist' is often used in a negative way to describe intolerance and dogmatism. After learning about fundamentalism itself and how the Taliban can be seen as fundamentalist, the class will discuss how far the term is an appropriate description of a worldview, or how far it is negative and unhelpful.

- c) Hand out the information sheet '2 What is Fundamentalism'. You could cut this into cards and hand out in envelopes for students to sort. Or hand out the sheets as they are for students to shade or highlight areas. Following the instructions on the PPT, students find answers to the questions using the 'cards'. They must choose the card which best answers the question
- d) Display the question on the final slide: *is the word 'fundamentalist' helpful or harmful?* Students read the information in groups and discuss.
You could print off the slide as a sheet for groups if it is easier.

3. Girls' education

Even before the Taliban began their campaign against girls' education there was a reluctance in Swat to send girls to school. Culturally girls were seen as not worth educating as they exist to serve their husbands, prepare food, keep the home and care for children. Malala's father, Ziauddin, was unusual in wanting opportunities for his daughter as well as his sons. Malala and her friends dreamed of being doctors and as she notes, 'it's hard to imagine why anyone would see that as a threat' (p. 2). Moniba, Malala's best friend at school, was extremely hard-working and well-behaved. Outside school she avoided anyone who could get her into trouble or lead her astray. As she said to Malala, 'I have four brothers, and if I do even the slightest thing wrong they can stop me going to school' (p. 63). Girls need the support of their families to attend school, not just to purchase books and spare them from household chores, but also to encourage and trust them. Millions of girls around the world will never attend school.

Taliban pressure against girls' education grew. Mullah Fazlullah broadcast threats on the Taliban radio station if girls were sent to school. The first school to be blown up was a public primary school for girls in a neighbouring town. Everyone was shocked that Fazlullah's men would carry out their threat to destroy a school. After that more buildings were attacked and more and more girls were pulled out of school. In Malala's town of Mingora a suicide bomber struck in the playground of a high school, killing 50 people. It was a devastating moment for the town. However Malala and her father wanted to speak out. Malala and some of her classmates gave an interview for a Pashto-language radio station about the Taliban attacks on girls' education. This was extremely brave. They wanted to tell the world about the Taliban's actions, but they also wanted to show that Pashtuns did not agree that Islam promoted hatred of women, destruction and violence. Malala gave another interview to a national radio station. Although it was extremely risky to draw attention to herself, she felt God would give her strength as she was doing the right thing.

By 2008 400 schools had been destroyed by the Taliban. Many people had been murdered for standing up to them. Many more had kept quiet for fear of the consequences. Ziauddin was approached by a BBC journalist based in Pakistan. He was looking for a schoolgirl to write a diary about life under the Taliban. Malala volunteered. To protect her identity she wrote under a pen name, Gul Makai. The first entry to her diary was published on 3rd January 2009. It was entitled 'I am afraid'. Malala's diary entries informed the outside world of what life was like under the Taliban in the remote mountains and valleys of Swat. She wrote about her hopes and fears, the terrible hatred and violence of the Taliban, and the impact on girls and women. The diary was published by the BBC in English as well as Urdu (the language of Pakistan) and gained interest. Malala reports, 'I began to see that the pen and the words that come from it can be much more powerful than machine gun, or tanks or helicopters. We were learning how to struggle. And we were learning how powerful we are when we speak' (p. 131).

At the beginning of 2009 there were only 10 girls remaining in Malala's class, when there had been 27. There was pressure for unmarried girls to be married off. The Taliban issued a deadline; from 15th January all girls would be prohibited from attending school.

Malala continued her fight, participating in a documentary for the New York Times website and speaking on as many radio stations as she could. This was extremely dangerous for her as well as the journalists. Journalists had been attacked and killed for telling the world what the Taliban were doing.

By July 2009 the Pakistani government had achieved a truce with the Taliban. In actual fact the Taliban influence continued in Swat for several more years but the violence subsided. The government celebrated Malala's bravery and she won a national peace prize in 2011. She also received awards of money from various politicians and government bodies. As she prepared to receive her award in the capital city, Malala realized that the prizes were 'little jewels without much meaning' (p. 181). Her true fight was in the education and empowerment of women and girls. She spent the prize money on a conference which 21

girls attended. This is the beginning of Malala's fight for girls' education. At this first conference, as she reports, the group 'made our priority education for every girl in Swat with a particular focus on street children and those in child labour' (p. 182).

Years later, after the shooting and her recovery, Malala gave a speech at the United Nations. These are her words:

'Let us pick up our books and our pens... they are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world' (p. 262).

LESSON 3:

Girls' Education

Through these input and activities we will try to piece together the beliefs, politics, history and cultural pressures that led to the widespread destruction of girls' schools in Swat. We will use the information about fundamentalism already studied and add two more sets of information to the mix: gender and poverty.

- a) Watch this video clip about the Swat Taliban's ban on girls' education, starting on 15th Jan 2009:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbSO2akmKtM>
- b) Recap information about fundamentalism from the section above. Choose cards that help answer the question: *Why is educating girls seen as undesirable?*
- c) Split your class into groups, each group will consist of 4 people. Within each group, two people will focus on one aspect, and another two people on a second aspect of the picture. The two aspects are 'gender' and 'poverty'. After considering one aspect in pairs, each group of 4 will share their learning. Groups will then suggest a reason as to the causes of the situation. Suggested question for groups to answer: *Why is educating girls seen as undesirable?*
- d) The information is given on 2 separate sheets (3 Gender and 3 Poverty). As before the information is presented as cards. Either give pairs the cards cut up in envelopes to sort, or the whole sheet.
Questions are given on each sheet for pairs to work through.
Expert group 1: gender
Expert group 2: poverty
- e) Finally, find out what Islam seems to teach about girls' education. Before you show the information (on 3 Islam and Girls Education) ask the class to guess. Questions are on corresponding PPT slides (3 Girls Education).
- f) In response to Malala's quote in the Amnesty International advert, give responses to her statement: *why are extremists frightened of a girl with a book?*

This information is relevant for teachers' background understanding. It might not be suitable for the classroom but could be referred to in conversation and discussion.

Islam, Gender & Politics


Pakistan was created in 1947 as a homeland for Indian Muslims. Although the population is ethnically and linguistically diverse Islam is the majority religion. According to current figures 96% of the population of Pakistan is Muslim (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_Pakistan). Pakistan is the only modern country to be created around a religious identity.

Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, was assassinated in 1951. Since then Pakistan has experienced several military coups and assassinations of its leaders. In 1977 General Zia ul- Haq took power in a military coup, executing the elected Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. In order to gain support for his reign, General Zia promoted himself and his government as upholding Islamic principles. He presented the army as defenders of Islam as well as the physical borders. He argued that people should obey him because he was creating a truly Islamic society. In this way Islam was combined with power and politics in Pakistan.

In 1979 Russia invaded bordering Afghanistan, also a Muslim-majority nation. Millions of Afghan refugees were given shelter in Pakistan. All over the world Muslims felt a common duty to defend Afghanistan. The invasion sparked a huge sense of global Muslim brotherhood. In Pakistan General Zia created training camps where Afghan refugees were trained as resistance fighters, called mujahideen, meaning 'those struggling for the faith'. Muslims from all over the world joined these training camps to become mujahideen. General Zia's call was answered to defend Islam from non-Muslim invaders. In these days jihad was seen as a duty akin to the pillars of prayers, fasting, pilgrimage, charity and belief in One God. When the 9/11 attacks occurred in September 2001, another general who had taken power in a military coup ruled Pakistan; General Musharraf. Musharraf had begun to modernize Pakistan, allowing pop concerts to be broadcast on TV and aspects of Western culture to be enjoyed, such as Valentine's Day. Life for women improved, female politicians and newsreaders were permitted, as well as airline pilots and coastguards, and a woman's testimony was made equal to a man's in a court of law.

However in North West Frontier Province, which contains Swat Valley, these liberalizing moves were not appreciated. Local leaders continued to promote a conservative society which they depicted as truly Islamic. Many Islamic schools, or madrasas, had been built by the government of Saudi Arabia, an extremely wealthy, conservative Arab nation, birthplace of Muhammad and guardian of the Hajj. Under Saudi influence the education of girls was not encouraged and traditional social roles were preferred. Islam is of enormous importance to ordinary Swatis like Malala and her family. For example, when Malala's family escaped to her father's home village for a period of time to avoid the Taliban, Malala wrapped up her school books and whispered Qur'anic verses over them. When she returned to find them safe, she thanked God for protection.

Malala's Islamic education does not suggest to her or her father that women should live under the control of men, as is the general expectation in Pakistan. When she visited the tomb of the founder of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, she read his speeches declaring all religions free to worship in the new Pakistan and calling for the dignity of women. However Malala sees conflict between different cultural or political groups and Islam used to justify the control of women.



After the shooting Malala was brought to Birmingham to receive treatment. One person she became close to was Rehanna, the Muslim chaplain at the hospital. Rehanna would pray with Malala in Urdu. They spoke about the attack. Rehanna explained that many Muslim people would reject the notion that Malala's shooting was permitted by Islam, and might see her attackers as not Muslims. Rehanna also argued that women as well as men have the right to an education in Islam.

Malala sees her life now as her 'second life' (p. 261). She feels that God has given her this second chance to continue her fight for girls' education. She has since performed umrah in Makkah, the Hajj pilgrimage that can be completed at any time of year. She reports that 'when we prayed at the Kaaba, we prayed for peace in Pakistan and for girls' education' (p. 261).

On her 16th birthday Malala made a speech at the United Nations in New York. This speech was widely celebrated all over the world. However, as she notes, 'there was mostly silence from my own country, except that on Twitter and Facebook we could see my own Pakistani brothers and sisters turning against me' (p. 262). A Taliban official contacted Malala after she gave her speech. Malala reports that in his letter he states, 'they would forgive me if I came back to Pakistan, wore a burqa and went to a madrasa' (p. 263). However Malala and her father are not convinced by the Taliban's vision of an Islamic society. Malala sees the right to an education as part of an Islamic life, as she says, 'Islam says every girl and every boy should go to school. In the Qur'an it is written, God wants us to have knowledge. He wants us to know why the sky is blue and about oceans and stars' (p. 263).

Her final words combine her religion and vision:

'Today I looked at myself in a mirror and thought for a second. Once I had asked God for one or two extra inches in height, instead he made me as tall as the sky, so high I could not measure myself... I love my God. I thank my Allah. I talk to him all day. He is the greatest. By giving me this height to reach people, he has also given me great responsibilities. Peace in every home, every street, every village, every country- this is my dream. Education for every boy and every girl in the world.' (p. 264- 5).