

# STORIES

ENSKIR LESTEXTAR OG VERKEFNI



## Stories

Enskir lestextar og verkefni fyrir unglingastig grunnskóla

ISBN 978-9979-0-2316-6

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Listi yfir réttthafa ljósmynda:

Bls. 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 28 neðri, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38,  
40, 42, 44, 48, 50, 52, 54, 55, 56, 57, 61,62, 65, 67, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79,  
80, 81, 82-83, 84, 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 96, 98, 99, 100, 103, 104, 106, 107,  
110, 111, 112, 113, 116, 118, 119, 122, 126, 128, 132, 134, 135 Shutterstock

Bls. 15 Wikipedia

Bls. 18, 21 Richard Dunwoody

Bls. 22, 23 Hallmar Freyr

Bls. 26-27 Kjartan Páll Sæmundsson

Bls. 130, 133 Dawn Shaw

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1. útgáfa 2018

Menntamálastofnun

Kópavogi

Hönnun og umbrot: Menntamálastofnun

Bók þessa má eigi afrita með neinum hætti, svo sem með ljósmyndun, prentun, hljóðritun, eða á annan sambærilegan hátt, að hluta til eða í heild, án skriflegs leyfis höfunda og útgefanda.

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*“Your fear is 100%  
dependent on you  
for its survival.”*

Steve Maraboli, *Life, the Truth,  
and Being Free*

Exciting adventures

## UP AND DOWN, ALL AROUND

What is it that makes someone want to climb the highest mountains in the world, or walk to the South Pole solo, on their own, pulling a sled? What drives a person to do that sort of thing? Is it a need for a physical and psychological challenge? Are the **daily grind** and more common outdoor activities not enough? Is it in **human nature** to explore the limits and go beyond, or is it a need for adrenaline? It seems that there are more and more people taking part in extreme sports, testing the limits of human capabilities and striving further and further, faster and faster, for longer and longer. Marathon runners, hikers, skydivers, deep sea divers, motocross cyclists **careening** down hillsides and the list goes on and on. They all **push themselves to the limits**.

*In your diary, explore what you think about the meaning of the phrase “human nature”.*

*What is it and what defines it?*

*Give examples to clarify your views.*

### HOLIDAY ON ICE

Vilborg Arna Gissurardóttir is a young Icelandic woman who has had her fair share of adventure and testing her limits. She’s hiked up and over Greenland Glacier. She’s climbed mountains and walked to the South Pole and she doesn’t seem to be slowing down any time soon. Vilborg’s motto is: “If you really want to do something, then you’ll find a way – if you don’t, you’ll find an excuse.” Vilborg has always had a passion for the outdoors and mountaineering and growing up in Iceland provided her with an opportunity to experience the beauty and splendour of the Icelandic landscape. It also made her tougher. Icelandic weather is not always kind to outdoorsmen and the mountains and glaciers of Iceland proved to be great training grounds for the challenging expeditions ahead. In 2012, Vilborg crossed the Greenland Glacier and in 2013 she became the first Icelandic person to ski solo from the coast of Antarctica and reach the South Pole. When most people were warm and toasty in their beds, enjoying their holidays, Vilborg was by herself on the ice of Antarctica. She started her trek on November 19<sup>th</sup> 2012 and her journey would last for almost two months. She reached the South Pole on January 17<sup>th</sup> after covering more than 1140 kilometres. One of her dreams had come true.

## **ADVENTURE GONE WRONG**

The novel and movie, *Into The Wild*, is based on the story of Christopher McCandless, a young man who decided to live with minimal support in the wilderness of Alaska. It's a moving story of a young man's attempt to get closer to nature, both within and without.

*"So many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, and conservatism, all of which may appear to give one peace of mind, but in reality nothing is more dangerous to the adventurous spirit within a man than a secure future. The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure. The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences, and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun." Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild**

## **WHAT TO WEAR?**

After accomplishing the feats required to reach the South Pole on her own, Vilborg was already preparing the next expedition, *The Seven Summits*. The expedition started in May, 2013 and was expected to end nearly a year later. The summits she planned to climb included Mt. McKinley (Dengali), Elbrus, Carstensz, Vinson Massif, Mt. Aconcagua, Mt. Kilimanjaro and finally, the intimidating, but beautiful Mt. Everest. These mountains are all on different continents and Vilborg had to prepare for drastic changes in temperature and weather conditions. Packing for a trip like this can't be an easy task! It's definitely not like packing for the beach!

While on expeditions, one of the things that Vilborg finds the most interesting is how simple everything becomes under these circumstances. It's you and the elements. It's the basic human needs that become important and crucial for survival. It is during those moments, when you are alone with nature, that you realise the magic of life and our planet.

Mt. Everest is located in Nepal and it is the highest mountain in the world with a summit reaching 8.848 metres. It's one of the most dangerous mountains on earth and has claimed the lives of about 240 people.



➤ Do some research on this mammoth of a mountain and write a one page essay on your findings.

*“All through my life,  
I have been tested.  
My will has been tested,  
my courage has been tested,  
my strength has been tested.*

*Now my patience and endurance are being tested.”*

Muhammad Ali, *The Soul of a Butterfly: Reflections on Life's Journey*

## The power of Mother Nature

When it's just you and the mountain, it becomes clear how fragile we are as humans. In April 2014, while Vilborg was at Base Camp on Mt. Everest, an avalanche killed 16 Nepalese guides. Vilborg, who wasn't in her tent at the time of the avalanche, felt lucky to be alive. The camp was destroyed. The avalanche came as a result of an earthquake that shook the mountain. Five people in Vilborg's party died and nine were injured in the catastrophe that day. Tragedy had struck.

►► Have you watched any movies or read any books about Mt. Everest expeditions? If so, which ones and what did you think about them? If not, what can you imagine it would be like to experience an adventure like being on Mt. Everest? In your diary, write about the items that you found most interesting or surprising. Do you think you would ever want to do something like this? Explain.





*“You gain strength, courage and confidence  
by every experience in which you really stop to look fear  
in the face. You are able to say to yourself,  
‘I have lived through this horror. I can take the  
next thing that comes along.’  
You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”*

Eleanor Roosevelt (You Learn by Living: Eleven Keys for a More Fulfilling Life)

### **The challenges make it worthwhile**

So what makes this lifestyle so appealing, despite its difficulties? The Seven Summits project involved a lot of traveling and provided Vilborg with the opportunity to meet adventurers from all across the world. It also brought hardships. Chasing your dreams and living your life with passion must be rewarding, especially when you reach your goals and you’ve worked hard to get there. Individuals like Vilborg, who have achieved the things they set out to do, must experience a great sense of satisfaction. She uses her personal values “positivity, determination and courage”, to help her along on her expeditions. Goals that challenge our physical and emotional strength and endurance require persistence and determination. These endeavours are not easy, but then many of the things that are worthwhile don’t come easy. They are hard to accomplish, they push us to our limits and then some. Maybe this is part of what made it possible for humans to send a man to the moon and back again. Maybe the need to go further is part of our nature.

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

daily grind

human nature

to careen

to push the limits



**Reflect and connect**

In your diary, explore the meaning of the quote from *Into the Wild*. What do you think is meant by this? Give your thoughts on the topic and use examples to clarify your meaning. How could these words relate to Vilborg's expeditions?

**Diary:** How would you prepare for an expedition like this? What are the things that you would need to survive and how would you decide what to put in your backpack?

In a one page essay, write about what you think are the driving forces behind these types of expeditions. What is it that makes people pursue these types of dreams?

Do some research on Christopher McCandless and write a short paper in which you summarize his last adventure. Make sure to cite your sources in a bibliography.



Choose a particular expedition or adventure and do research on it. You may choose anything that appeals to you, either from this text or from other sources. You will need to present your findings to your peers. Watch out, there are many to choose from!

Find out about the mountains in “The Seven Summits” expeditions and write a short report on your findings. Include information on location, weather conditions and ease of access.

**Extramaterial:** Video footage of the avalanche that swept down the climbing route on Mt. Everest: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHP0aF\\_6R6E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHP0aF_6R6E)[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHP0aF\\_6R6E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHP0aF_6R6E)



*“Strong words outlast  
the paper they are  
written upon.”*

Joseph Bruchac, Code Talker:  
A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War

## THE NAVAJO CODERS IN WWII: THE SECRET CODE THAT WAS NEVER BROKEN

Throughout history people have used codes to pass on secret information. The information is encrypted and is only understandable to people who have the key. Who hasn't seen or heard the phrase "top secret"? Codes have been used in classrooms, in spy movies and in wars. Morse code was developed to pass along messages that only some would understand. You can learn **Morse code** and you can even go to university to study codes and code breaking! That field of study is called cryptography.

**Morse code** consists of a series of sounds and clicks that go on and off. It's made up of long and short dots and dashes with spaces in between. Each sequence of dots (dits) and dashes (dahs) represents a letter in the alphabet. SOS, the international distress code, is an even sequence of three dots, three dashes and three more dots. Usually SOS is understood to mean "Save our ship" or "Save our souls".

# SOS

• • • — — — • • •

*"The supreme art of war is to subdue  
the enemy without fighting."*

Sun Tzu

### WAR CODES

During World War II there was a race to come up with a code that could not be **deciphered** by the enemy. But, there was a problem. With new codes come new code breakers. It's like having a good virus protection program on your computer. It works well until someone learns how to break the code. Hackers learn how the virus protection works and they find ways to get past the security walls and break into your computer files. During WWII, it became

increasingly important to come up with a code that couldn't be broken using the usual methods. It was crucial. Information is power and keeping secrets is extremely important in a war. Lives may depend on keeping the messages secret.

### CODES

In a research project, find out about the important codes used in WWII. What were they, who developed them and how were they broken?

### AN UNLIKELY SOURCE

The deserts, canyons and **plateaus** of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico are home to the Navajo Nation. The Navajo language is spoken by very few and during WWII Navajo men were chosen to create a code to battle the Japanese and hide the intentions of the **allied** forces. These men became famous and were known as the Navajo Code Talkers. Their bravery on the front lines and their ability to deceive the enemy made them heroes and they received medals for their contributions and service to their country. During the course of the war, praise for their speed, accuracy and skill grew. They could “encode, transmit, and decode a three-line English message in 20 seconds.” By the end of the war some 400 code talkers had served. However, it would take decades for them to receive the honors they deserved because of secrecy. Originally, there were twenty-nine men who enlisted and developed the code. Navajo Code Talkers served in six Marine divisions and relayed secret messages over the radio that turned the course of battle. Major Howard Connor, 5th Marine Division signal officer, said that: “Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken **Iwo Jima**.” He had six Navajo code talkers working around the clock during the first two days of the battle and they sent and received 800 messages, all without error. There are many accounts about the heroism of the Navajo Code Talkers and their code was never broken. Chester Nez, the last of the original Navajo Code Talkers died on June 4, 2014. He was ninety-three years old.

### IWO JIMA

Use reliable sources to find out what you can about Iwo Jima. Be prepared to do a presentation on at least one item you discover that is about or connected to Iwo Jima.



### Connect and reflect

Write a short essay on WWII. Choose a narrow topic and make sure that you do research and use reliable sources.


**Diary:** Have you ever needed to use a secret code or language to send messages to others? What kinds of methods could be used if you ever needed to do so?

Many movies have included the use of codes and codebreaking. Discuss one of those films and give short summary of the plot.

#### LANGUAGE BANK:

to decipher  
a plateau

The Allied forces during the WWII: Those participating countries who were trying to stop the Germans, the Japanese and the Italians during the war.

A herd of brown horses is captured in motion, running across a grassy field. The horses are in various stages of a gallop, with their manes and tails flowing. The background is a soft-focus landscape with other horses and a hazy horizon. The overall mood is energetic and powerful.

*“The only thing  
we have to fear  
is fear itself.”*

Franklin D. Roosevelt



## IF YOUR MIND IS PREPARED, YOUR BODY WILL FOLLOW

“You create what you fear, so don’t fear it.” This may seem like easy, straightforward advice, but that’s not always the case. We all know that the monster under the bed doesn’t really exist. It is merely a figment of a child’s overactive imagination. Stop thinking about it and it disappears. But as children the monster seemed very real and parents were awoken in the late night hours to hunt and banish the ugly creature. By imagining frightening things we can sometimes make those things spring to life in our minds. That’s what good books are made of.

Aníta Margrét Aradóttir knows about confronting her fears. In 2014 she took part in one of the most dangerous horse races on the planet – The Mongol Derby. This incredibly difficult race requires participants to cover a thousand kilometers of wilderness and rugged terrain and they have ten days to do it! Extreme sports include very real dangers.

In the Mongol Derby it is commonplace that riders are seriously injured. There are a number of hazards involved in this race and riders are pushed to the limits, both physically and mentally. Semi-wild horses are not always cooperative and enduring the elements in unfamiliar territory can test survival skills. It is not uncommon for riders to have to sleep outdoors surrounded by wildlife. There are even wolves! In a race like the Mongol Derby, there are good reasons to be afraid and one of the most crucial factors in successfully completing the race is overcoming those fears.

### ON THE TRAIL OF GENGHIS KHAN

So how did a young woman from Iceland end up racing across the Mongolian Steppes on horseback? The answer is a combination of coincidence, the Internet and a hunch. While browsing the Internet Aníta came across some information on the Mongol Derby, a race that attempts to recreate routes established by the great warrior and conqueror, Genghis Khan. She read about the race, watched a few videos and after that she was hooked. She said she didn’t even need to think about it. She just clicked on “sign up” and after that there was no turning back. She knew it was something she wanted to do, believed she had the skills to do it and decided to follow her **intuition**.

“I knew I was in good shape, I was an experienced rider and used to riding for long periods of time. I just knew it was something for me, it was something I knew I should do.”



## THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

In such a challenging race there are sure to be difficulties and trials. When asked about what she found most difficult Aníta says that there was no one thing in particular. She knew from the start that the race would put her abilities and stamina to the test and she realized early on that the most important thing was to be mentally prepared. “If your mind is prepared then your body will follow. I felt like I had prepared myself to the best of my abilities. I didn’t expect the race to be easy, I knew it would be a challenge.”

According to Aníta, two of the most common mistakes that the Mongol Derby riders make is that they overestimate their own abilities and underestimate the challenges of the race. Aníta seems to have done neither. She finished in 19th place and never fell off a horse! That in itself is an achievement, as those who are familiar with horse racing know. During the race Aníta says that she never considered giving up and **throwing in the towel**. She was determined to give it her all and quitting was never an option. “I was going to finish the race no matter what. I was going to finish even if I had a broken arm and two broken legs. That’s how much I wanted it.”

Determination makes a huge difference when the **going gets tough** and Aníta had ways to avoid the pitfalls that would **sap her strength**. “If I had doubts

then I pushed them out of my mind and thought instead about the fact that I was going to finish no matter what unexpected things might happen. When you think like that you push the fear out of your mind and then it seems like everything else works out. You create what you fear, so don't fear it."

*"All adventures, especially into new territory, are scary."*

Sally Ride

### **A WHOLE NEW PERSPECTIVE**

The Mongol Derby course is divided into 40 kilometer sections which are marked by "Urtuus", or horse stations. Riders are expected to change horses at each station and each horse is checked to make sure that it is fit and in good condition. Veterinarians are on site to ensure the well-being of the animals. Each Urtuus has tents called "Gers" which provide food and shelter and riders are able to rest and refuel before continuing. Participants can expect to be introduced to mare's milk (airag) and mutton, which are common sources of nourishment on the steppes of Mongolia. The whole experience of being thrust into a foreign culture under such extreme conditions must make for some memorable experiences. So what stands out in Anita's mind when thinking about the 1,000 kilometer race? "The horses. They possess incredible strength and stamina. They would run for kilometers on end and when you finally stopped, you could hardly tell they had been running. Their breathing wasn't even laboured."

In hindsight, after returning to Iceland, Anita says that the experience changed her. She has a new perspective on life. Foreign countries, new experiences, different cultures and lifestyles expose us a variety of things that can affect us deeply. "My attitude has changed. I came back a more positive person and I have a new appreciation for the quality of life here in Iceland. There is so much poverty in Mongolia, but most of the people there are happy, even though their lives are difficult."

### **AFTER THE MONGOL DERBY**

"I thought that I would want to take it easy and quit going on these adventures of mine. That's hasn't been the case. Now, I'm more adventurous than ever."

Aníta was chosen Woman of the Year by the magazine *Nýtt Líf* and now has plans to start her own business which will specialise in planning and offering difficult horse treks in her home country of Iceland. In that way, she is bringing a bit of the Mongolian experience back to Iceland.

*“Your time is limited, so don’t waste it living someone else’s life. Don’t be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people’s thinking. Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.”*

Steve Jobs

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

intuition

to throw in the towel

when the going gets tough

to sap one’s strength

**Connect and reflect:**

**Diary:** Have you ever let fear stop you from doing something that you wanted to do? Share your story.

Choose one of the quotes and write about what it could mean. Find situations in which the quote could apply. Give examples.

**Ideas for group work/research projects:**

The Mongol Derby

Genghis Khan

The ecosystem of the Mongolian Steppes

Endurance horse racing

Fear and the fight or flight response

Extreme adventures

The Mongolian Horse





*“Knowing is not  
enough, we must apply.  
Willing is not enough,  
we must do.”*

Bruce Lee

## GUNNAR NELSON: THE YOGI OF MIXED MARTIAL ARTS IS A VIKING AT HEART

The Icelandic fighter, Gunnar Nelson, is one of the rising stars in the world of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) and he is the first Icelandic fighter to be signed by the **UFC**. He is known for his great sportmanship and calm demeanor. Whereas many fighters **taunt** their opponents with **trash talk** to try to **psyche them out**, Gunnar is the complete opposite. That doesn't mean he is not fiercely competitive, because he is. Gunnar acts true to the meaning of his first name, which means a fighter in his native language, Icelandic. He approaches every fight professionally, but prefers to let the fighting do the talking. After all, actions speak louder than words!



### ALWAYS IN SPORTS

Gunnar was a very active kid and full of energy and you could always find him outside playing. He used to spend a lot of time during summers with his grandparents at their farm near the small town of Ólafsfjörður. He loved being there, free to roam about outside and play games with his friends. The love of the outdoors runs in his family and Gunnar and his sister used to travel a lot in the summertime with their parents, camping and hiking.

Gunnar started participating in sports early. His first game was football (or soccer), the most popular sport in Iceland. The only downside to football is that it takes up a lot of time during the summer, when most of the games are played. This was a bit problematic for a family who loved travelling and being out in the wild during the summer months. Soon, the solution presented itself in the game of ice hockey, a fast exciting game that has its season during the winter.

## OUTLET FOR HIS ENERGY

Ice hockey is a very fast **contact sport** and it helped Gunnar develop his balance and his swiftness, which would later come in handy. He really loved the game and became very good at it too. Still, he was also very interested in martial arts. His father having been influenced by the films of **Bruce Lee** had trained both kick boxing and other types of martial arts. In spite of the family interest, it was decided that it would be better for Gunnar to stick to ice hockey so he would get more of an outlet for his abundant energy. It wasn't until Gunnar was in his early teens that martial arts really became his main focus.

**Contact sport:** any sport in which physical contact between players is an accepted part of play, as football, boxing, or hockey.

[www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

## A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

It didn't take Gunnar long to **find his bearings** in martial arts after he started training. After just one year of training karate he became the Icelandic National Junior Champion, a title he won three years in a row. He started out strong and was soon winning all of the matches in his league. He challenged himself even further by playing above himself in the adult league while it was still permitted. Karate is a very technical sport and as much as Gunnar was a rising star in the field, he really wanted to fight in a more realistic setting to find out what he was made of in an **authentic**, real nitty gritty fight where all of the various fighting styles were used.

## BOTH A PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WAR

In martial arts full contact karate or kickboxing could be called a two dimensional sport where you can kick and hit but not really **grapple**. Boxing is more of a one dimensional sport as it's just hitting with your fist. MMA is a multi-dimensional sport as it has all the fighting styles - hitting, kicking, clinching, take-downs and grappling on the ground. Because of the **versatility** of the sport it is more like a real fighting experience, where the fighting is more natural and alive. It goes without saying that this level of contact sport is not for everybody because it's violent and really tests the spirit as well as the physical capabilities of the fighters. The fight is both physical and mental in that sense. You won't go far in the game without a strong will and a fighting heart.



## A HOME FOR MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

Before 2005 there was no place in Iceland where you could train mixed martial arts. A group of **enthusiasts** started the MMA club Mjöltnir that same year. There were two groups of members that formed the club. One was a group from the karate club Þórshamar, who had been training karate, kickboxing and wrestling with Jón Viðar Arnþórsson. The other was led by Jón Gunnar Þórarinsson, who had been training a small group in Brazilian Jiu-jitsu with the Boxing Association of Reykjavík. The interest in the sport was rising and a few foreign trainers came to Iceland with workshops, which **sparked a lot of interest**. The new club trained in various places, but in the fall of 2006 the club found its home on Mýrargata in Reykjavík, and interestingly enough it was Haraldur Nelson, Gunnar Nelson's father, who secured the **venue** for the club.

## TURNED DOWN THE MONEY

Gunnar was already a star in the karate world and after winning three national titles in the sport, he was awarded the biggest **grant** that anyone had been offered in the history of the Icelandic Karate League. However, he decided not to accept the grant because his heart was already set on Mixed Martial Arts. The fact that he turned down the grant tells us something about Gunnar's character and his values. He wants everything to be fair and honest and shows great sportmanship in everything he does.

Mixed Martial Arts is the fastest growing sport in the world when it comes to popularity in the media. That **trend** can also be seen in Iceland where Mjöltnir has been growing steadily since it started in 2005. It doesn't hurt to have an internationally famous MMA star like Gunnar, fronting the club.

## WHAT IS THE TRAINING LIKE?

Nobody gets this far in any given sport without training a lot. It helps to have **inherent** talent, but it is the temperament and the willingness to work hard that really **seals the deal**. Gunnar has his own way of training. He doesn't really lift weights or do any traditional gym work, but rather works with his own bodyweight as well as doing training matches. It is quite interesting that he actually doesn't really study his **opponents** to the **core**, as is common practice before matches. However, when you hear the reason why you will understand his method.

He might watch a match or two with his opponent, to get a feeling for how he moves, but he doesn't do that to focus on his opponent's weak points.

After all, the opponent might be working on those weak points and he might even have mastered them before the scheduled fight! Furthermore, there are no guarantees in this sport. The scheduled fighter you are expecting might change at any moment because of injuries. This has taught Gunnar to focus mostly on his own game – to better himself – rather than studying his opponent. His philosophy is that a good fighter needs to be able to respond to different **circumstances** at a moment's notice. It is always all about you and what you can do as a fighter. It is more important to be able to feel the energy in the match and try to steer the opponent into your own game – into a situation where you feel you can **have the upper hand**. It's all about being in the moment and being able to handle whatever gets thrown your way.

### **NO DRUGS FOR THIS FIGHTER**

The discussion of performance enhancing drugs has been all over the media, especially after the downfall of the American cyclist, **Lance Armstrong**. The world of Mixed Martial Arts has also had its cases of illegal drug use. According



to the UFC, in a random test of 19 fighters during the years of 2013 to 2015, 25% tested positive for drugs. That is a high number, but given the fact that the company represents close to 600 fighters, the test group is too small to draw a conclusion. However, in order to **hinder** drug use, the UFC changed its policy early in 2015, making drug testing **mandatory** for fights. If a fighter tested positive he/she could face up to a four year ban from fighting. This means that the UFC is not taking this lightly. Anyone banned from fighting for two and up to four years might be looking at the end of their career.

Gunnar does not **mince words** when it comes to performance enhancing drugs. He hates them with a passion. He doesn't like any supplements whatsoever and doesn't even use protein powder, let alone anything else. He feels that these drugs are both dangerous to those using them, and nobody knows the consequences of this kind of drug use. The case of the American cyclist, Lance Armstrong, is **a case in point**. Never, in the history of sports, has anyone gone to such lengths to ensure winning.



Gunnar feels it's not acceptable for anyone in sports to go up against someone who is **rigging the game** by using drugs. It's not fair, and is the opposite of what a good sportmanship is all about. Gunnar's club Mjölfnir has had people give talks about drug use in sports in order to educate their fighters on the physical dangers of the drugs. Drug use goes against both honor and good sportmanship. Haraldur Nelson says that the cost of drug testing is still too high for any club to be able to use them on a regular basis and he thinks that needs to change.

*“We are twice armed  
if we fight with faith.”*

Plato

## **FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS**

Since all great athletes need to work endless hours on their game, some might feel that they need to give a lot up for their sport. Gunnar doesn't feel that way. He thinks that if you're passionate about what you're doing, you're not really giving anything up if you think about the big picture. You might not be able to meet your friends quite as often as you'd like, which can be frustrating. You might be training abroad and miss family **obligations** because you can't leave. But, even though it may be difficult, it is the choice you make. If you're passionate and follow your dream, your life will be a bit different. You still get to do a lot of the things just like your friends, just maybe not quite as often. But in the end, it is all worth it.

## **WHERE ARE THE TATTOOS?**

After the UFC signed Gunnar in 2012 his presence in the media has grown **significantly**. He has more media obligations, but he also gets more money for fights. Although Gunnar is relatively new on the international stage of Mixed Martial Arts, he has already made his mark. He's known for his poker face and has been called the Yogi of Mixed Martial Arts. It has a **grain of truth** to it, because Gunnar is a very **contemplative** person and even though he doesn't practice traditional yoga, he likes to have his time to reflect.

He is also one of the few MMA fighters who doesn't have tattoos. That isn't because he is against them as such, he just doesn't have the time to get a

tattoo and let it heal. It would take too much time from his training. This may make him sound like he's all work and no play, but that is not the case. Gunnar may be focused but he has a great sense of humor, as anybody who knows him will tell you. There are many sides to a person, and Gunnar is no different. He knows how to have fun, but when it comes to fighting, he means business!

### THE FIRST MMA FIGHTING CLUB IN ICELAND

Gunnar Nelson is the president of Mjölur, the first Mixed Martial Arts club in Iceland. On their website [HYPERLINK "http://www.mjolur.is"](http://www.mjolur.is) [www.mjolur.is](http://www.mjolur.is) you can see their diverse programs for both sexes. If you want to know more about the international scene you can go to [www.ufc.com](http://www.ufc.com), the website of the biggest promotion company in the business featuring news, upcoming events and information on most of the top-ranked fighters in the sport.



### BRUCE LEE

An icon of Martial Arts and one of the biggest Kung Fu stars of all times. He started Kung Fu schools in California and later became an international Martial Arts movie star.



## LANCE ARMSTRONG

An American former professional cyclist who won the Tour de France seven times, which is seen as one of the most difficult athletic feats in the world. Armstrong is a cancer survivor and his track record of winning again and again made him into a national American hero. Rumors about drug use came up again and again and in October 2012 Armstrong lost his titles and was banned from professional cycling for life. In January 2013 Armstrong appeared on TV with Oprah Winfrey where he admitted his guilt. It is, by far, the biggest fall of any athletic star to date.



### LANGUAGE BANK:

to taunt

authentic

grapple

versatility

enthusiasts

venue

grant

trend

inherent

opponents

core

circumstances

to hinder

mandatory

obligations

significantly

contemplative

to trash talk

to psyche out somebody

find your bearings

to spark a lot of interest

to seal the deal

to have the upper hand

to mince words

a case in point

to rig the game

a grain of truth

**Reflect and connect:**

**Discussion in class:** What characteristics are most important for athletes. Why?

Is it more important to win than to do the right thing? Talk about drugs in sports and why you think athletes are tempted to use them. What do you think should be done to prevent drug use in sports? What about the pressure on athletes?

**Diary:** Why do you think Mixed Martial Arts is one of the fastest growing sports in the world when it comes to popularity in the media? Write one paragraph about why you think that is.

Are you in sports? If yes, write one page about your sport and what makes you like it. What are your goals in the sport? What is your training schedule? Do you make friends in training?

If you are not in sports, write about your hobbies and why you chose them. What makes your hobby interesting? Do you have any goals regarding your hobby?

*“It’s not the size of the dog in the fight,  
it’s the size of the fight in the dog.”*

Mark Twain



*“We shall not cease from  
exploration, and the end  
of all our exploring will  
be to arrive where we  
started and know the place  
for the first time.”*

T. S. Eliot





## THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION (1804-1806): DISCOVERING THE WEST

In May 1804, two men planned and departed on an expedition with a group of other men. Their goal was to explore and map the wild American west. Those visionaries were Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their expedition took more than two years. We know quite a lot about them and their journeys because they wrote detailed **journals** documenting their travels. They wrote about the people they met, the hardships they encountered and the adventures they had along the way.

*“On the acquisition of Louisiana, in the year 1803,  
the attention of the government of the United States,  
was early directed towards exploring and improving  
the new territory.”*

Meriwether Lewis

### WHY WEST?

Most of us have heard of the “wild west”. In the late 1700s and early 1800s about half of what is now the United States of America was **uncharted** wilderness. This started changing when President Thomas Jefferson, who was one of the **founding fathers** of the United States of America, came into office. He was the country’s third president and while in office he played a **crucial** part in the **Louisiana Purchase Treaty**. This treaty opened up new lands for exploration and almost doubled the size of the new country. The signing of this **treaty** is considered one of Thomas Jefferson’s greatest accomplishments. However, the whole of the western part of the country was a complete wilderness and there was a need to explore and map the new land in order to open up travel and trade routes for **perspective** settlers.

## THE EXPEDITION

The Lewis and Clark expedition started near St. Louis, Missouri and covered **approximately** 8,000 miles (about 13,000 kilometers). The journey took 3 years and the explorers went all the way to the Pacific Coast and back. This group was also known as the **Corps of Discovery** and was made up of 33 permanent members and a dog named **Seaman**. As the name implies, the expedition party was meant to discover new lands, collect information on the plants and wildlife and establish relations with the native peoples along the way. Lewis and others kept detailed journals which tell us first-hand what the party experienced. It's because of these journals that we know so much about the expedition.



## HARDSHIPS

It's hard to imagine what the Corps of Discovery had to go through. This was an enormous **undertaking** and must have **pushed them to their limits**, both physically and mentally. In 1804 we didn't have the modern conveniences that we have today. We know from the journal entries that they encountered many dangers. Dangerous terrain and bad weather posed great threats and we must remember that they had to carry all of their supplies with them and were far from any sort of help if things went wrong. Ticks and mosquitos **plagued** the party as did the common cold. We see this in one of Clark's journal entries dated Sunday, June 17th, 1804:

"The Ticks are numerous and large and have been trouosom [troublesome] all the way and the Musquetors are beginning to be verry troublesom, my Cold Continues verry bad the French higherlins Complain for the want of Provisions, Saying they are accustomed to eat 5 & 6 times a day, [4] they are roughly rebuked for their presumption,..."

As you can see, the spelling in this text is different from what we're used to seeing today. You might be surprised to know that American spelling rules are fairly new. Noah Webster played a big part in that. Find out how he changed how Americans spell.

*"I believe much trouble and blood would be saved  
if we opened our hearts more.*

*I will tell you in my way how the Indian sees things.*

*The white man has more words to tell you how  
they look to him, but it does not require many words  
to speak the truth."*

Chief Joseph, Nez Perce



## NATIVE PEOPLES

While crossing the country the Lewis and Clark expedition party came across over 50 Native Indian tribes. The Indians played an important part in the success of the expedition but there were also some conflicts between the Corps of Discovery and a few of the native tribes. The Corps had practiced a ritual for meeting native peoples. This **ritual** included marching, showing their guns and then exchanging gifts. This worked most of the time, but not always. The Teton Sioux of South Dakota were not impressed by the Corp's ritual and it would have ended in armed conflict had it not been for the **Teton Chief, Black Buffalo**, who **stepped in** to stop the building tension. The Corps of Discovery left the Teton lands after a number of **conflicts** and were probably lucky to leave unharmed. Even though they had a **close call** with the Teton Sioux, most of the native peoples that they met offered help with the expedition. For instance, it is unlikely that The Corps of Discovery would have been successful without the help of the Shoshone and Nez Perce tribes.

### THREE BOYS AND TWISTED HAIR

Late in September 1805, the Corps of Discovery had managed to make the difficult crossing over the Bitterroot Mountains. They followed a trail that Nez Perce used every year during their buffalo hunts. The Nez Perce had heard about the Corps. When three young Nez Perce boys saw Captain William Clark and his men approach they were frightened and hid in tall grass. Clark found them and to show them a sign of friendship he offered the boys ribbons as gifts. This did the trick and the boys led them to the village where they met Chief Twisted Hair, who Clark later described as “a Cheerful man with apparant siencerity.” The Corps stayed with the Nez Perce for several days while they prepared for the rest of their journey. Twisted Hair and his sons helped them find good wood for building canoes and they traded goods for **horses**.



Assignment ideas: Find out more about the Nez Perce Indians and prepare a poster or presentation for your class.

## THE SHOSHONE GIRL, SACAGAWEA

Sacagawea was the daughter of a Shoshone chief. She was born in Idaho, most likely in 1788. At the age of 12 she was captured by enemies of the Shoshone, the Hidatsu Indians, and sold to Toussaint Charbonneau. Charbonneau was a French-Canadian fur trapper and took Sacagawea as one of his wives. It's hard to imagine how this young girl must have felt. Sacagawea lived with her husband among the Hidatsu and Mandan Indians in what is now North Dakota, far from her family. The Corps of Discovery had built a fort in this area, called **Fort Mandan**, and spent the winter there. It was during this time that Lewis and Clark met Charbonneau and hired him as an **interpreter** on the expedition. They needed someone who could communicate with the native peoples. Even though Sacagawea was pregnant at this time, it was decided that she would also join the group on their journey west. This decision would turn out to be a crucial one as their journey continued from Fort Mandan westward toward the Rocky Mountains. They were headed into Shoshone lands and Sacagawea spoke the language. Most of the journey was made by boat, but as the Corps moved west, they were in need of horses to cross the **Rocky Mountains**. Lewis and Clark knew that the Shoshone Indians had horses and were counting on trading with them in order to get the horses they so desperately needed.

Sacagawea had her baby at Fort Mandan on February 11, 1805 and he was named Jean Baptiste Charbonneau. He would accompany his mother on the difficult journey west and back again. William Clark became quite fond of the boy and at the end of the expedition he offered Sacagawea to raise him in St. Louis and give him an education. Sacagawea agreed to this and when Jean Baptiste was 4 years old he went to live with Clark.

Idea for activity: Find out about the life of Jean Baptiste Charbonneau.

## THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS



## REUNITED

As the Corps neared the Shoshone lands Sacagawea began to recognize **landmarks** in the surroundings. Many years had passed since she had been kidnapped and she had not seen her people since then. Clark and most of the men decided to make camp while Lewis and three of his men went ahead of the party **to scout**. They were met by three Shoshone women. At first the women were afraid, but after Lewis gave them gifts and laid down his gun, they saw the men were there in peace. It was a good thing that they met the women first. A band of 60 warriors approached and the women convinced them that Lewis and his men meant no harm. The **principle** chief of this tribe was named Cameahwait (One Who Never Walks). He welcomed Lewis and his men and treated them as guests. Communication was difficult, but Lewis was able to make himself understood. The Corps needed horses for the difficult mountain crossing and the Shoshone had about 700 of them. Chief Cameahwait and some of his warriors **accompanied** Lewis and his men back to the camp where Clark and the rest of the party waited. It was there that an **astounding** thing happened. Sacagawea recognized Cameahwait as her brother! After an emotional reunion the **negotiation** for horses continued and it was agreed that the Corps would get the horses they needed in exchange for guns.

## TO THE COAST AND BACK

The Corps of Discovery finally made it the Pacific Ocean in the middle of November 1805. Now they were faced with a hard decision. Should they stay for the winter or start back? The captains decided to put it to a vote. They even allowed Sacagawea to vote! This was almost unheard during this time. Women were not allowed to vote on important affairs and it would be over one hundred years before women got the right to vote. Lewis and Clark were clearly ahead of their time, both in charting the new territory and in realizing the importance of women. After the vote, it was agreed that they would spend the winter on the coast. In March of 1806 they started their journey home. The trip would take six months and they arrived in St. Louis on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## HEROES

Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery completed their twenty eight month expedition and were **hailed** as heroes upon their return. The journey had taken them almost 8,000 miles. They had established relationships with over 50 Native American tribes, collected information on plants and animals and Clark had drawn pictures and mapped the new lands. He completed





his map in 1810. Lewis, the botanist, had mentioned over 260 plants in his journals and of those approximately 178 of them were new to science. They had accomplished what they had set out to do and then some. Today we have a very valuable account of their journey because of the journals they kept. Those journals are a priceless source of information for us all and will continue to offer a window to the past for generations to come.

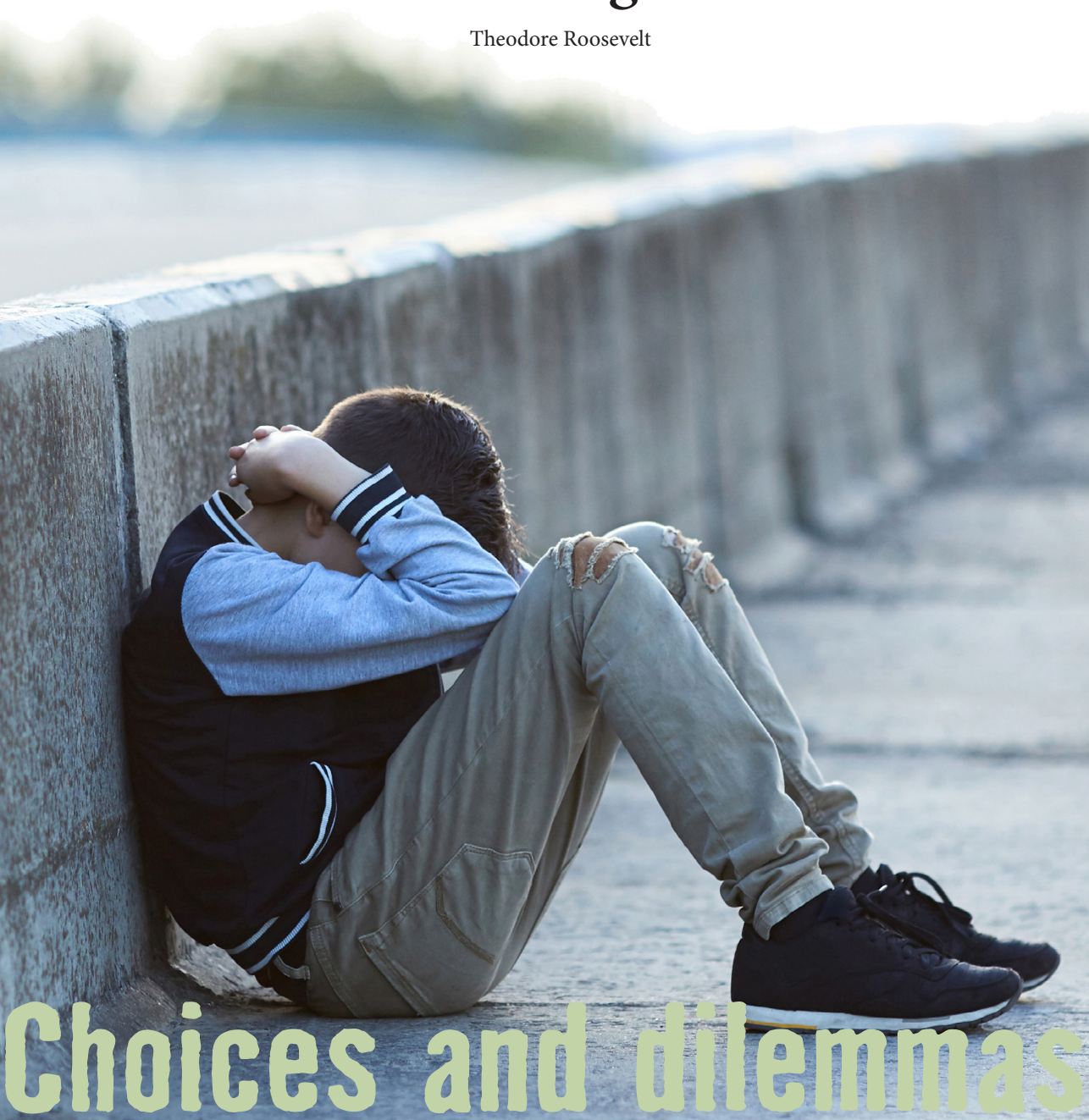
**LANGUAGE BANK:**

journals  
uncharted  
crucial  
treaty  
perspective  
approximately  
undertaking  
to push one to the limits  
to be plagued  
ritual  
to step in  
a conflict  
a close call  
an interpreter  
landmarks  
to scout  
principle  
accompanied  
astounding  
negotiation  
to hail



*“Knowing what’s right  
doesn’t mean much  
unless you do  
what’s right.”*

Theodore Roosevelt



Choices and dilemmas

## WHEN THE JOKE ISN'T FUNNY ANYMORE

“How can you be so ugly and disgusting? You’re so gross! Look at the way you dress. Your family must be dirt poor if you wear this piece of crap! They must really hate you... JOKE!” Sean started laughing while looking at Tom, who just looked down at the floor. A roar of laughter was heard in the group of students because Sean was one of the most popular guys in school and everybody wanted to be on his team. Some were laughing a bit uneasily, but this was almost like a ceremony that took place every other day and either you joined the gang or you could take the chance of replacing Tom in being the subject of nasty jokes. Besides, Sean was just joking, right? Tom must be used to it by now. He didn’t seem too upset. He wasn’t crying or anything like he did that day when he closed himself in the bathroom and we heard him bawling. Now that was pretty awkward, if you ask me. But today, Tom wasn’t acting like that. Still, come to think of it, we had noticed that he was missing from school a lot this term and the teacher was even giving him a hard time for it. But then, Tom had always been a bit sickly. Not everybody is a poster child for good health, right? But then, everybody knows it can be tough being in school and people just have to deal with it the best they can.

Is Tom being bullied by Sean or does Tom just lack a sense of humor? Does saying something is a joke, change the meaning of the things Sean says to Tom? What would you do in Tom’s situation?

### ARE YOU JOKING OR PICKING ON ME?

Some might find it difficult to see the difference between innocent joking and actual bullying. It would be so boring if we couldn’t joke around and see how people react to our jokes. Often best friends joke constantly and are just good sports about it and nobody would say they were bullies. So what is the difference?

It is good to keep in mind a few things when we **differentiate** between joking and bullying. When jokes go back and forth between friends who have a strong relationship and the tone of voice is not **aggressive** it would most likely not be bullying. In a case like that, the person being joked about would appreciate the jokes as being affectionate and just a sign of them belonging in the group. This kind of joking back and forth between good friends can actually strengthen the friendship. However, if the jokes are used to **alienate**, criticize or embarrass another person you have crossed the line and entered the “land of the Bullies”. Here the tone of voice is more hostile and aggressive,

and the aggressor means to **inflict** emotional pain, means to put the person down instead of making them feel good about themselves.

### THINK BEFORE YOU POST!

*“If you’re horrible to me,  
I’m going to write a song about it,  
and you won’t like it.  
That’s how I operate.”*

Taylor Swift

Most of us realize when bullying is happening around us, even if we try our best to **ignore** it. It is a dead **give away** if people are talking behind somebody’s back, especially if it is done negatively. If that same person is constantly being made fun of on the grounds of their appearance, culture, race or religion it is safe to say that they are being bullied. If someone is being ignored and kept out of social groups in school, and students don’t want to do assignments with them or even sit next to them, we have also entered the land of the bullies. Jokes involving destroying another person’s belongings, stealing from them or hiding their stuff, is yet another form of bullying. Someone might say that surely teachers will stop it if this is going on in school, but sadly they don’t always realize what is going on and many kids and teenagers find it very difficult to talk about this.



Furthermore, in this day and age a lot of bullying happens online, on social media sites such as Facebook or Snapchat or in text messages. Many teenagers don't realize that everything they put on the Internet leaves a **trace** that can be found. It is called a "digital footprint" and if you write something horrible about somebody, you'd better be able to back up what you say in person and take full responsibility. A good rule of thumb would be to always hesitate before you post something about people on the Internet. Stop to think about whether you would mind someone writing the same thing about you. Being **impulsive** on the Internet is a **lethal** combination and one that can get you into a lot of trouble. More importantly, it can cause other people a lot of pain.

Food for thought:

What kind of a digital footprint are you leaving behind? Are you being as careful with your words online as you would be in person? Or, do you feel that different rules apply on the Internet?

## DEADLY SERIOUS

Is there a pattern to bullying? Is it possible to **predict** who will be bullied at school or elsewhere? Some people have the feeling that people who are bullied are weak, and school is just like a jungle where the weak are preyed upon. The answer is not that simple. Studies have shown that anybody can **fall victim to** bullying. Sometimes kids that stand out, or are seen as different from the group are targeted by bullies. But that does not **exclude** kids who are **perceived** as normal from being bullied. Many good kids who have a lot going for them get into this situation and simply don't know how to get out of it. Kids, teenagers, men, women, thin people, fat people can all find themselves at the mercy of a hostile bully. What is similar, however, with those who are bullied is the way they feel in the situation. They feel hurt, **rejected** and like they are never good enough. Often the situation makes them feel very **anxious** and depressed even to the point of not being able to sleep well at nights. Their self-esteem suffers and it can take many years to repair the damage of **systematic** bullying. In the most severe cases some kids have **contemplated** suicide because of how horribly they feel and sadly some have gone through with it, which clearly shows how deadly serious bullying can be.

## WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

Knowing that bullying can basically destroy lives, the people who bully others must be real monsters, right? That is not necessarily the case. Many bullies don't really feel good about themselves and instead of **facing up to** it, they **take it out on** others. Sometimes there are problems in the home, or in school that make them act out against others. Some are very impulsive and don't think about the **consequences** of their actions. Often they don't feel good about themselves and they **go on the attack** to hide their own **insecurities**. Some bullies can be bossy and aggressive and seem to have little regard for other people's feelings. Perhaps they see that kind of behavior in their immediate surroundings, either at home or in their circle of friends. Bullying can, in a way, be like a disease in certain groups. The **psychiatrist** Kolbrún Baldursdóttir, who has over 20 years of professional experience in dealing with bullying, says that the best advice she can give bullies is to stop to think before they act. Stop before you've done something that you cannot take back.

## BULLYING AND THE FEAR IT CAUSES

What about those innocent **bystanders**, those who are not actively bullying but know what is going on and don't do anything about it? If you know about bad things happening and don't do anything, you might as well be doing those acts yourself. As the former president of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt said: "Knowing what's right doesn't mean much unless you do what's right." If you don't do something about **injustice** or bad behavior you are **aligning** yourself with the bully and not **sidling with** the person who is being bullied. Don't let the bully frighten you into doing what is wrong, even if wrong only means being silent. Instead of supporting a culture of fear, you can just as well choose to support a culture of **dignity**. A culture of dignity where people are always valued. If we have **zero tolerance** towards bullying, then it won't be able to thrive and it will eventually disappear. Growing up is hard enough. We don't need to make it worse by picking on others and making their lives miserable. Besides, what comes around, goes around and you could be next.

*"Be who you are and say what you feel  
because those who mind don't matter  
and those who matter don't mind.*

Dr. Seuss

### Reflect and connect

**Diary:** Everybody has heard of bullying and some of us have either been bullied or been bullies ourselves. Be honest. Write about a bullying situation you know about and try to understand the motivation of the people involved. If you were put in charge of finding a solution to end the bullying in this situation, what would you suggest doing?

**Discussion in class:** Many kids and teenagers find it very difficult to talk about being bullied to their parents, teachers or their friends. Would it be possible to come up with some kind of a system that would be helpful for those who are hurting because of bullying in school? Discuss the possibilities and try to come up with a solution.

### LANGUAGE BANK:

differentiate	systematic
aggressive	to contemplate
to alienate	to face up to something
to inflict	to take it out on somebody
to ignore	consequences
give away	to go on the attack
trace	insecurities
impulsive	psychiatrist
lethal	bystanders
to predict	injustice
to fall victim to	to align
to exclude	to side with
to perceive	dignity
to reject	zero tolerance
anxious	

*“The care of human life  
and happiness, and not  
their destruction, is the  
first and only object of  
good government.”*

Thomas Jefferson





## A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

“I haven’t had very many big arguments with my parents, but I remember one that left a lasting **impression** on me.” These are the words of Michelle, a seventeen year girl old from Sunnyvale, California. Michelle is a senior in high school, so she’ll be graduating in the spring. Looking back on her high school years there are a few teachers and subjects that stand out as her favorites. One of those teachers is part of the reason that Michelle had a major **blowout** with her father when she was sixteen. “It all started when my Social Studies teacher, Mr. Perry, asked us to write an essay about the death penalty, or capital punishment, as it’s sometimes called. We had been talking about many things in class that week, but when we came to this subject things started to **get out of hand**. All the kids in the class started arguing and things got **heated**. The teacher eventually had to step in to calm things down. He asked us to write an essay as homework. I had no idea that later, when I got home from school and asked my dad to help me with my essay – which was, by the way, due on Monday – I would get a big surprise. What started as a conversation and me asking my dad for help turned into one of the biggest arguments of my life. I didn’t **see that coming!**”

The death penalty is controversial. It’s a topic that has a tendency to polarize people into opposing views. There seems to be no middle ground, although many people would prefer to have it that way. Either you’re for it, or against it. According to Amnesty International, a human rights protection organization, at least “... 2.466 people in 55 countries are known to have been sentenced to death in 2014.”

“I had my own views on the subject of capital punishment, so when I got home that day I sat down and started to write. The death penalty is wrong and **‘two wrongs don’t make a right’**. It can never be right to kill a person. So, anyway, to get on with the story, I was almost done writing my essay when my father came home and I asked him to read it for me. Instead of telling me what a good job I’d done he looked at me and asked, ‘How can you say that?’ I was confused. He went on to tell me that he found it hard to believe that I thought people like **Charles Manson** and **Ted Bundy** shouldn’t receive the death penalty. He told me what they had done, he talked about a mass murder that had taken place not long ago. He talked about taxpayer money, the families of the victims and he went on and on. He mentioned the word ‘deterrent’. Every time I protested, he got angrier. He said I was too trusting in human nature and **‘naïve’** because of my age. I wasn’t being ‘realistic’, he



Charles Manson was the leader of a cult that is thought to be responsible for the deaths of 35 people. He was convicted of first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder on January 25, 1971. He was sentenced to death. That sentence was later changed to life in prison in 1972 when the California Supreme Court invalidated all death sentences before 1972.

Ted Bundy was connected to at least 36 murders. His crimes were horrendous, he raped and killed young women in many states. He was sentenced to death and was executed in Florida's electric chair in 1989. Many experts think that he may have been responsible for the murders of many more young women, the number may be even close to one hundred. When he was executed, the crowds of people outside the prison cheered.

“So, we didn't agree, to say the least. We had completely opposite opinions and it became quite obvious that we were probably not going to come to any sort of an agreement on this issue. Even after I gave him my reasons for being against the death penalty, he held fast to his views. I explained that I thought that life in prison was more of a punishment and that people make mistakes. Someone might be innocent and be sitting on death row! What if someone was wrongly accused and put to death? What about that? You can't just say, 'Hey, sorry, I take it back.' Once a person has been executed there's no taking it back. My dad said that even though some convicts received life in prison, they were still **eligible for parole**. He asked me about that. What would I think if a murderer got out of prison on parole and was free to kill again? Yeah, we certainly didn't agree. Finally, we decided that neither of us were going to convince the other to change their mind and we **agreed to disagree**. We haven't talked about it since. But, every once in awhile he'll remind me of our argument and say, 'Let's try not to do that again, okay?' and then he'll smile. I think he may yet **come around**.”

Parole is when someone who has been convicted of a crime and is doing their time in prison gets the chance to get out early because of good behavior. They are released early. For instance, a criminal may receive a prison sentence of 20 years and be 'up for parole' in 10. If approved, that person is released from jail but has to follow strict rules and meet regularly with their parole officer, who checks up on them and makes sure they are not breaking the law.

Amnesty International is a global movement that campaigns to stop the abuses of human rights. The organization is present in over 150 countries and territories worldwide. Amnesty International's main goals include investigating and exposing the facts surrounding abuse, lobbying governments and large powerful groups, such as companies and making sure they respect international law. Amnesty International uses its supporters around the world to campaign for change and supports people to claim their rights through education.



The *Green Mile* is a novel which was made into a motion picture. The story is about a group of prison guards who work on Death Row and the prisoners being kept there. One of the main characters is sentenced to death because he was thought to have killed two little girls. As it turns out, this man was wrongly accused and innocent of the crime. You'll have to read the book or watch the movie to find out more!

*“..each bloodletting hastens the next,  
and as the value of human life is degraded  
and violence becomes tolerated,  
the unimaginable becomes more conceivable.”*

Bill Clinton

*“The world is very different now.  
For man holds in his mortal hands  
the power to abolish all forms of human poverty,  
and all forms of human life.”*

John F. Kennedy

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

impression

blowout

to get out of hand

heated

to not see something coming

two wrongs don't make a right

naïve

eligible

to come around

to agree to disagree

**Reflect and connect:**

**Diary:** The three quotes above are from former U.S. Presidents. In your diary reflect on what the quotes could mean.

**Debate:** Divide into two groups and debate the issue of the death penalty. One group will argue for the death penalty and another group against the death penalty. Make sure that you prepare by collecting information to support your argument.

**Essay writing:** Write an essay on the death penalty. Do some research and form your own opinion based on what you find. Make sure to consider the possible counter-arguments and include them in your essay.



*“A good laugh  
and a long sleep  
are the best cures  
in the doctor’s book.”*

Irish Proverb

## HEALTHY LIVING: GOOD CHOICES FOR A GOOD LIFE

Do the choices we make every day have an effect on our health? The answer is an absolute “yes!” Our lifestyles matter and our daily choices regarding our diet and exercise most definitely matter in the long run. It doesn’t mean that the chocolate bar you had this afternoon is going to kill you, but if you have a habit of eating chocolate bars every day, it will surely have an effect although you can’t see it immediately. To begin with, you will probably gain weight. A small chocolate bar, or a drink of soda, every day can add at least ten pounds to your waistline every year. So you can see that in just five years you might be **50 pounds** heavier than today! Sometimes when we’re young we don’t feel the consequences of our habits immediately, but we are creating a pattern that we may be stuck with for the rest of our lives.



### FAST OR SLOW?

Hamburgers, fried chicken, pizzas and burritos are advertised daily in the media. An **enticing** picture of **succulent** – and photoshopped – food makes us hungry on a daily basis. How often don’t we see advertisements blasted on the screen and soon after realising how hungry we are? We get a **craving** for that great looking pizza or that yummy hamburger. We want it now, not after the time it would take if we had to cook it!

Fast food has been blamed for a lot of weight gain in developed countries. The easy access to deep fried and calorie rich foods is showing and many **nutritionists** claim that those who eat a lot of fast food might be in need of good nutrition, in spite of eating a lot. It sounds weird, but the idea is that food that has been **processed** is not as nutritious as the food you cook yourself. This is especially true if you cook food that doesn’t have food additives which increase **shelf life**. It seems obvious that food that can last for months without going bad is

not natural. Who wants to eat a five month old hamburger? The question is, are the food additives and all the processing harmful to our health? Those who believe that have been linked to a movement that is sometimes called „Slow food“ or „Clean Eating“ which is basically a trend more than an actual movement. Most of the **advocates** of slow food are not teenagers, but people who are older and perhaps found themselves stuck in a bad routine when it came to eating and have decided **to turn over a new leaf**. They want to start anew.



### THE ENDLESS DIETS

When it comes to finding the right way of eating there are a lot of **proposed** solutions out there. The paleo diet, the Atkins diet, the 5:2 diet, the South Beach diet, the raw diet, the vegan diet and the list goes on and on. It seems like everybody has **put their two cents in** when it comes to providing solutions for eating healthy foods. Most of these diets are sold as fast solutions to losing weight. There is a whole **industry** out there catering to healthy eating and in order to bring something new to the table, some minor changes are made to



already existing diet solutions, and they are given a catchy new name. All for your convenience and pleasure, of course!

Some diets are not marketed as weight-loss solutions, but rather as an eco-friendly lifestyle, and vegetarian eating would probably fit that category. Many vegetarians believe that it is better for people to eat a plant based diet, and it is also better for the planet as a whole. They argue that it is much easier to feed everyone by growing plants for **consumption**, than it is raising **livestock**. The latter also adds more methane gas to the **atmosphere** and there is only so much the ozone layer can take! Others disagree and say that a plant based diet is not meant for humans. After all, we all started out as **carnivores**, hunting down our **prey**. It is no wonder people get confused with all these mixed messages all around them.

### YOU NEED TO MOVE IT, MOVE IT

You might be confused about what to eat, but you know your body was meant to move, right? Our bodies are wonderfully made human machines capable of unbelievable **feats**. When we hurt ourselves, the wound will heal if we give it time. When we run, we gain stamina. When we lift weights, we gain muscle and strength. But this wonderful machine was not meant to sit all day or **slouch** in a sofa in front of the TV. No, it was not. When we **deprive** our amazing bodies of the movement they require, we lose strength and muscle. It's like forgetting your bike in the garage only to find it rusting and in **dire** need of repair.



Does this mean you have to slave away in the gym day in and day out to make sure your body will be healthy and strong? The answer is, not necessarily. If you drive to the gym and work out for an hour, and then drive back home and sit for most of the day, you might be missing out on the best way of exercising. Of course, it will be **beneficial** to work out and break a sweat for an hour every day, but you might just as well skip the car, walk to school, use your bike or go horseback riding to get the same benefits. Many people feel that constant movement during the day is the most beneficial of all to our health. So, even if we need to sit down in class or elsewhere, we need to stand up every 30 minutes or so to stretch and move our bodies a little bit. Think about a fun way to **incorporate** some movement in class.

## LIVING HEALTHY

Is living healthy just about eating right and exercising or are there more things to consider? What about our mind and our spirit? Are we healthy if we exercise and eat right and don't pay attention to our thinking and our emotions? Good health includes both our body and our mind. So don't forget that reading assignment, solving that math problem, writing a letter or thinking about the future. Our brain needs just as much exercise as our bodies do. We gain brain power by thinking and trying to solve difficult problems. It's just like building a muscle, a brain-muscle. The more we give our brains a work out, the smarter we get. It is a win-win situation, isn't it?

We also need to think about our emotional health and learn how to deal with disappointments, learn how to say „I'm sorry“ when we do something wrong and be able to ask for support when we need it. All of these skills are the **functional** skills of a healthy person. It is downright amazing how our mind works. If we believe in ourselves and our abilities we can do whatever we want. The sky is the limit. If, on the other hand, we have low self-esteem and question our abilities, we are not likely to succeed. When we are young, and coming into our own element, we are still building the confidence we will gain later in life. That sometimes means that we are less sure of ourselves than we would like to be. If that applies to you, the best advice is to **fake it until you make it**. Take care of yourself like you're your most prized possession. Stand up for yourself, when you feel you are being wronged. Be your best friend. You will thank yourself in a few years!

## MODERATION OR COMPETITION

Being healthy doesn't mean that you are better than everybody else, that you can run faster, eat healthier, jump higher or read more. It is about being the best version of yourself. What others are doing is not your concern. Don't try to fit into a mould that doesn't fit you. Work with what you have. People have different builds, different talents, different passions. Find out what works for you. If someone posts on Facebook that they just did fifty push-ups or they ran up a mountain in 30 minutes, good for them. It doesn't make you less of a person. You can join them if you like competition for the fun of it, but it is more important to work on your own special version of yourself every day. Running once a month is less beneficial than walking every day. Making the good choices every day to work on your mind, body and spirit will get you much further than shorter occasional intensive **spurts** of activities. **Consistency** is key to building a good routine that will secure you a healthy lifestyle. If you just decide to take good care of your body and mind, one day at a time, you will most likely end up a healthy person. It's worth a try, isn't it? Remember the story of the tortoise and the hare – slow and steady wins the race.

### CLASS RECIPES

Go to [www.wix.com](http://www.wix.com). The class could look at the website together and decide on a template to make an online Recipe Book with their favorite recipes. Use the recipes you've written down in your diary. Just make sure someone is in charge so the project gets done. Those who are interested in the project can be adding recipes throughout the schoolyear, and make it into a basis for connections and shared experiences.

### Reflect and Connect:

**Diary:** Write down your favourite recipe. If you have never cooked at home, ask your parents to help you with a recipe you think your classmates could make themselves. Try to think about having it fairly easy to make, because after all nobody is a chef!

Write down your own private goals for tomorrow, when it comes to eating, moving your body and exercising your brain. Don't try to overdo it, remember small changes yield big results! Try to do this every day for a week and see how it works for you.

Find exercise videos on YouTube and choose one to try out for fun. Try to find something that really appeals to you. It's always much more fun to do the things we really like.

When people are young they don't necessarily realize the consequences of what they are doing today. Reflect on that statement and give examples.

**Discussion in class:** Is it more motivating to compete with others than it is to compete with one's self? If you are competing with yourself, what kind of apps are out there? Which ones can you use to document your progress?

<p>pounds</p> <p>enticing</p> <p>succulent</p> <p>craving</p> <p>nutritionist</p> <p>processed</p> <p>shelf life</p> <p>advocates</p> <p>to turn over a new leaf</p> <p>to propose (a solution)</p> <p>put your two cents in</p> <p>industry</p> <p>consumption</p> <p>livestock</p>	<p>atmosphere</p> <p>carnivores</p> <p>prey</p> <p>feats</p> <p>to slouch</p> <p>to deprive</p> <p>dire</p> <p>beneficial</p> <p>to incorporate</p> <p>functional</p> <p>fake it until you make it</p> <p>spurts</p> <p>consistency</p>
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**LANGUAGE BANK:**

**WRAP IT UP!**

These wraps are a good snack for school and are both healthy and easy to make.

**Ingredients:**

- 2 whole wheat tortillas (you know they're better for you)
- cream cheese of your choice
- 2 slices of ham, or chicken (optional – sliced tomatoes for vegetarians)
- ¼ cup of shredded lettuce
- 2 tsp. grated cheese of your choice
- 2 tsp. finely chopped chives
- 2 tsp. of green onions finely chopped
- A dash of good creamy salad dressing

**DIRECTIONS:**

Spread cream cheese over tortillas. Layer with ham (chicken or tomatoes), lettuce, cheese, onion, green pepper and drizzle with just a little dressing. Roll up tightly, wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate until serving. Yield: 2 servings.





*“An eye for an eye  
will only make the  
whole world blind.”*

Mahatma Gandhi

## GUNS AND VIOLENCE

In January 2015, in Florida a two year old toddler, Khaleb Ahles, climbed into the family car, opened the glove compartment and found a gun. Looking at the gun he turned the barrel towards his chest and pulled the trigger. His **frantic** parents tried **CPR** and called 911. It was too late. Khaleb Ahles died. In South Carolina in October 2015, a two year old toddler was sitting in the back seat of his aunt's car. His grandmother was riding along with them in the front passenger seat. He found an interesting toy in the pouch of the car seat. It was a revolver. He started playing with it and accidentally shot his grandmother in the back. She was taken to the hospital and luckily survived. The sister of the grandmother will possibly be facing charges for not keeping the gun in the glove compartment or somewhere out of sight. No charges were brought against the parents of Khaleb Ahles, because according to Florida law, keeping a gun in the glove compartment of your car is not a crime. Khaleb Ahles finding the gun is a horrible tragedy, but not punishable by law.

### NEGATIVE NEWS

Every single day brings us stories of violence in the media. If it isn't about a war and refugees, it's about senseless shootings of innocent people or horrible tragedies. The majority of the news is negative and not encouraging. The saying, „No news is good news“ is true, when it comes to the media.

Watch the evening news and take notes of negative news versus positive news.

It would be easy to blame it all on the media. It is known that negative **sensational** news that shock viewers bring up **ratings**. However, it is not as easy as that. Without the media we might not even know about the senseless violence all around us. It would be good to get a better balance of news and hear about the good things more often. But even though the news can sometimes be quite depressing, it is important to know what is going on. It is our only chance of getting information and deciding to change things for the better, because knowledge is power. If we decide we don't want to know about some of the difficult things in the world, we are not using our power as citizens in the **big scope of things**. You can't have a positive **impact** on things if you don't know what's happening.

## SENSELESS SHOOTINGS

Since 1996 and up to October 2015, there have been over ninety-one mass shootings worldwide. That's if we don't count shootings related to wars. Almost 600 people were killed in these shootings. Seventy of those ninety-one shootings happened in the United States. These numbers do not include all instances of gun violence in schools, only the **fatal** ones.

In Littleton, Colorado in 1999 two students at the Columbine High School walk into the school and kill fourteen students, one teacher and wound twenty-three others before they turn the guns on themselves. In 2012 a twenty-year old man kills his mother in their home and then goes to Sandy Hook Elementary School and shoots and kills twenty children and six others in the nation's second deadliest mass shooting. In June 2015 a white male goes into a **predominantly** African-American church in Charleston, South Carolina. He sits in the church for an hour and then opens fire. Nine people are killed. In October 2015 a student of Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon enters the school wearing military clothes and **armed to the teeth**. He shoots nine people dead and wounds seven others before turning the gun on himself after a shoot-out with the police.

By far, the worst mass killing in Europe is the horrible event that happened in Norway in 2011. A **deranged** politically motivated gunman kills eight government officials with a car bomb. Two hours later, he goes to the secluded island of Utøya, where he shoots and kills 69 young people who were attending a Worker's Youth Camp. Fifteen years earlier a man walks into the Dunblane Primary School in Dunblane, Scotland and kills sixteen children and one teacher, wounding ten others before killing himself. It is the worst mass shooting **massacre** in the history of the British Commonwealth.

## WHY DO THESE PEOPLE KILL?

These examples are sadly just a few of the senseless killings of innocent **civilians**. What motivates anyone to commit such **heinous** crimes is not always clear. In some cases, like the shooting in Norway and the shooting in the church in Charleston, South Carolina, the motivation is hate. The Norwegian killer was a self-professed Islam hater who had left a **digital footprint** on various hate websites. He was an extremist in his political views and hated those leaning politically to the left, like the young people he killed. The South Carolina shooter was also motivated by hate. He was a **white supremacist** and confessed that he was hoping to start a race war by killing the black people in the church. These two examples show quite clearly the hate motivation as



well as the deranged mind of the shooters. In most of the school massacres finding reasons seems more complicated. The shooters come up with various reasons to **justify** their killings. What all of the murderers seem to have had in common is that they had no sense of **empathy**. In addition, most of them had some kind of mental disorder. Furthermore, there were a lot of **red flags** that had been ignored by their community. Most importantly, the killers seem to have had easy access to firearms.

## GUN LEGISLATION

The staggering difference in numbers, when it comes to comparing gun violence in the US with the rest of the world, is partly due to easy access to guns. In less than two years after the school massacre in Scotland in 1996, a ban on owning handguns was passed in the UK. There was already a ban on semi-automatic weapons and assault rifles but with the ban on handguns the UK has one of the toughest anti-gun laws in the world. Gun violence has gone down as a result, but it hasn't been **eliminated** it altogether. In 2010, a gunman shot down twelve people in Northern England, armed with two assault rifles. This shows that in spite of gun legislation some people will still be able to get guns illegally. Yet, data shows that where access to firearms is limited, the numbers of gun related crimes go down.



## OPPOSITE VIEWS

What is it about guns and America? Why have attempts towards stricter gun control not worked even though mass shootings happen every year claiming hundreds of innocent lives? In some states, **measures** have been put in place for a stricter process of **registration** for those buying guns. Still, the **polarization** of views regarding gun ownership in the US doesn't seem to be going away any time soon. The demand for stricter gun laws is met by the demand for more guns for defense. Those who are pro-gun cite the 2<sup>nd</sup> **Amendment** and claim that guns are never to blame, just the people using them. In the case of mass school shootings they want school officials to bear arms, as well as teachers. Those who are anti-gun, claim that it is the access to guns that makes all these gun-related crimes possible. There doesn't seem to be a real conversation going on between these two opposite groups. You are either for or against.

Every town for gun safety is a group that has been **gaining momentum** in the US as well as the group Moms demand action that started after the Sandy Hook Elementary School killings. Both of these groups collect data on gun violence and provide a venue for others to support their fight for more safety in American towns and cities. They put pressure on **locally elected officials** among other things. They believe there has to be a more sensible way of dealing with gun violence that will benefit everybody and will **ultimately** be understood by both sides of the gun divide.

### BILL OF RIGHTS – AMENDMENT II:

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

## GLORIFICATION OF GUNS

When you look at American history, you can see that many Americans have an **innate** distrust of government. After all, they did move to America to escape the British rule. They wanted freedom to be the **core value** of their new society. Guns have always been a big part of American culture. To many people, it is a part of being an American. One should be able to defend oneself against hostile people, wild animals or a government gone wrong. A man with a gun is almost **symbolic** of the American lifestyle. This can be seen in the early Western movies with John Wayne. Later the movies starring Clint Eastwood reinforce this image. The frontier movies about the real life characters Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett also played a big part. They are all examples of

great American heroes, rugged outdoorsmen and outlaws. The idea of a lone ranger fighting **social injustice** enforces this positive image of gun ownership. In the movies the cowboys need guns to fight the **hostile** Indians, who are ready to scalp and kill them if given the chance. The old western movies show a glorified version of the wars with the Native Americans. They usually **portray** Native Americans as savages standing in the way of **progress**, instead of showing them as people trying to defend their land.



These examples oversimplify a much more complicated history. However, they hopefully help us to gain a little understanding of why it seems like a much bigger deal to Americans to have guns than it is to Europeans. But let's be clear, not all Americans believe that the 2nd Amendment means that everyone has the right to bear arms. It remains one of the most controversial political issues in the US. But the horror of continual mass shootings and other gun related accidents is seriously getting to all Americans. It doesn't matter whether they are for guns, or against them. They all agree on one thing. The violence needs to end. The only question is how.

*“Education is the most powerful weapon  
in which you can use to change the world.”*

Nelson Mandela

### **GUNS AND SAFETY**

Do guns keep you safe at home? It is a loaded question and the data seems to suggest that you are more likely to suffer harm if you have a gun in your home, than if you don't. The first dangers you encounter if there are guns in the home are accidental shootings. The cases of the toddlers who got a hold of guns, are examples of these kinds of accidents. Secondly, data suggests that having a firearm in the house is linked to more fatal cases of domestic violence and suicide. Thirdly, when it comes to self-defense the data shows that only 1% of reported gun related crimes are linked to the use of a firearm in self-defense. This means that in 99% of other cases the guns are not being used for self-defense. To make matters worse, the data on self-defense gun use does not even show a reduced risk of victim injury. Finally, a study done on homicides from 1996-2010 showed that homicide rates were three times higher in states with high firearm ownership compared with states with low firearm ownership.

### **DON'T NAME THE SHOOTERS**

In this article the names of the killers have not been mentioned. Many mass murderers have confessed they wanted to become famous, but why grant them that wish? It would be helpful if the media would come together and decide to never mention the names of the killers. The media attention should rather be given to the victims, whose lives have been stolen from them. Honor their memory by not mentioning the names of the murderers.

*“Collective fear stimulates herd instinct,  
and tends to produce ferocity toward those  
who are not regarded as members of the herd.”*

Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

frantic	civilians	locally elected officials
CPR – Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	heinous	ultimately
sensational	digital footprint	innate
ratings	extremist	core value
big scope of things	white supremacist	symbolic
impact	to justify	reinforced
fatal	empathy	societal injustice
predominantly	red flags	hostile
to be armed to the teeth	to eliminate	to portray
deranged	measures	progress
massacre	registration	invasion
	to gain momentum	

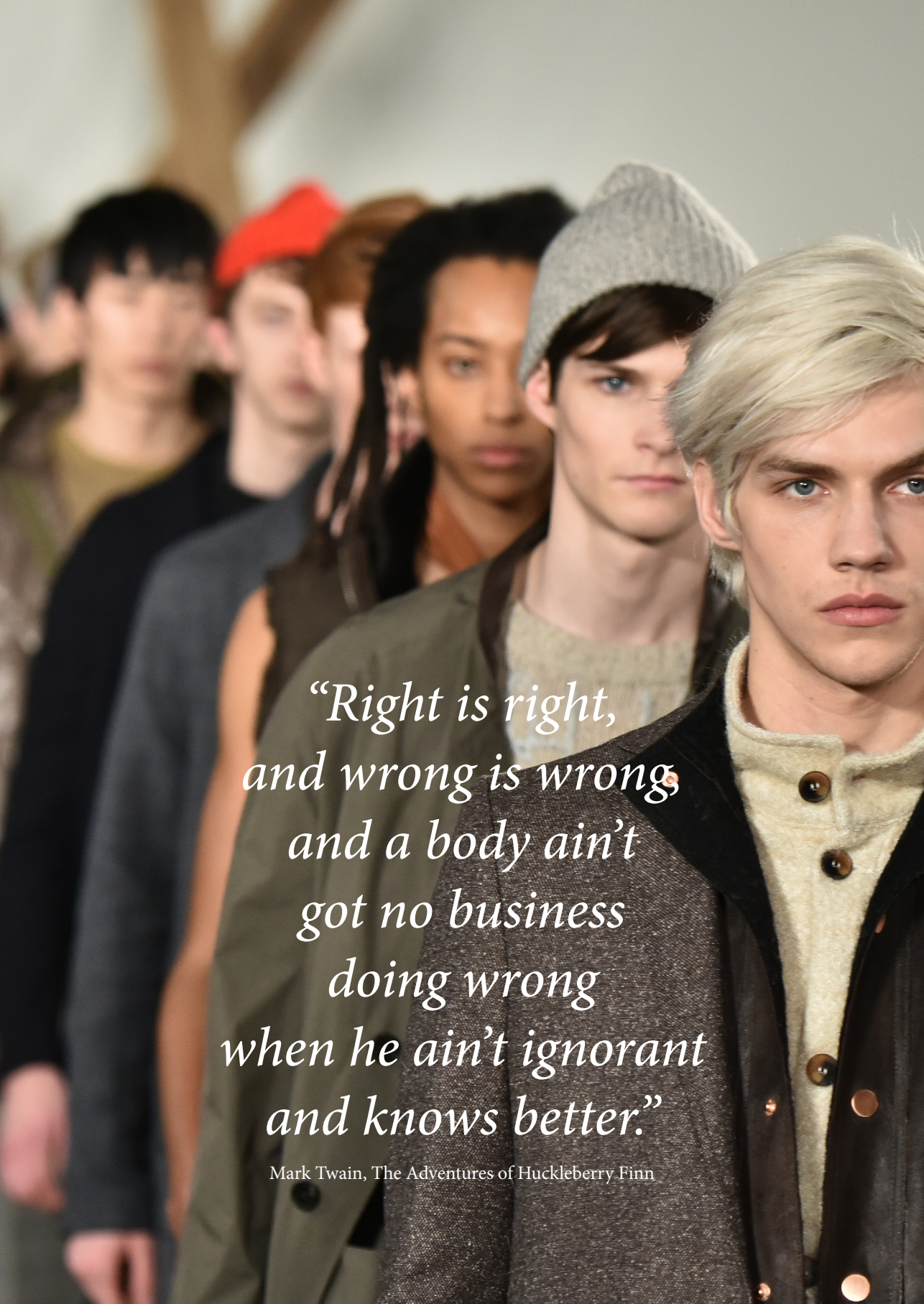
**Reflect and Connect:**

**Class Discussion:** Divide the class into 2 groups, one arguing for guns and the other against. Try to find online data and examples to support your arguments.

If you were running a TV station, would you agree not to mention the name of shooters on the news? Do you think the news always need to give a full account of what is happening? Discuss and support your views with examples.

**Diary:** What do you think would be best to do in order to minimize gun violence? You can check out sites like <http://everytownresearch.org/> for ideas and information.

**Essay:** Go to the website: <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0777958.html> and choose one fatal mass shooting to write about. Find the information about what happened. Try to find as much information you can about the victims and their lives. The essay should be 1-2 pages long.



*“Right is right,  
and wrong is wrong,  
and a body ain’t  
got no business  
doing wrong  
when he ain’t ignorant  
and knows better.”*

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

## WHO IS PAYING THE PRICE?

The advertisements show us happy gorgeous people dressed in the latest fashion from H&M, or Forever21 or one of those big corporate fashion chains young people love because their clothes are so cheap you can basically **buy them in bulk**. Who doesn't like to **make a bargain**, and get the latest **trends** without **breaking the bank**? The less the cost, the more we buy. In the documentary *The True Cost*, the director Andrew Morgan, claims that the fashion industry is keeping some seriously dark secrets and that everything that is extremely cheap comes at a price we are only beginning to understand.



### FAST FASHION

The fashion industry has changed **tremendously** in the last thirty years. In the 1960s Americans made 95% of their clothes, but now it's only about 3%. The remaining 97% of manufacturing is now taken to **developing countries**. The cost of clothing has also gone down encouraging the consumer buy a lot more. In fact, the more the US has moved the manufacturing to poor countries, the cheaper the prices have become. This business model is called Fast Fashion and it has completely changed the way clothing is made, bought and sold.

Not only are the big fashion corporations making clothes for a lot less money, but they are also **manipulating** us, the consumers, into buying more and more. The big chains get new trends every week and with advertisements everywhere, the average American is now buying 500% more clothes in the last two decades than they have ever done before. Now someone might think that getting all these clothes for low prices is a good thing and that these facts simply show how people can afford a lot more today than they did before. But, it's a bit more complicated than that.





## SWEATSHOPS

The global fashion industry now makes almost 3 trillion dollars every year. Factories that manufacture clothes in poor countries are often called sweatshops. This is because they are often crowded and the working conditions are difficult. We've known for some years that sweatshop workers are not treated well and that they often work in unsafe condition for very low wages. How unsafe these factories are, became clear on a Wednesday morning on April 24th 2012 when an eight story factory, Rana Plaza, in Dhaka,



Bangladesh collapsed killing over 1,000 factory workers, mostly women, and seriously injuring over 2500 people. This horrible accident caught the attention of the international media and shocking pictures from the factory **rubble** were shown on TV all over the world. People were searching for their loved ones for days. During the investigation it became clear that the workers in the factory had complained about cracks in the structure of the building the **previous** day. In other words, this accident could have been prevented.

### **AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION**

It might be easy to blame the factory owners for not making sure their workers were safe, but again, that would not tell the whole story. As big corporations demand lower prices, manufacturers have to make the clothes at impossibly low costs and **underbid** each other, even though they really can't. They are desperate to get the business because there are no jobs. If they try to maintain their price, the corporations go elsewhere, where there are other poor desperate people willing to work. So in order to make it work, they ignore the **safety measures** in their factories. Business must go on. The question is then: Who is responsible for this situation? Is it the manufacturer, the corporation or the consumer who buys the clothes in the stores for a great price?

As the death toll rose in Bangladesh, so did the profits of the fashion corporations. They made more money than ever the year following the disaster at Rana Plaza.

### **THE STORY DOESN'T END THERE**

Clothes are made of fabric and cotton is the most common fiber used in clothes. As you can imagine the need for cotton has risen a lot with people buying 500% more than before. This has created an opportunity for big **agricultural biotechnology** companies. These types of companies modify seeds and plants in order to make them produce more. This process calls for excessive **pesticide** use on the land and it has completely changed how farming is done. Some farmers claim that we don't really know how this man made change of nature will affect us in the long run. There are signs of growing instances of serious illnesses such as cancer, in the farming areas. This is a very scary thought and an issue that needs to be investigated.

These same big companies own all of the seeds in the industry. When small farmers need to buy seeds it's like **David fighting Goliath**. These big companies have all the power to set the price and often the poor farmers are basically driven off their land because they owe the companies so much for the seeds.

This situation has become deadly serious. In the last 16 years there have been more than two hundred and fifty thousand recorded farmer suicides in India. That's about one farmer every 30 minutes and it's the largest recorded wave of suicides in history.

### **TIME FOR A NEW WAY OF DOING THINGS?**

There is a growing group of people who are very concerned about how the fashion industry is affecting both farming and poor countries in the world. People who fight for a cause like this are often called activists. Instead of accepting how things are, they get up and try to fight the situation. They take action. They think that there must be a better way to make clothes than the Fast Fashion model – a way that still makes money, but without taking such an enormous toll on both garment workers and the environment. What do you think?

#### **THE FASHION DESIGNER**

“I love everything about clothes, I love the poetry, the fabric, I love the colors, I love the textures, I love the way they make you feel. You know, they are your chosen skin. We communicate who we are to a certain extent through our clothing. It is fundamentally what we wish to communicate about ourselves.”

Orsola de Castro

#### **THE CEO OF THE FACTORY**

Employs over 25,000 people and they make 1 in every 6 dress shirts in the US. He says that in the last 20 years, the prices of garments have gone down, whereas the manufacturing cost has actually gone up. It's a recipe for disaster.

Roger Lee. CEO of TAL Group in Hong Kong

### THE JOURNALIST, ACTIVIST

“This industry that is generating so much profit for a handful of people? Why is it that it is unable to support millions of its workers properly? Why is it that it is not able to guarantee their safety? We are talking about essential human rights. Why is it unable to guarantee that whilst generating these tremendous profits. Is it because it doesn't work properly? That is my question.”

Lucy Siegle journalist, author in UK

### THE GARMENT WORKER IN BANGLADESH:

Shima is one of 40 million garment factory workers in the world. Almost 4 million of those are in Bangladesh, working in close to 5,000 factories, making clothing for major Western brands. Most of the workers are women with a minimum wage of less than 3 dollars a day. They are among the lowest paid garment workers in the world. When Shima came to Dhaka she was 12 years old and her salary was 10 dollars a month.

Shima has a daughter. She has taken her daughter with her to the factory, but the conditions are horrible. So she has no other choice but to give her daughter away to be raised by her family in a small village. Shima will only see her daughter a couple of times every year.

Shima Akhter

### THE DIRECTOR OF THE FREE MARKET INSTITUTE:

“So this low wage manufacturing, or so called sweatshops, they're not just the least bad option workers have today, they're part of the very process that raises living standards and leads to higher wages and better working conditions over time. ... Other alternatives that are much worse than our sweatshops, usually much worse than the factory job the worker has.”

Benjamin Powell, Director, Free market Institute

**THE PSYCHOLOGIST:**

“What we now know 20 years later and hundreds of studies later, is that ... the more that money and status is important to ... [people], the less happy they are ... Now that’s really at odds with the thousands of messages that we receive daily from advertisements suggesting that materialism and the pursuit of possessions and owning stuff is what’s going to make us happy.”

Tim Kasser, Phd, Psychology Professor, Knox College

**THE DIRECTOR:**

“The eyes of the world are opening, and I believe history is giving us this moment to choose a better path. Human progress moves forward when those who have a voice use it on behalf of those who do not. It moves forward when a moment is seized rather than ignored. And it most certainly moves when we decide that the profit of some must never come from the exploitation of others. I hope with all my heart that this film serves as a needed step in that progress.”

Andrew Morgan, director of The True Cost

**THE FAIR TRADE ADVOCATE/ FASHION DESIGNER**

Safia Minney started a Fair Trade Fashion Brand over 20 years ago in Japan. The idea behind Fair Trade is correcting the social injustice in a trading system where workers and farmers are paid a living wage and production doesn’t harm the environment.

Safia Minney, founder, CEO People Tree

Stitching

Stitching

Stitching

Cutting

Cutting

### **THE ACTIVIST**

“Farmers get into debt when they get the seed because of the high cost – 17,000 percent more than it used to be. They get into deeper debt because it doesn’t deliver on the promise of controlling pests, so they have to buy more pesticides. The tragedy with chemicals, whether it’s fertilizers or pesticides, is that they are what has been called ecological narcotics. The more you use them, the more you need to use them. For a while, the yield of the single commodity climbs and then it starts to decline because you have contaminated the soil.

Companies that make these GM (genetically modified) seeds and make the chemicals are the same companies. And they are also the same companies that make the medicines which they are now patenting.” When the farmers owe the companies too much, they will collect by taking their farm away. “That day the farmer will go into his field, drink a bottle of pesticide and end his life.”

Vandana Shiva, Environmental activist Delhi, India

### **THE PHYSICIAN:**

Most of the cotton in India is grown in the Punjab region, which is now the largest user of pesticides in India. Dr. Pritpal Singh has been studying the effects of these chemicals on human health and his reports show a dramatic rise in the number of birth defects, cancers, and mental illness in the region.

Dr. Pritpal Singh, Punjab in India

### **THE MONSANTO ADVERTISEMENT:**

“Monsanto is proud to be the industry leader in agricultural innovation because of what these agricultural advancements can do to help you double yields for the future needs of the world. We’re dedicated to the future of agriculture and providing farmers with innovations that help them produce more and conserve more, while improving the lives of people around the world. Together, we can face the challenges of the next generation and beyond.”

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

to buy in bulk  
 to make a bargain  
 trends  
 to break the bank  
 tremendously  
 developing countries  
 to manipulate  
 rubble  
 previous  
 to underbid  
 safety measures  
 pesticides



Agricultural biotechnology is a number of scientific techniques used to improve plants, animals and microorganisms. Scientists have developed solutions to increase agricultural productivity by using DNA. It is also often called Genetic engineering and basically the idea is to make plants produce more and make animals grow bigger.

**Reflect and Connect:**

**Discuss:** Is it important to know how things are made before we buy them?

Where do you buy your clothes?

What is your favorite store? Where do they make their clothes?

Which is more important, getting clothes at a good price even though somebody suffers in the process, or paying more for clothes knowing that nobody is working for less than humane wages?

Do you know the difference between a company, a business and a corporation?

*“No act of kindness,  
no matter how small,  
is ever wasted.”*

*Aesop*



Good work



## LITTLE HEROES

You don't have to be large to do great things. Who hasn't heard of Mighty Mouse who was always coming to "save the day"? There was even a song written about that particular cartoon mouse. It's funny how mice seem to be thought of as cute little creatures. But, although closely related, rats are a whole different story. For some reason, rats seem to have a **bad rap**. Most people find them rather disgusting. They are thought to be filthy little **sewer dwellers** that carry diseases. Even though this may be the case sometimes, not all rats are dirty **scavengers**. On the contrary, they are little heroes who are saving lives and limbs.

"I don't like rats, but there's not much else I don't like. The problem with rats is they have no fear of human beings, they're loaded with foul diseases, they would run the place given half the chance, and I've had them leap out of a lavatory while I've been sitting on it."

David Attenborough



## SAVING LIVES

Apopo is a non-profit organization that trains African giant-pouch rats to sniff out **landmines** and detect TB, or tuberculosis. The rats go through a **rigorous** training period before they go to work in the field. At least six countries are involved in projects using rats in this way. According to the Apopo website, there are currently “56 countries and 4 territories around the world that are affected by landmines...” Mostly, these landmines are in post-war regions. A landmine is an **explosive** device that is shallowly buried in the ground. During war, these mines are intended to stop the enemy. However, when the war is over the landmines remain hidden and each year many **unsuspecting** civilians are killed or **maimed** by these. Rats are being trained to find these landmines before they explode and hurt people.



Tuberculosis is a widespread **infectious** disease that is caused by bacteria. According to Medical News Today, “around 3 million people with TB are being missed by health systems through either lack of **diagnosis** or failure to report diagnoses.” At Apopo, rats are being trained to detect the disease. It takes about 9 months to fully train a rat to detect TB in a person. Once trained, these rats are able to screen about a thousand people a month. This program is proving important because the trained rats help to find patients who are carrying the disease and may not have been diagnosed otherwise.



“Everyone can do simple things to make a difference, and every little bit really does count.”

Stella McCartney

## RAT SCHOOL



As mentioned before, it takes quite a long time to train a rat to the point where it can perform such difficult tasks. Rats are bred and from the moment they are born they are **socialized** and introduced to humans, different situations and **scents**. The rats are then “click trained”. Click training means that a reward, usually food, is used to **reinforce** a particular behaviour. A clicker is used to let the rat know when it has done the right thing. The rat learns that the “click” means food and once it performs the expected action it gets a reward. Then the lessons get more difficult. The rat is given a choice between smells. If it chooses the right one, TB bacteria or TNT (explosives), it gets rewarded. In this way, rats are taught to recognize the smell of explosives and TB. When rats are able to complete these tests they **graduate** from rat school and are officially TB or IMAS (International Mine Action Standards) rats. Apopos is on a mission to “develop detection rats technology to provide **solutions** for global problems and **inspire** positive social change.” These rats

are making a huge difference in the world. You don't have to be Superman to save lives. These little African rats are proving that! These little creatures have very special superpowers: brains and sensitive noses.

**Reflect and Connect:**

**Diary:** Are you afraid of any animals? If so explain. If you're not afraid of any type of animal then discuss why you think some people are. Give examples.

**Project:** Find out more about the Apopo projects. Choose one of the countries listed on the Apopo website and give a presentation to your peers.

**Writing:** Do some research on rats to find out the facts about these animals. Write an essay in which you present your findings. Make sure to organize your essay into paragraphs.

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

bad rap

sewer

dwellers

scavengers

landmines

rigorous

device

unsuspecting

infectious

diagnosis

socialized

scents

to reinforce

to graduate

solutions

to inspire

*“The secret of your success  
is hidden in your daily habits.”*

~ Mike Murdock



## WHAT IS THE SECRET OF SUCCESS?

The title of this article is a **loaded question** many have tried to answer. We all secretly wish for a magic formula, a **foolproof blueprint** that would make us successful and **prosperous**. How do we define success? Is winning the lottery being successful, or is there more to success than luck and **financial gain**? Most people would see success as a **combination** of being really good at something and getting the financial rewards. So the real question is: How do we get really good at the things we do?

### YOU EITHER HAVE IT, OR YOU DON'T?

Some people claim that the key **ingredient** in success is talent and some people have it and others don't. That theory doesn't leave much space for those who are not quite sure what their talent is, now does it? On the opposite side of the **spectrum** you can find people who say that talent has much less to do with it than just putting in the hard work. Just do it! You've all heard the saying: Practice makes perfect! If that is true, then we all have an equal start and it is just based on our willingness to do the work it takes to become successful. An interesting theory was put forth in the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell, who is a writer for the New York Times, as well as an author of his own books.

*“I didn't get where I am  
by thinking about it  
or dreaming it.  
I got there by doing it.”*

– Estee Lauder

### THE CASE OF THE BEATLES

Malcolm Gladwell writes about many interesting people in his book and in one case he shows the band The Beatles, which was the most famous pop band in the whole world in the 60s and 70s. The members of the band all came from Liverpool in England and had a working class background. The songwriters in

the band were mostly John Lennon and Paul McCartney and no one would deny their great talent. But was there something else that took them from the level of being good, or having great **potential**, to actually becoming the world **sensation** they became?

Gladwell finds the answer in the band's years in Hamburg, Germany before they became famous. So what happened in Hamburg? Well, they were not famous back then. They were a decent band, but not really great. So what was it? Gladwell insists that it was because they were basically struggling and had to play every day to make a living. The fact that they had to put in all these hours on the stage, resulted in their sound becoming tighter and more focused. All this hard work made the band ready to become the most famous band in the world. He says that they played for over 10,000 hours on stage in various venues and those 10,000 hours is actually the magic number of success. Paul McCartney was asked about this theory and he said that actually there were quite a few bands who were also putting in the hours that didn't become The Beatles. However, he still said that he believes that in order to become a success you have to put in the time.





## THE CASE OF BILL GATES

Is it seriously that simple? It would be great to say yes, but things are rarely that simple. Gladwell claims that there are a lot of factors that matter when you investigate the things that make people successful. As in the case of The Beatles, it took three things: the talent, the 10.000 hours and being at the right place at the right time. Gladwell also uses one of the richest men in the world, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, as an example to prove his theory.

Gates was born to wealthy parents in Seattle, USA and was quite easily bored with his studies. His parents put him in a private school that **catered to** wealthier families in the area hoping he would get more interested in his studies. The parents raised money for various summer projects in school and in the summer of 1968, three thousand dollars were spent on a computer terminal. Now, you have to remember that at this time almost no schools had computers, let alone computer clubs. This fact, is one of the other key ingredients in Gladwell's formula for success. The ingredient of **opportunity** – or being at the right place at the right time. What happened was that Gates became **obsessed** with the computers and practically moved into the computer lab with a group of others and they started teaching themselves how to use these strange new toys. When the money ran out, the parents raised more money for the project. Gates spent almost every waking hour in the computer lab and put in his 10.000 hours and the rest is history.

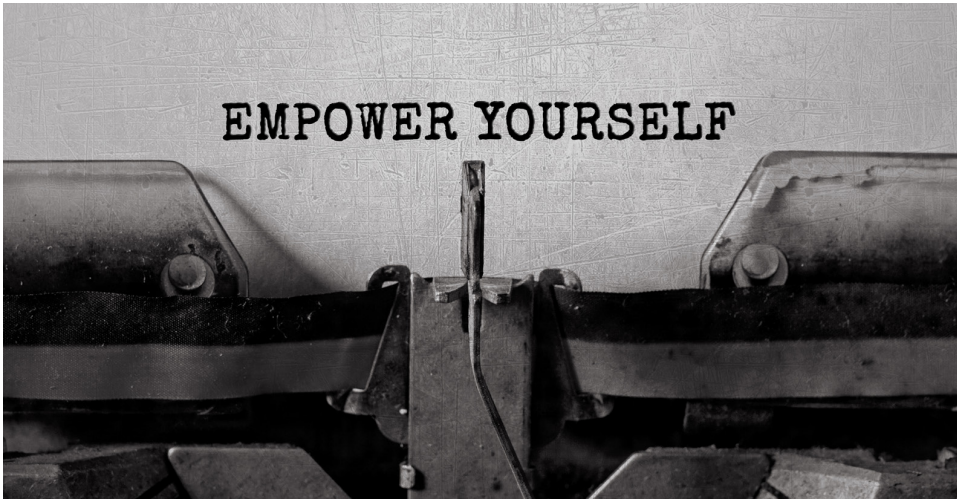


*“Try not to become  
a person of success,  
but rather try to become  
a person of value.”*

– Albert Einstein

## ALL THE VARIOUS FACTORS THAT ARE AT WORK

Going back to our first question about what it takes to become successful, we can see that according to Malcolm Gladwell's theory you need three things: Talent, time and opportunity. He also talks about the importance of support from both family and friends. Furthermore, he demonstrates that a wealthy background is clearly helpful in some cases. In fact, it can be the key ingredient in having the opportunity to develop one's skills in life. However, many have gone from **rags to riches**. The example of The Beatles shows that.



### WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS?

In all stories of successful people there is a hidden love story. You really must love what you do and if you don't know what it is, your first assignment is to find what really makes you interested. Then you put in the hours, you don't give up and slowly but surely you'll get better at it. Then and only then do you know if you have a shot at greatness. There is no greater feeling than the feeling of accomplishment and it sure beats any notions of winning the lottery. If you don't believe it, just watch an episode of "How winning the lottery destroyed my life" and you will understand.



*"I have not failed.  
I've just found 10.000 ways  
that won't work."*

– Thomas Edison

## LANGUAGE BANK:

loaded question	combination	to cater to
foolproofed	ingredient	opportunity
blueprint	spectrum	obsessed
prosperous	potential	rags to riches
financial	sensation	

**Ideas for assignments:**

**Groupwork:** Pick a product (can be a gadget, film, band, business, household item etc.) and try to figure out the story behind its success. Work in groups of 4-5 and choose roles for each member (1. Writes down ideas, 2. Finds visual material, 3. Leads the presentation). Everybody has to do the research to find the information you want to present.

**Diary:** Imagine something you would really like to excel at. Write down all the steps you would take in the first month and what goals you might set for yourself.

Who were the Beatles? Find out their most famous songs on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and see if you can understand the lyrics. Why do you think they were as popular as they were? Are there any bands today that are as popular? What makes a band really good in your opinion?

*“I have no fear  
of losing my life –  
if I have to save  
a koala or a crocodile  
or a kangaroo  
or a snake, mate,  
I will save it.”*

Steve Irwin



## THE KANGAROO ADVOCATE: “I’M GOING TO HAVE TO KEEP THIS”

Most people can probably agree that kangaroos are, without a doubt, one of the cutest animals on the planet. There’s something about those big brown eyes and big ears that just make us melt. They are like giant bunny rabbits and who doesn’t like those? We see a picture of a kangaroo and we think **Australia**, **Crocodile Dundee** and **Dingoes**. Kangaroos and Australia **go hand in hand**, as they should. The kangaroo is actually the national symbol of Australia.



### JILL, JACK AND JOEY

There are specific names for male and female kangaroos. A female is called a doe, flyer or jill and a male is called a buck, boomer or jack. A group of kangaroos is called a mob, a herd or a troop and a baby kangaroo is called a joey. What many people might not know is that joeys are at risk. Once **orphaned** they are helpless and stand very little chance of survival without **constant** care. One man decided that something needed to be done to save orphaned joeys. He started by saving one and now he has a troop of approximately 30. He started the Kangaroo **Sanctuary** in Alice Springs and works towards educating people about kangaroos.

### DID YOU KNOW?

That kangaroos, wallabies and wallaroos belong to a group of animals called marsupials from the family Macropodidae, which means “big feet”. Marsupials are mammals that nurse and carry their young in pouches. An adult kangaroo can hop along at a speed of about 30 miles per hour (48 kilometers) and the larger ones can cover over 15 feet (7 meters) in each hop. Because of the size of their feet, they are unable to walk in the usual way and have to use their strong tails and tiny forelimbs for support when moving slowly. It’s called crawl-walking.



### CHRIS ‘BROLGA’ BARNES

It’s been over 10 years since Chris ‘Brolga’ Barnes rescued his first joey. He pulled the helpless joey out its dead mother’s **pouch** and took it home with him. At the time, he was living in the **outback** in a tin shack with no power, toilet or shower. It’s safe to say that his living conditions were pretty rough. The jill had been killed by a vehicle and left on the side of the road. The joey was small and **vulnerable** and Brolga thought “I’m going to have to keep this.” He didn’t know what he was going to do, but he knew he had to do something to help this small animal. That was the experience that changed his life and set him on the trail to starting the Kangaroo Sanctuary. What many of us don’t realize is that when it’s born, a baby kangaroo can be anywhere from the

size of a grain of rice to the size of a lima bean (5 to 25 millimeters). They are completely **dependent** on their mother and the safety of her pouch. Most joeys don't leave their mother's pouch for good until they are between eight and twelve months old. Saving a joey meant that Brolga had to find a way to **mimic** a mother kangaroo and that meant creating a pouch and feeding it milk.



### EDUCATING PEOPLE

Brolga was successful in raising the joey and started to help more of the babies. After hearing how successful he was at nursing orphaned joeys back to health, strangers started bringing him orphans that had lost their mothers. Brolga expanded his operation and created the Kangaroo Sanctuary. He figured that if he could save joeys then he could teach other people to do it as well. Today, Brolga is an educator teaching people about kangaroos and what they can do to help. He's even planning on building a wildlife hospital. Brolga is making a difference and **devoting** his life to protecting joeys in the Australian outback.

Some people keep kangaroos as pets. Some even let them in the house and dress them up in T-shirts. Find some facts about keeping kangaroos domestically and decide what you think. Is it cute or cruel? Argue your case.





**LANGUAGE BANK:**

to go hand in hand

orphaned

constant

Sanctuary

pouch

outback

vulnerable

dependent

to mimic

to devote

**Reflect and Connect:**

1. Debate on the issue of keeping kangaroos as pets. You'll need to do some research and form an opinion based on what you find.
2. In your diary, think of ways that one person can make a difference. Give examples.
3. Do some research on the Australian outback and the wildlife that can be found there.
4. Find out more about Chris "Brolga" Barns and do a presentation on his life and work.

Want to find out more?

Watch the documentary series "Kangaroo Dundee".



*“Kids need to see  
entertainment  
where females  
are valued  
as much as males.”*

Geena Davis

## WHERE ARE THE GIRLS?

Many young people feel that equality between the sexes is not a problem in modern society and girls and boys have exactly the same opportunities to get ahead in life. Anybody **begging to differ** is probably a “feminist.”

Before we read any further, let’s think about what we think feminism stands for. Write down a few words describing your understanding of what it means to be a feminist.



Some might say that in theory **gender** equality is a fact, but in practice there are still far more men holding leading positions in society. Legally, women and men have the same rights in most Western countries so why aren’t women and men **represented** more equally when it comes to higher positions in society? Are girls not aggressive enough to get out there and get what they want? Are boys more capable when it comes to leadership than girls? Are boys and girls raised differently, which might explain this difference? Do girls need role models when it comes to success in the work arena? The more one thinks about this subject, the more questions seem to pop up.

## GLASS CEILING

Some say that even though some girls are aggressive and really try to get ahead, they will still face all kinds of obstacles that boys don't have to deal with when it comes to getting good jobs and **climbing the corporate ladder**. The term "glass ceiling" is often used by those who think women have a harder time getting ahead in the workplace. It means that women can only go so far within the company and will hit an invisible glass ceiling when they try to get the top jobs. If this is the case, what could possibly be the reason? Isn't it time to set aside our feelings and **assumptions** when it comes to gender equality, and look at what has actually been investigated.

## ROLE MODELS IN THE MEDIA

The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media has been doing research on gender representation in films, TV and books for over 20 years. Geena Davis is a famous actress who felt, as many other Hollywood actresses, that roles for women as powerful **protagonists** in films and TV series were often very difficult to come by. Women were also often written off at a certain age by the Hollywood film industry. She decided to do something about this by investigating what was actually being done in the media. Her goal was provide the facts, educate the public and try to engage both authorities and media users. She wanted to change what was going on, because after all, why should girls accept being in second place when it comes to media exposure?

The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media's mission is to dramatically alter how girls and women are reflected in the media. The Institute highlights gender inequalities through research, education, training, strategic guidance and advocacy programs.



## IT IS POSSIBLE TO INSTILL A CHANGE

Most people agree that having strong role models in life is of great importance. We learn our values from our parents, our immediate surroundings and the media. Geena Davis claims that if women are not shown as much in the media as boys, it has an effect on us – the viewers – because then half of humanity is reduced to a secondary role. Furthermore, how people are portrayed in the media is just as important. If girls play second fiddle to the boys in mainstream media, children and teenagers are learning those roles. The cycle continues and nothing changes. It may be impossible to control these things completely, but it is possible to instill a change. The audience and the media industry need to be aware of the importance of the role media plays in shaping our views and attitudes towards the sexes.

“No one can argue that viewing again and again an imbalanced fictional “world” where females are often underrepresented or unmotivated can be good for young females or young males. Females take up half the space in society, yet, especially in films aimed at children, they appear much less frequently than do males.”

## STEREOTYPES IN MEDIA

What if the media always portrays a very similar picture of girls and women? That would be called stereotyping, and it is a well known practice in the media, not only regarding girls, but also when it comes to different races and nationalities.

Before we read any further, can you think of common stereotypes in films and TV when it comes to both sexes, different races, sexuality and different nationalities?

Sometimes we find stereotypes quite funny because they **correspond** to our **preconceived** ideas of a group of people. However, the problem with **excessive** use of stereotypes is that it is an oversimplification at best. By using stereotypes we dismiss all of the differences that surely exist within each group. It is almost like saying that all girls are the same and all boys are the same.

## ALWAYS PRETTY

Quite telling results were found in a study on characters in very popular animated Disney movies made for young children. Firstly, the female characters were valued above all else for their physical beauty. Do you think this is a problem? Who decides what is pretty and what is not pretty? What about other characteristics like having a great personality or being very smart? According to the study, more than half of the female characters had exaggerated physical bodies. They had unnaturally thin waistlines and looked more like Barbies than real people. Furthermore, the female characters often were **short sighted** in their goals. Either they were daydreamers, or they were easily **distracted** from their goals, or they were real daredevils who risked everything to get what they wanted.

The same study analyzed over 4000 characters in G-rated family movies and found two common stereotypes for girls, the traditional and the **hypersexualized**. The traditional female type was seen as either a parent



or a caretaker who always puts the interests of others above her own. The hypersexualized character is attractive above all else. This can be seen in sexualized clothing and unrealistic body image. The study found out that females were five times more likely than males to be shown wearing little or nothing.

### **A CHANGE WILL BENEFIT ALL**

The studies that have been done on how girls and women are portrayed in the media are very clear. Girls need to get a more rounded and realistic representation and more positive role models that are not just about them being pretty and nice. They need to be seen as strong characters and get as much screen time as the boys. That would not only benefit girls and feminists, but the boys as well. Both sexes have a variety of great qualities that need to be shown on screen equally for all children to prosper and become the best they can be in real life.



**LANGUAGE BANK:**

- beg to differ
- gender
- to represent
- climb the corporate ladder
- assumptions
- protagonists
- to play second fiddle
- to correspond
- preconceived
- excessive
- short sighted
- distracted
- hypersexualized

**Reflect and Connect:**

Use some of the assignments on <http://www.inc.com/bill-murphy-jr/17-inspiring-women-entrepreneurs-on-how-to-be-successful.html>

**Collect your own data:** Divide the class into groups. Pick 5-6 popular movies that are available on DVD and have the group time the onscreen time of girls/women and boys/men. Notice both screen time and speaking time in minutes and seconds.

Name of movie	Women screen time	Women Speaking time	Men Screen time	Men Speaking time



Using the same movies as above, list the jobs the male and the female characters have.

<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Business/financial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science/technology/engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Media/arts/entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journalism; law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Law enforcement/protective services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal/corporate care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*“The human spirit  
is a magnificent entity.  
Just when we think  
we can stand no more,  
something significant  
touches our soul...  
and life goes on.”*

Peggy Toney Horton



**Be the change**

## THE SMALLEST GIFT CAN BE THE BIGGEST OF ALL

It is now over seventy years since the end of World War II and a lot of movies and documentaries have been made about the horrors of the war, the suffering of the Jews and the concentration camps. People who have never experienced war themselves often find it difficult to relate to the magnanimity of the horrors of this war.

### THE CHOCOLATE

Some stories from the war do not express the horrors of the situation, but the opposite. They are stories of how small gestures of kindness can show us the beauty of the human spirit and make us believe in the good in people. One of those stories is the story of Francine Christophe.

Francine was born in 1933 in France, the same year Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power in Germany. She was made to wear a yellow star, the symbol of being Jewish, and the star was very big on her chest because she was only eight years old. The Nazis took her mother and her and put them in the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen in Northern Germany. Although people were not allowed to bring any things to the camps, children, like Francine, were allowed to take a couple of things with them from home. Her mother brought two pieces of chocolate with her and told Francine that she would keep it and give it to her if she thought she was getting seriously weak from starvation.



## THE BEAUTY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

Helene, one of the women in the camp with Francine and her mother, was pregnant. You would never have known that from looking at her, because she was so skinny. When the time came for her to deliver the baby, Francine's mother took her daughter aside and asked her if she remembered the chocolate she was saving for her. Then she asked her how she was feeling. Francine told her mother: "Fine mama, I will be OK".

Her mother asked Francine if she could give the chocolate to Helene. "Giving birth here will be hard. She may die. If I give her the chocolate it may help her." Francine told her mother to go ahead. Helene gave birth to a tiny little baby, who never cried, until the camp was liberated six months later.

## THE WOMAN AT THE CONFERENCE

Many years later Francine was talking to her daughter about the **psychological aftermath** of her **traumatic** experience. Her daughter asked her if she would have had an easier time if she had had professional help. Francine decided to organize a **conference** called: "If the survivors of concentration camps had had counseling in 1945 what would have happened?" The conference was a huge success. A lot of older survivors, psychologists and **historians** attended the conference and it was very interesting. One woman stood up to give a speech and she said: "I live in Marseilles, where I am a **psychiatrist**. Before I deliver my talk I have something for Francine Christophe." She reached into her pocket and pulled out a piece of chocolate. She gave it to Francine and said: "I am the baby."

### Reflect and Connect:

**Discuss in class:** How can small gestures of kindness change life for the better? Try to find examples of kind gestures you can show in your own life.

**Diary:** Imagine going through the trauma of being locked up in a concentration camp as a child. Write approximately one page about how that experience would affect a person as an adult.

**Diary:** Has anyone ever shown you an unexpected kindness? How did that make you feel? Explain the situation.

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

documentaries

concentration camps

magnamity

starvation

liberated

psychological aftermath

traumatic

conference

historians

psychiatrists

**Additional material:** Here you can see the Belsen-Bergen Camp:

[http://isurvived.org/Bergen-Belsen\\_liberation.html](http://isurvived.org/Bergen-Belsen_liberation.html)

If you have the chance, see the movie: *The boy in striped pajamas* (2008) based on the book by John Boyne. The film shows the war from a young boy's perspective.

[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0914798/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0914798/?ref_=nv_sr_1)

An interview with Miep Gies who risked her life daily to hide Anne Frank and her family.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/frank/tscripts/miep.htm>



*“Education is the most  
powerful weapon  
which you can use  
to change the world.”*

Nelson Mandela

## THE “LION WHISPERER”

Sometimes our life takes an unexpected turn and leads us in a direction we didn't foresee. After graduating with a BSc (Bachelor of Science) degree, Kevin Richardson began a career in helping people through the tough process of physical **rehabilitation** after they had undergone surgery. One day a surprising thing happened and he was offered the opportunity to work at a local lion park near Johannesburg, South Africa. He came to a **fork in the road** and chose his path. After that there was no turning back and today he is famous worldwide for the work he does with lions and **hyenas** in South Africa. He's been featured in news stories, starred in and produced films and written books. He's known as “The Lion Whisperer” and is considered one of the most knowledgeable experts in the world when it comes to lions and other large African **predators**.



## KING OF BEASTS

From the beginning Kevin Richardson loved animals, any kind of animal. He found them all **fascinating**. While working at the lion park he was especially **captivated** by the **majesty**, beauty and strength of the “king of beasts”, the lions. He had doubts about traditional training methods using sticks, chains and whips and felt that there must be a better way to **interact** with these big cats. So, **disregarding** common practice he decided to try something different, an **alternative** method. His methods involve getting to know each individual animal. He learns what each of them like and dislike, what makes them angry and what works towards earning their trust. He becomes part of the family, part of the **pride**. He’s a self-taught animal **behaviorist** and has his own views on what works and why.



Big cats are usually solitary creatures and live for the most part on their own. Lions are different. They live in social groups called prides. Each pride usually consists of related females and young adult males and one dominant male. The females do most of the hunting in groups and the dominant male guards his territory and protects the female lionesses and cubs.



## WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Lion numbers are **decreasing**. This is mostly due to hunting, **habitat** loss, disease and the conflicts that arise between humans and predators. Kevin Richardson's Wildlife Sanctuary is on a mission to educate the public and provide a **safe haven** to large **carnivores**. Ultimately, Kevin's vision is to change the way people think and to minimize the number of carnivores kept in captivity. He is passionate about getting rid of the "cub petting industry" and believes it is directly linked to the "canned-hunting" industry. **Located** about an hour northeast of Johannesburg, the sanctuary is made up of thirteen fenced enclosures and covers 1300 hectares of land. Taking care of so many animals is expensive and there were times when Kevin was unsure about whether or not he would be able to keep the reserve open and running. Luckily, those worries are now in the past. The main aim of the Wildlife Sanctuary is to raise public awareness to the **plight** of lions through education, using social media, films, documentaries and television. These programs provide most of the funds needed to run the sanctuary and make it **self-sustainable**. The sanctuary also runs a **volunteer** program for those who are interested in getting involved and learning more in an up close and personal way.

Hyenas have a bad rap. They are usually portrayed as the disgusting "bad guy". Hyenas are thought to be dirty scavengers who are vicious, mean and evil. In the movie, "The Lion King" the hyenas were "the enemy" to the other animals, including the lions. In a short essay, explore this topic with regard to the stereotype and compare it to Kevin Richardson's ideas about hyenas. How might our ideas about wild animals and our feelings towards them **affect** their fate?



*“The continued existence of  
wildlife and wilderness  
is important to the quality of life of humans.”*

Jim Fowler

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

rehabilitation

fork in the road

predators

fascinating

captivated

majesty

interact

disregarding

alternative

pride

behaviorist

decreasing

habitat

safe haven

carnivores

located

plight

self-sustainable

volunteer

**What's the difference between these two words?**

affect / effect

**Reflect and Connect:**

1. What are the factors that are endangering lions and other predators? Do some research on this topic and prepare a presentation on the subject.
2. Kevin Richardson uses alternative methods in his dealings with the large predators he works with. Has he been criticized for this? Find out what others are saying about these methods and write a short paper with your findings.

**Diary:** Do you think that you would be interested in signing up as a volunteer at a place like Kevin Richardson's Wildlife Sanctuary? Give your reasons.

Have you ever come to a fork in the road and had your plans, or your life, change because of the path you chose? Explain.

Reflect on the meaning of the above quote by Jim Fowler. What does this mean and how is it important. Explain and give examples to support your views.

**Extra material:** Films and books: <http://www.lionwhisperer.co.za/index.php/about-kevin/past-work>

Art of the Pride: <http://artofthepride.com/>

A black and white photograph of a ballerina's legs in white tutu shoes on a wooden floor. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the wood and the fabric of the shoes. The quote is centered over the image.

*“The greater the obstacle,  
the more glory in  
overcoming it.”*

Moliere

## MISTY COPELAND TAKING THE BALLET WORLD BY STORM: AGAINST ALL ODDS

The world of classical ballet has been **predominantly** white with only a few dancers of different racial backgrounds. Those who have been able to enter the ballet world have been few and far between, especially when it comes to the **top notch** positions of solo dancers. This is especially true when it comes to the role of the principal dancer. The ballet dancer Misty Copeland is breaking the barrier for black ballet dancers by taking the centre stage. She was appointed the Principal dancer for The American Ballet Theatre in June 2015, thereby being the first African American dancer to reach such honors in the American Ballet Theatre. Let's look at how Misty Copeland achieved her centre stage in American ballet.

### WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS

Misty Copeland is in so many ways the **embodiment** of the **American Dream**. She did not seem to have many **prospects** when she was a child in San Pedro, California. She was one of six children and raised by her divorced mother. They were constantly on the move, until the family settled down in a motel in Gardena, where they all had to live in only two rooms. In America people often talk about living on the wrong side of the tracks, meaning you live in a poor part of town – the part that is divided from the better part by the railroad tracks. Misty's story is a story of a girl from the wrong side of the tracks who makes it against all odds.

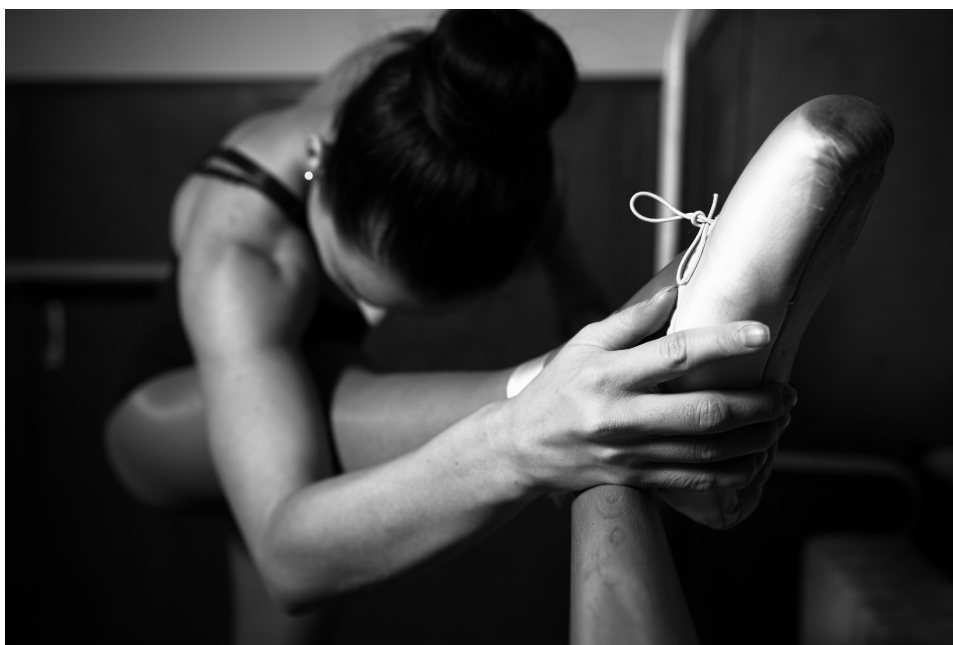
### HARD WORK PAYS OFF

When Misty was thirteen years old a teacher suggested she should **enroll** in an after school program in ballet. The ballet instructor, Cindy Bradley, noticed Misty immediately, and realised that this young girl had **immense** potential, even though she had never studied ballet. You can just imagine how big an **impression** Misty made, because for most starting at thirteen is very late, if not too late. At this time, Misty had not even heard classical music and everything about the ballet world was **alien** to her, except for the fact that she loved it, more than she had ever loved anything in her life. She took lessons during the day and during the evening. She worked **relentlessly** to make up for lost time.

“Ballet is an extremely difficult job and it takes a lot out of you physically, but it’s just as much about mental discipline. Some people don’t last because they don’t have it in them. But to move up, you have to have that focus and you have to love what you do. There’s no way you could do this if you didn’t.”

Misty Copeland

All that hard work paid off. In only three months she was dancing on her toes, a **feat** that takes most ballet dancers three years to master. But all this training meant that she didn’t spend much time with her family and one day her mother called Cindy Bradley and told her to bring Misty home, because all these ballet lessons were too much. However, that same evening Cindy went back to the motel and convinced Misty’s mother to let her stay with her so she could use the time practising.



### THE COURT CASE

Misty lived with Cindy and her family for three years and practised her art. She started getting noticed and winning awards. Her mother thought she was losing her daughter and wanted her to come back. Misty felt that if she moved back home, her future in ballet would end. She didn't want this to happen, so she decided to try to get legal **independence** from her mother. The court case caught the attention of the local media and not in a good way. Misty was sensitive and after two months she just couldn't continue this fight, dropped the lawsuit and moved in with her mother and siblings. Even up to this day she gets very sad thinking about this difficult time. Thankfully, for the ballet world, Misty would **bounce back**. The following year she got the opportunity to go to a ballet summer workshop in New York, and that's when she got her big break.



### MAKING HISTORY

The director of the American Ballet Theatre, Kevin McKenzie, noticed her and recognized in her all the **qualities** that make a great ballet dancer. In September 2000 he signed her as a dancer for the company. In 2007 she became a soloist for the company and in June 2015 she reached the highest goal a ballet dancer can achieve when she was **promoted** to be the principal dancer in the company. This made her the first African-American female dancer to hold that position in the 75-year history of the American Ballet Theatre. Today, her career in ballet is blossoming and she has also been **branching out** into other areas. She co-wrote a best-selling **biography** and has published the children's book *Firebird*. She has won **multiple** awards and President Obama appointed

her to the President's Council of Fitness, Sport and Nutrition in 2014. She has come a long way from the run down motel in Gardena, California. The future looks bright for Misty Copeland.

"I had moments of doubting myself, and wanting to quit, because I didn't know that there would be a future for an African-American woman to make it to this level," .... "At the same time, it made me so hungry to push through, to carry the next generation. So it's not me up here ... it's everyone that came before me that got me to this position."

Misty Copeland in the New York Times, 1st of July 2015

### **ENDORSEMENTS AND THE VIDEO THAT WENT VIRAL**

Misty Copeland has had endorsement deals with COACH and American Express, as well as having her own calendar in 2013. She really caught the eye of a different crowd than her normal ballet enthusiasts, when she starred in the video campaign "I will what I want" for Under Armour. The video went viral and got more than 8 million hits in a few weeks. Furthermore, the musician Prince, got her to appear at one of his concerts as a dancer and she was a guest judge on the popular TV show, So you think you can Dance.

### **THE IMAGE OF THE BALLERINA AND THE QUESTION OF WEIGHT**

The traditional image of the ballerina is that she is white like porcelain, petite and very thin. Because of this image it has been a struggle for many more athletically built women to enter the world of ballet. Even the ballet star Misty Copeland has had doubts about her own body, because she is more athletic and muscular than many ballerinas.



### **ONE SUGAR PLUM TOO MANY**

In November 2010 the New York Times ballet critic Alastair Macaulay wrote in his review of the New York City's Ballet production of the Nutcracker that "Jenifer Ringer, as the Sugar Plum Fairy, looked as if she'd eaten one sugar plum too many". This remark caused an uproar online over female body types, fat shaming and a lot of people came to Ringer's defense. The irony is, obviously, that Jenifer Ringer is not fat at all. If anything, she is very thin.

### **'NOT COOL MAN'**

The reason why so many people were outraged was that Jenifer had been very candid about her battle with anorexia and bulimia earlier in her career, so many felt the comment was very insensitive. The pressure on women to be thin is one thing, the pressure for ballerinas to be very thin is intense. The celebrity blogger Perez Hilton wrote: 'We thought the reviewers were supposed to review the dancing, not someone's stomach. Not cool man.' The critic got so many angry responses that on December 3rd the same year, he wrote a follow-up piece defending his comments. 'If you want to make your appearance irrelevant to criticism, do not choose ballet as your career.'

### **CELEBRATE THE VARIETY**

Jenifer Ringer appeared on TV where she said she didn't expect an apology. 'As a dancer, I do put myself out there to be criticized, and my body is part of my art form. At the same time, I'm not overweight. I do have, I guess, a more womanly body type than the stereotypical ballerina. But that's one of the wonderful things about the New York City Ballet is we have every body type you can imagine. We have tall, we have petite, we have athletic, we have womanly, we have waiflike. I mean, we have every body type out there, and they can all dance like crazy, they're all gorgeous. And I think dance should be more of a celebration of that, of seeing these beautiful women with these different bodies all dancing to this gorgeous music, and that's what should be celebrated.'

From an interview on Today's News

## RAVEN WILKINSON



Misty Copeland has called Raven Wilkinson her mentor and that she would never have made it to where she is in the ballet world without Raven paving the way. Raven Wilkinson was hired by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo in 1955, and she was the company's first black ballerina. She was told to use a lot of white make-up and try to blend into the crowd so she wouldn't stir up too much attention. She didn't want to give the company any grief, but she also didn't want to deny her race and who she was.

### **DIFFICULT TO PUSH THROUGH THE RACIAL BARRIER**

Raven was born in Harlem, New York in 1935 to a middle class family. Already at the age of nine, a famous Russian dancer was training her. In spite of her talent she was rejected a couple of times when auditioning for the Ballet Russe because she was black. She thought about giving up dancing and went to university, but she just couldn't do it. The third time she auditioned, she made it and by the second year with the company she was promoted to the role of a solo dancer.

**RACISM AND KU KLUX KLAN**

The first tour with the company went relatively fine, but with racial tension building up in the South, Wilkinson had to endure endless racism. She was banned from staying with the others on tours and sent to motels only for blacks. After several interactions with the Ku Klux Klan it came to a point where the ballet company feared for her life and decided that she wouldn't be performing. That night, locked in her hotel room, she saw a burning cross on the lawn outside her window. She decided she couldn't take it anymore.

**AT A CROSSROADS**

Raven had always been a spiritual person and she joined a convent for six months after leaving the Ballet Russe. However, she got an opportunity to join the Dutch National Ballet and she took it. She relocated to Holland where she stayed for seven years. When she returned to America she was hired by the New York City Opera where she danced from 1974-1985. After that she had occasional character roles up to the year 2011.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLE MODELS**

Misty Copeland has referred to Raven as her role model. As much as Misty has had to fight for her place in the ballet world she says it's nothing compared to the racism and harassment Raven had to endure during her career. Raven fought all her life for representing black women in ballet. Now, Misty has taken the torch to continue that fight. It's her hope that one day the ballet world will represent the diversity of races that are found in America.

**THE AMERICAN DREAM:**

The ideals of freedom, equality, and opportunity traditionally held to be available to every American.

*“To me,  
The American Dream  
is being able to follow your own personal calling.  
To be able to do what you want to do is incredible freedom.”*

- Maya Lin

**LANGUAGE BANK:**

**predominantly**

**top-notch**

**embodiment**

**prospects**

**to enroll**

**immense**

**impression**

**alien**

**relentlessly**

**feat**

**independence**

**to bounce back**

**qualities**

**promoted**

**to branch out**

**geography**

**multiple**

**Reflect and Connect:**

**Discussion in class:** How can you be inspired by Misty Copeland's story? Write down your thoughts regarding her difficulties as a child, her hard work and eventually her success. What do you think about her court case against her mother? What are the differences between Misty, as a black ballerina, and a white ballerina? They both trained extremely hard. Can you learn anything from her story that you can apply to your own life?

**Diary:** Write a page on each of the following topics.

How do you define racism? Have you heard about the KKK? Is there any racism in Iceland? Have you experienced or seen any instances of racism?

Criticism. Do you think that the New York Times critic was wrong in saying that Jenifer Ringer had eaten "a plum too many," or was he justified in his criticism? Is there pressure on girls to be thin? Can you give an example of that from your own experience?



*“Happiness depends  
on ourselves.”*

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

WE ARE HOW  
WE TREAT EACH OTHER  
AND N♥THING MORE

## FACING UP TO IT

We humans are social creatures. We all want to belong, to be part of the group and feel accepted (and sometimes loved) by those around us. Sometimes this means that we try to “fit in”. Sometimes that’s a good thing and other times it’s not. Mostly, we want to be happy. Other people may make us feel good or bad about ourselves, but the key to happiness lies within ourselves and doesn’t depend on others. What it **boils down to** is that the most important person involved in making you happy is you.

### WHAT HAPPENED TO HER FACE?

We are all different in some way or another. Dawn Shaw, an American woman living near Seattle, Washington, knows all about being different. She was born with a **tumor** on the left side of her face and removing the tumor caused that side of her face to be **paralyzed**. Her face is “uneven.” People have a **tendency** to stare at her and young children will point at her and ask their parents “what happened to her face?” Growing up with a facial difference wasn’t easy and although Dawn has come to a point where she is comfortable in her own skin, there are many people with physical differences and **disabilities** who aren’t. Some of them are afraid to leave their own homes for fear of the reactions of others.

*“It makes me sad to think that some people who have a face that has been changed by a medical condition or an accident are afraid to go out in public because other people can be so hurtful. People with physical differences should be able to exist in everyday society without fear of being stared at or insulted. No one should feel lonely or left out because of how they look or because of a physical limitation. I have felt that way many times during my childhood.”*

Dawn understands that most people don’t **intend** to be hurtful, but she would rather they just asked her directly instead of asking others. Children tend to ask their parents why Dawn looks like she does and she points out that ...

*“Their parents don’t know, so it is better if they ask me, as long as they ask politely. Curiosity is normal, and I understand that they are not trying to be mean. Once they learn about me and discover I am just a person, my appearance doesn’t matter anymore. Because I am comfortable with who I am, my attitude helps others be comfortable with who I am.”*

## BE KIND TO OTHERS AND YOURSELF

Self-esteem is important. It gives us confidence and helps us to **cope** with the difficulties that come our way. Sometimes those difficulties include being on the receiving end of **snide remarks**, teasing and bullying. Dawn feels lucky in that she grew up in a very supportive and **nurturing** environment:

*“... because of my appearance, I was teased in school. However, I had people who loved and supported me. They encouraged me to develop my talents and helped build my confidence and self-esteem. Because of that, I was more resilient. The mean comments still hurt, but I was able to recover more quickly. The better people feel on the inside and the more they embrace their own abilities and differences, the more quickly they will recover when other people are mean to them. A bully is mean because he or she is unhappy with his or her own life. That person may be jealous, or may need to feel more powerful because they lack power in other areas of their life. If a person feels good about their own abilities and talents, they are less likely to want to tear someone else down. Remember to be kind to others. If you meet a person who looks different, imagine they are someone you care about such as a family member or a friend. How would you want that person to be treated? Don’t forget to be kind to yourself as well.”*





*“Experience  
is the teacher of all things.”*

Julius Caesar

### PUTTING EXPERIENCE TO GOOD USE

Life is hard sometimes. Everyone goes through tough **phases** during their lifetime and some people have **more than their fair share**. But it's those difficulties and the experiences we gain because of them, that open doors. Dawn has chosen to help others by sharing her experiences through writing and **webinars** and hopes that in doing so she will be able to increase **awareness** and provide support for those who are **struggling**.

*“Because of how my appearance and experiences have affected my life, I was encouraged to write my memoir, Facing Up to It. It was a long and difficult process, but as I wrote I came to understand that my story could help other people who are not comfortable with themselves or their appearance. If someone who looks like I do can have a long, successful and loving marriage, others with altered physical appearance can love and be loved as well. If I can be happy and do fun things like going to concerts and riding my Icelandic horses, others can be happy and do fun things too. My second book, Friending the Mirror, is a guide to helping people feel better about themselves on the inside.*

*In addition to the books I have written, I host an online webinar called “Friending the Mirror.” This series aims to help people find beauty through happiness by directly addressing issues and insecurities related to appearance, disabilities and other physical challenges. People are afraid of what they don't understand. My programs educate people about differences so that they become less scary, which helps people become more accepting. My guests also offer advice to help people build self-esteem.”*

### STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

*“We focus so much on our differences, and that is creating,  
I think, a lot of chaos and negativity and bullying  
in the world ... if everybody focused on what  
we all have in common ... we all want to be happy.”*

Ellen DeGeneres

Why do people seem to **categorize** each other into groups of “us” and “them?” Have you ever wondered why seemingly nice people show themselves to be **prejudiced** and narrow-minded? What makes bullies terrorize others and why do others remain silent as they witness mean behavior? Maybe it’s time for a change in attitude. There’s an old saying that we shouldn’t judge others until we’ve walked a mile in their shoes. Well, that may not always be possible, but as Dawn says: “All of us have challenges and differences, whether they involve how we look, how we think, what we experience, or a combination of these. We should be happy for such **diversity**, as it makes each of us unique and gives us so much variety in our lives and in our relationships.”

It’s all about our **perspectives**, attitudes and **perceptions** and we can change those. Let’s start with ourselves!

### **Reflect and Connect:**

**Diary:** Have you ever stopped to stare at someone? Why? Explain the circumstances and reflect on your feelings and thoughts at the time. Would you react differently after reading the text above? Explain.

Have you ever gone through difficulties and used your experience in a positive way? Do you know anyone else who has gone through hard times and become stronger because of it? Explain and give examples.

Why do you think that Dawn says “it was a hard and difficult process” to write her memoir, *Facing Up to It*? What do you think the title of the book means? Explore this topic and try to put yourself in her shoes.

**Discussion in class:** Why do people seem to pick on others and say unkind things? What can we do as individuals?

What does it mean to have high self-esteem? What kinds of events or situations can damage our self-esteem? Are children more susceptible to having their self-esteem damaged than adults?

Discuss the phrase “bad experiences can make you stronger.”

**Essay topics:** Do some research on Aristotle and *Nicomachean Ethics*. How does this relate to the topic of happiness? Present your findings.

Do some research on Dawn Shaw and the work that she is doing. Present your findings to your peers in a presentation.

## LANGUAGE BANK:

boils down to	tear someone down
tumor	phases
paralyzed	more than their fair share
tendency	webinars
disabilities	awareness
insulted	struggling
limitation	memoir
intent	altered
curiosity	insecurities
appearance	chaos
cope	categorize
snide remarks	prejudiced
nurturing	diversity
resilient	perspectives
embrace	perceptions
lack	

*“There comes a time  
when one must take a position  
that is neither safe,  
nor politic, nor popular,  
but he must take it  
because conscience  
tells him it is right.”*

Martin Luther King Jr. (A Testament of Hope:  
The Essential Writings and Speeches.)

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a red circular sticker. The sticker has the words "I Voted" written on it in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background is a blurred, light-colored surface.

**I  
Voted**

## WHAT'S UP WITH POLITICS?

“Why do people argue about politics? Don't we all want the same things in life? Why can't everyone just agree to do the right thing?” My brother asked my parents these questions the other day. They had been watching the news and I guess he heard something that **sparked** these thoughts. Needless to say, my parents looked at each other blankly and seemed to be at a loss for words. I have to admit that I reacted in exactly the same way. I've taken history. I've learned a little about government and how it works, but politics **baffles** me, and I honestly don't think that I'm the only one out there who thinks this way.

### LEFT, RIGHT AND CENTER

It's very confusing for the **average** person to understand all of the political **terminology**, let alone the **ideology** behind all of the terms. We have people who **label** themselves as conservatives, democrats, liberals, socialists, communists, anarchists – and the list goes on and on. The same goes for political parties: the Green Party, the Labour Party, the Conservative Party and so on, depending on which country you're in. How can we ever understand this stuff? There are leftist views, right wing views and all kinds of other views in between. Believe me, there are lots of them.

*“Ethical decisions ensure that  
everyone's best interests are protected.  
When in doubt, don't.”*

Harvey Mackay

### FINDING YOUR PATH

So why should we even bother? The answer is easy. If you want to have an effect on the society you live in, then you need to be an active part of it. It's useless to complain about situations if you're not ready to participate in finding **solutions**. If you want things to change, then you have to do your part, do some research, make informed decisions and do what you believe is right. This may involve joining a political party if you're **passionate** about being part of the process of creating policies, or it may just involve voting in **elections** when you're old enough. It always involves finding out what the issues are

and making up your own mind. For the most part, people get involved in politics because they want to **contribute** and make society a better place. The disagreements in government usually take place when it comes to deciding what needs to be done, how it should be done, and in what order. Do new laws need to be created? Who will **benefit** and how much will it cost? Is it worth it? Is it **ethical**? Either way you will need to explore the options and take a **stance**.

So, what's the answer to my brother's question? Can people just agree to do the right thing? Maybe, that would be possible if it were a small group of people with similar views. However, I think it's more complicated than that because we all have different ideas about what the "right thing" is. It's all about our **priorities**, our **moral code** as individuals, and our goals for a better society. What is clear, however, is that we all need to try our best to do the right thing to the best of our knowledge.

*“Education is the art of making man ethical.”*

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel



### Reflect and connect:

**Diary:** Have you ever thought about politics? Is there anything in your country that you would like to see change? Explore this topic and your thoughts about it.

Watch the evening news and report on what you see there. Is there any news concerning politics?

How do we form our opinions? Are we influenced by our parents, our friends or the media? Explore this question and reflect on your views.

**Presentation:** Choose one of the political parties in your country and prepare a presentation on that particular party. What do they stand for? What are their priorities and goals and how do they intend to achieve those goals?

Find out how government works in your country. Choose one or two aspects to examine and present your finding to your peers.

### LANGUAGE BANK:

to spark  
to baffle  
average  
terminology  
ideology  
label  
solutions  
passionate  
elections  
to contribute  
benefit  
ethical  
stance  
priorities  
moral code



## SOURCES

### UP AND DOWN, ALL AROUND

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## THE YOGI OF MIXED MARTIAL ARTS IS A VIKING AT HEART

The Yogi of Mixed Martial Arts is a Viking at heart

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## WHEN THE JOKE ISN'T FUNNY ANYMORE

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**Stories** er textabók með verkefnum í ensku hugsuð fyrir efsta stig grunnskóla þar sem megin markmiðið er að örva gagnrýna hugsun, dýpka orðaforða og lesskilning og hvetja nemendur til sjálfskoðunar um hlutverk sitt og mikilvægi hvers einstaklings í samfélaginu.

Bókin skiptist í fjóra hluta: **Exciting adventures – historical and personal; Choices and dilemmas; Good work** og **Be the change**.

Mismunandi þyngd og lengd texta innan hvers kafla getur nýst vel fyrir fjölbreytta hópa. Textarnir eru einnig hugsaðir sem krækjur fyrir nemendur til að kynna sér áhugaverð álitæfni sjálfir, í hópum og/eða með aðstoð kennara. Í lok hvers kafla er bent á vefslóðir og möguleg verkefni fyrir nemendur til að rannsaka til að dýpka skilninginn á umræðuefninu og auka orðaforða og skilning enn frekar.

Höfundar efnis eru Dóra Ósk Halldórsdóttir og Kristen Mary Swenson, framhaldsskólakennarar. Auk þess er Dóra, blaðamaður og sjálfstætt starfandi textagerðamaður og Kristen Mary kennslustjóri nemenda af erlendum uppruna í Fjölbrautaskólanum við Ármúla.

