

Christy Brown

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_1043R_EN

LANGUAGE
English



lingoda






Goals

- Can read and understand a historical text about Christy Brown.
- Can discuss which stories and people inspire you and explain the reasoning behind this.





Christy Brown was an artist and writer from Ireland. He struggled a lot to find his place in the world of art and overcame incredible setbacks to achieve his dreams. His is an inspirational story of courage and bravery.



Ireland: country of artists and writers



Christy Brown was born in Dublin, Ireland. What do you know about this country already? Do you know of any other famous writers or creatives from there?



My childhood

Reflect on your childhood. What did you find difficult to learn as a child?

Can you remember learning to ride a bike? Learning to read and write? Learning to tie your shoelaces? What did you struggle with?



Christy Brown

**Christy Brown was a
writer. How many
English speaking
writers can you name?
Who is your favourite?**

writing

books

novels

poetry

theatre



Christy Brown

Christy Brown was born in Dublin in 1932. He was part of a huge family; he had a startling 22 siblings, 9 of whom sadly died before reaching adulthood. Soon after Brown was born, doctors discovered that he suffered from **cerebral palsy**. Cerebral palsy is a type of **neurological disorder** which leaves sufferers severely disabled. As a result of this, Brown had minimal control of his **limbs** and was unable to walk, talk or write normally. Doctors and social workers actually encouraged Brown's parents to give up their baby and to leave him in an **institution** for disabled children. They refused to follow this advice, since they loved their son **in spite of** his disabilities.

From birth, Brown was profoundly disabled. As a child he used to communicate with his family using **grunts**, which only they could interpret. He could neither walk, talk, nor feed himself. He couldn't use his arms, nor his right leg, but he did have control over his left foot.



Christy Brown



Early in his childhood, he began to show great interest in books and art. Incredibly, with the **unwavering** support of his mother, he managed to teach himself how to write and draw using his functional left limb.

Brown's social worker, Katriona Delahunt, was **instrumental** in promoting his development during this time. She took a special interest in the family and in Brown's story. She would regularly bring him various books and art materials to use. Brown was constantly encouraged by those close to him to paint and write; before long, he became successful, eventually establishing himself as a **prolific** and respected writer and artist.



Vocabulary review: is there anything new here?

social worker

limb

institution

in spite of

unwavering

prolific



Retell in your own words

**Imagine you are Christy Brown's social worker.
Tell your friend about him
and his story from what
you know so far.**

baby

extraordinary

gifted



Changed times

The Ireland in which Christy Brown was born was very different to the Ireland of today. Think about society one hundred years ago. What things have changed? What expectations are different? Discuss this in relation to the quote below.

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Doctors and social workers encouraged Brown's parents to give up their baby.

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Discuss

**How do you think
society will change in
the next 50 years?**

**What do you think is
likely to stay the same?**



Christy Brown



When speaking about his writing and art, Brown often said that the act of creation was **a kind of outlet** for him. He spoke about how his brothers were able to find release in their lives through playing football, or in relationships with women, however these things weren't possible, or not nearly as easy to achieve for Brown.

Art was a form of **therapy** and was very **cathartic** for him; it was a chance for him to express himself, and negotiate his thoughts and feelings about the world around him. His editor, David Farrar, described Brown as a brave and ambitious character – one of those rare individuals who push themselves as far as they can, **despite the odds** against them.



Christy Brown



Brown's achievements were incredible notwithstanding the obstacles he faced, and as a happy consequence he experienced enormous success during his lifetime.

He is probably best known for his autobiography, *My Left Foot*, which was published in 1954 to great critical acclaim. Sadly, Brown did not live to see the book developed into a film adaptation – a huge achievement for a writer, especially in the 1950s. The film featured a talented and reputable cast, and was released in 1989 to **rave reviews**.



Vocabulary review

a kind of outlet

cathartic

therapy

rave reviews



Over to you



Choose three new words or expressions from the passage and make a sentence about someone whom you admire with each.



Stressful lives

For Christy Brown, art was a form of release from his physical difficulties. Think about your own life; what stresses you out? Find as many examples as you can for each category.



work



home



school



holidays



About you



Art and writing relieved tension and stress for Brown. What about you?

How do you find serenity in your life? Swap tips on stress release with your teacher!



Christy Brown



Unfortunately, Christy Brown's personal life was **marked by controversy**. His first partner, Beth Moore, was an American woman who first came into contact with Brown by letter. She began writing to him shortly after the publication of his autobiography, which had become a **literary sensation**.

Moore was married at the time of her initial correspondence with Brown, but after he travelled to the USA to meet her, they began an affair and eventually moved in together. Brown **credited** Moore as being a great source of support and encouragement to him, and even dedicated one of his books to her.



Christy Brown



However, Brown and Moore weren't meant to be. Though they were due to be married, shortly before their wedding, Brown met another woman by the name of Mary Carr at a party in London. Soon afterwards, Brown ended his relationship with Moore. Carr and Brown would remain partners until Brown's death in 1981.

Brown's final years were **plagued with unhappiness**. It is rumoured that Carr was both emotionally and physically abusive due to her dependence on alcohol. She also cheated on Brown. Brown spent his final years in isolation; he became a **hermit** and **recluse**, refraining from any frequent socialising. He died unexpectedly from choking on a lamb chop while eating dinner on 7th September 1981.



Vocabulary Review

to be marked by
controversy

a literary
sensation

to credit someone

to be plagued with
something

hermit

recluse



Star crossed lovers

Although Christy Brown found some moments of happiness in his personal life, his final years were marked by considerable tragedy.

Which other famous people can you think of who had difficult relationships? You can use fictional characters too! Tell the story of one such couple to your teacher.





Inspiration

Despite his tragic death, Christy Brown's life story is inspiring. A story of perseverance and success against the odds.

Think about your own life. Of which moments are you proudest? Share one with your teacher. If you prefer, share the story of someone else who inspires you.

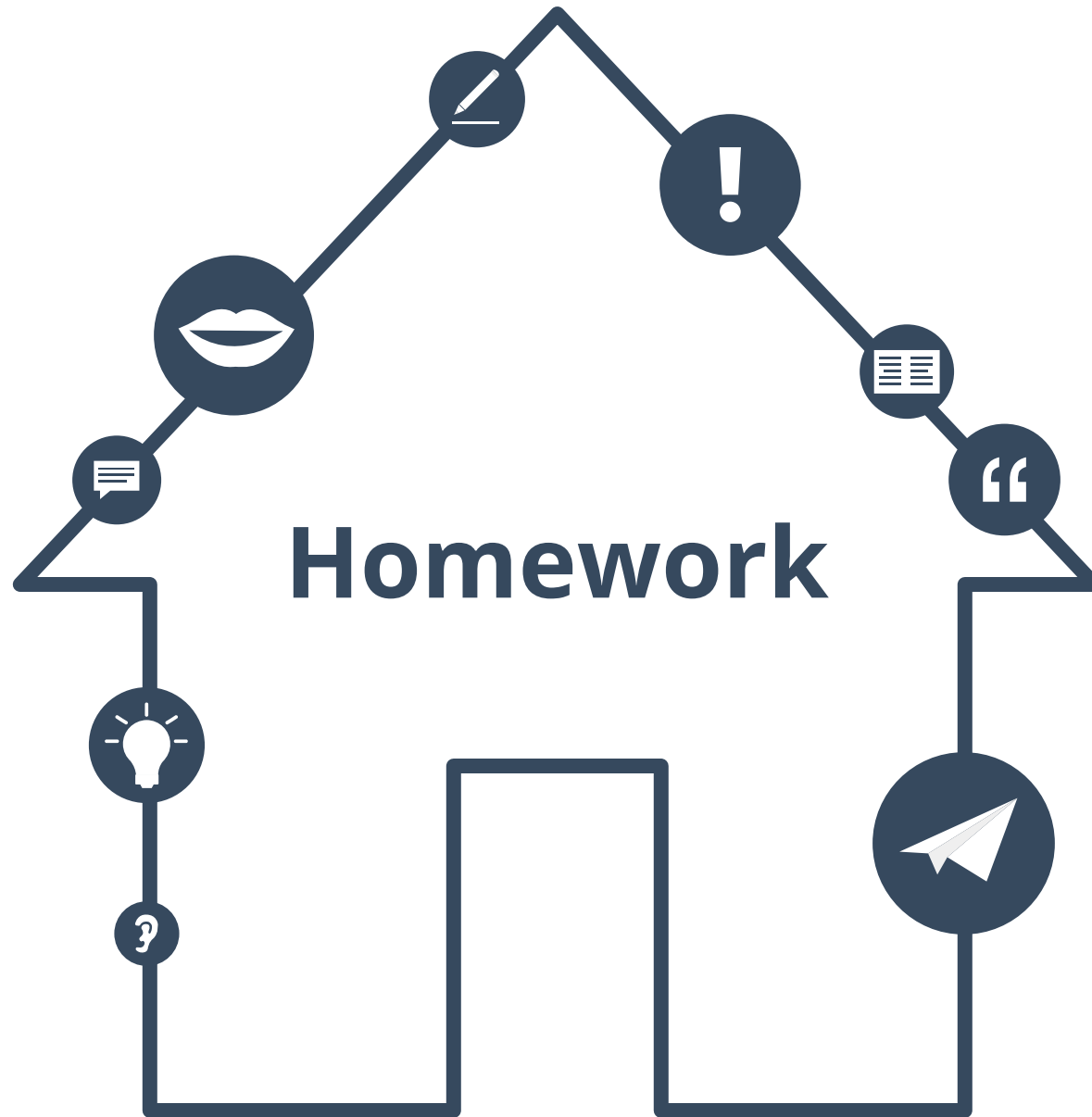


Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!







Write an e-mail

Christy Brown's story is very inspiring. Write an e-mail to a friend describing a time when you saw or heard something that inspired you. Relate the incident and what it inspired you to do.

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To

Subject

Dear...



Pause and reflect

Think about this lesson again. Which were the hardest parts of the lesson and which were the easiest? Evaluate the lesson here.

A vertical sheet of white paper with a spiral binding on the left side and horizontal lines for writing, intended for the user to reflect on the lesson.



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