

COMMUNICATION

Describing an inspiring person

LEVEL

Intermediate
(B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_2121X

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can describe an inspiring person using a range of different vocabulary.
- I can use a variety of verb patterns to explain why that person inspires me.



Warm-up

You're going to read **a short article** about four inspiring people. Before you do that...

Who are these four people?

What are they known for?



?



?



?



?

Reading

Read the article. **Summarise** who each person is (or was) and what they did.

Our first two inspiring people...



Nick Vujicic (pronounced VOO-yee-cheech) is an award-winning motivational speaker and best-selling author. Despite being born with a rare disorder that gave him no arms or legs, Vujicic came to accept his disability and now uses his story to inspire others. In his book, *Life Without Limits*, he encourages each and every one of us to find our purpose in life, to never give up and to always believe in ourselves.



Marsha P. Johnson was an African-American trans-rights activist. In June 1969, police raided the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York, and forced over 200 people out of the bar, using excessive violence against them. In the days after, Johnson led a series of protests demanding rights for gay people. With news of the protests spreading around the world, Johnson not only helped lead the fight for LGBTQ rights in the U.S., but inspired people everywhere to join the movement for equality.

Reading

Read the article. **Summarise** who each person is (or was) and what they did.

Our other two inspiring people...



Malala Yousafzai is a well-known Pakistani activist. After standing up for the rights of girls in Pakistan to receive an education, she became a target for terrorists, who, in 2012, shot her in the head. She survived the attack and went on to become the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 and one of the most recognisable campaigners for women's education in the world.



Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu was a Chinese-American physicist who helped develop the first atomic bomb. After emigrating to the U.S. in 1936, she completed her PhD at the University of California at Berkley. At a time when anti-Asian attitudes were growing with WWII, she was the first woman hired as a faculty member in the Physics Department at Princeton and one of the few women seen on campus. Wu is now considered a pioneer, who inspired an entire generation of women to become scientists.



Discuss in breakout rooms or as a class

If in breakout rooms: **agree on** answers with your partner and **share** them afterwards.

**What characteristics
does an inspiring
person usually have?**



**Which person from the
article is most
inspiring? Why?**



Describing an inspiring person

Sort the **vocabulary** from the text into the **correct category**.



1

activist

2

well-known

3

to stand up for

4

to demand

5

recognisable

6

scientist

7

award-winning

8

speaker

9

to become

Nouns

Adjectives

Verbs



Form a complete description

Match the two halves of the sentence to form a description of an inspiring person.

1 Nelson Mandela campaigned for justice and freedom in South Africa and...

2 Helen Keller, after losing her sight and hearing at the age of 19 months,...

3 Harriet Tubman escaped slavery but returned on various missions to help...

4 Despite being born a peasant girl, Joan of Arc inspired the Dauphin of France to...

5 Greta Thunberg is an environmental activist who started protests in 2018 to...

a ...stood up for the rights of women and people with disabilities in the U.S..

b ...lead over 700 slaves to freedom in the U.S. in the 1850s.

c ...became the country's first Democratic President in 1994.

d ...demand action on climate change from governments and world leaders.

e ...defeat the English back in the 15th century.

How would you describe them?

Choose one of these inspiring people. How would you **describe them** to someone who doesn't know them?

award-winning

to become

well-known

to demand

recognisable

to stand up for

Kamala
Harris

Jane
Fonda

Rosa
Parks



Looking at verb patterns

When we explain **why a person inspires us**, we use certain verbs together:

Johnson helped lead the fight for LGBTQ rights in the U.S..

Vujicic encourages us to find our purpose in life.

Wu inspired an entire generation of women to become scientists.

- Highlight **all of the verbs** in the examples above.
- Find **three verbs** in the sentences above that are **followed by an infinitive**.
- Which of those verbs is followed by a **bare infinitive**?

(Hint: a bare infinitive has no to before it)





The secret to finding happiness in life is to **lead** a life with **purpose**!

What does Vujicic mean by leading a life *with purpose*?

What's the difference between to **lead a life** and to **lead a protest**?

Who is one person who inspires you?

Choose a person **everyone in the class knows**. Then, **write three to four sentences** about them. Make sure to **describe the person** and **explain why they inspire you**.

best-selling
award-winning
recognisable

to stand up for
to demand
something

an activist
a speaker
a scientist
a politician

to help
to encourage
to inspire *someone*
to *do something*



*One person who inspires me is Martin Luther King Jr.. King was an **activist** and leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.. He **inspires us all to** use our voice and **stand up for** what we believe in!*



Time to talk!

Choose one of the **questions** below. Then, **ask a classmate** to find out more about them.



- Who was one of your heroes or heroines as a child?
- How did they inspire you?
- Do any of your friends, family members or colleagues at work inspire you?
- What's something that they always encourage you to do?



End of lesson

Idiom

To light a fire

Meaning: to motivate someone to take action.

Example: Nick Vujicic's story ***lit a fire*** in me. It made me go out and enjoy life to the fullest!



Additional practice



Describing an inspiring person

Add the **vocabulary** from the lesson under these headings.

1	2	3
Nouns	Adjectives	Verbs





Complete the sentences

Use the words on the right to form **correct sentences**.

- 1 Al Gore is a famous environmental _____ from the U.S..
- 2 My tutors at university always _____ me to work hard.
- 3 Maya Angelou was an _____ author of several works.
- 4 Charles Darwin is _____ for his theories on evolution.
- 5 My parents helped me to learn how to _____ for myself.

stand up
award-winning
encouraged
well-known
activist



What do you think?

**What makes a
person inspirational
for others?**

**Try to create a list of five
qualities together as a group.**





When we were younger...

Complete the sentence below with your own ideas. **Use the pictures below** to start your discussion. How many ideas can you think of?

**As young children, we usually
dream of becoming...**





Answer Key

- P.7:** **Nouns:** activist; scientist; speaker
 Adjectives: well-known; recognisable; award-winning
 Verbs: to stand up for; to demand; to become
- P.8:** 1. c; 2. a; 3. b; 4. e; 5. d
- P.10:** 1. helped, lead; encourages; find; inspired; become
 2. help; encourage; inspire
 3. help
- P.18:** 1. activist 2. encouraged 3. award-winning 4. well-known 5. stand up



Summary

- We can use a variety of nouns and adjectives to describe an inspiring figure.
 - We can say what they do or did using a job title, such as a **scientist, activist, campaigner...**
 - We commonly describe them or their work using compound adjectives, such as **best-selling** or **award-winning**
-
- When we explain what they did, we can say they **stood up for** something, they were **recognisable** or that the work they did **became** very important or influential.
-
- When we describe their effect on us, we can use a variety of verbs and say that this person **encouraged, helped** or simply **inspired** us to do something.



Vocabulary

well-known

award-winning

best-selling

recognisable

author

speaker

activist

campaigner

scientist

physicist

to stand up for (something)

to demand (something)

to become (something)

to inspire (someone to do something)

to encourage (someone to do something)

to help (someone do something)

to lead



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