

## Can young people change the world?

A sixth grade language arts unit on Malala Yousafzai's

*I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World*

### Unit Summary and Rationale

In 2016, Malala Yousafzai became the youngest person in history to win the Nobel Peace Prize. While she may be most famous for surviving a gunshot to the head from the Taliban who targeted her on the bus home from school, she is most notable for her dedication to advocating for the educational rights of women and girls. Not only will Malala's story be engaging and inspirational for an audience of sixth graders, but her memoir *I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World* will make space for classroom discussions about important essential questions, including the unit's primary focus, which explores how students themselves may change the world. I have selected the young reader's edition of the text for several reasons. First of all, the length is much more manageable than the full text for a single-semester curricular unit in middle school. Additionally, the text goes into more detail describing contextual background knowledge that many of my students will need. Finally, the language itself is challenging yet accessible and can be supplemented with various texts (interviews, articles, speeches) that both increase and decrease text complexity.

In addition to a standards focus on closely reading literary nonfiction, this unit will also focus on expository writing. In Chapter 12 of the text, Malala uses a pseudonym to start a blog on which she discusses the reality of life under the Taliban as a form of protest. Likewise, the students in my class will be starting their own blogs on which they will post various forms

of writing. Some writing assignments will be more traditional, such as citing evidence from the text to track theme development as well as reader responses, but students will also be asked to explore and blog about world issues of their choosing. They can use newspapers as sources, and they can also use chapters from Chelsea Clinton's text *It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Informed, & Get Going*, each of which directly relates to the unit essential question, as inspiration. Students will explore the secondary essential questions through discussion and blogging as the unit progresses, eventually culminating in an end-of-unit Socratic Seminar where students will lead a class discussion about these important and thought-provoking issues, using the Malala text and supplemental texts as evidence.

### Desired Results

OBJECTIVES	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</li> <li>● I can write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information by selecting, organizing, and analyzing relevant content.</li> <li>● I can produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</li> <li>● I can cite textual evidence to support analysis of what texts say explicitly as well as inferences.</li> <li>● I can determine a theme or central idea of <i>I Am Malala</i> and how it is conveyed through particular details; summarize the text distinct from personal opinions.</li> <li>● I can describe how <i>I Am Malala's</i> plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as</li> </ul>	<p>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Can young people change the world?</li> <li>● What is equality?</li> <li>● What are our basic human rights?</li> <li>● Whose responsibility is it uphold justice?</li> <li>● Whose responsibility is it to teach standards for justice? Government? Family? Schools? Other?</li> <li>● What can be done when one sees that justice is not being upheld, on small or large scales?</li> <li>● To what extent is it important that all members of society are educated?</li> <li>● In what ways is or isn't Malala's story universal?</li> <li>● How do <i>you</i> want to portray yourself to the world?</li> </ul>
	<p><b>COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS</b></p> <p><b>CC6.RL.1 and CC6.RI.1:</b> Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p><b>CC6.RL.2 and CC6.RI.2:</b> Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.</p> <p><b>CC6.RL.3:</b> Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.</p>

<p>how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward resolution.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text</li> <li>● I can analyze how a particular chapter or scene fits into the overall structure of <i>I Am Malala</i> and contributes to the development of ideas.</li> <li>● I can compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres in terms of their approaches to similar topics.</li> <li>● I can determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.</li> <li>● I can integrate information presented in different media as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</li> <li>● I can compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another.</li> <li>● I can work with peers and adults to develop writing by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting.</li> <li>● I can use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others;.</li> <li>● I can engage effectively in discussions, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</li> <li>● I can interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.</li> <li>● I can analyse a speaker’s argument, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.</li> </ul>	<p><b>CC6.RL.4 and RI.6.4:</b> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</p> <p><b>CC6.RL.5 and RI.6.5:</b> Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, plot, or ideas.</p> <p><b>CC6.RL.9:</b> Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.</p> <p><b>CC6.RI.6:</b> Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.</p> <p><b>CC6.RI.7:</b> Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</p> <p><b>CC6.RI.9:</b> Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).</p> <p><b>CC6.W.1:</b> Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.</p> <p><b>CC6.W.2:</b> Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</p> <p><b>CC6.W.4:</b> Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)</p> <p><b>CC6.W.5:</b> With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.</p> <p><b>CC6.W.6:</b> Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.</p> <p><b>CC6.SL.1:</b> Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 6 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</p> <p><b>CC6.SL.2:</b> Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.</p> <p><b>CC6.SL.3:</b> Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.</p>
	<p><b>Texts</b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World</i> by Malala Yousafzai</li> <li>● Interview with Jon Stewart, October 10, 2013</li> <li>● <i>Persepolis</i> (film or Ch. 1 for comparing/contrasting or teaching about male/female separation switch at revolution)</li> <li>● <i>It’s Your World: Get Informed, Get Informed, &amp; Get Going</i> by Chelsea Clinton</li> <li>● <i>He Named Me Malala</i> (film)</li> <li>● Transcript of Malala’s speech to the United Nations</li> </ul>

## Assessment

### Formative Assessments:

- Blog posts for each of Five Parts, explaining central idea, tracking themes, and responding to text
- Written Classwork
- Teacher Observation
- Tickets to go

### Summative Assessments:

- Socratic seminar on essential questions
- Argumentative essay on topic of choice (related to an essential question and approved by teacher)

## Learning Plan

*The lesson plans that follow are a selection from an extended unit on this text.*

(Unit Plan Template Adapted from *Understanding By Design* by Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe)

### Lesson Plan 1: Assessing and Activating Prior Knowledge for *I Am Malala*

**Time:** One 60-minute period

#### Context

- This is the introductory lesson for a unit on “I Am Malala.” In this lesson, students will work in groups and collaboratively as an entire class to brainstorm prior knowledge and ask questions regarding topics directly related to the Malala text.

#### Lesson Objectives

- I can assess my knowledge of topical vocabulary words, share my ideas with others in writing, and build on my knowledge through a gallery walk activity.
- I can work as a group to integrate information and write a definition for my topic.

#### Common Core Standards

- **CC6.SL.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 6 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **CC6.SL.3:** Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

#### Materials

- Vocabulary activator sheets
- Markers

- Chart paper set up in quadrants with topic
- Timer

**Procedures/Activities****Activator:**

1. Students are given the following list of vocabulary words. They need to mark each with a smiley face ( ) that represents the degree to which they understand the word in the “before activity” column on their papers. Words they know or sort of know, they should attempt to define.
  - a. Middle East
  - b. Islam
  - c. Muslim
  - d. The Quran
  - e. Taliban
  - f. Pashtun
  - g. Terrorism
  - h. Malala Yousafzai
  - i. Eid / Ramadan
  - j. Allah

**Activity:**

1. Teacher will lay out six chart papers (See Artifact 1) each marked with a different one of the above topics (not all topics will be represented independently).
2. Students will be broken into small groups (3-4 students)
3. A timer will be set for five minutes, and each group will try to brainstorm everything they know about their first topic as well as questions.
4. When the timer chimes, students will move to the next chart paper and add to the work already there, answering questions if possible, adding additional questions, and/or clarifying misconceptions.
5. This process will repeat until groups have visited all six chart papers.
6. Groups will return to their original poster, and they will have five final minutes to attempt to integrate the information on their poster to “define” their topic.
7. A reporter for each group will share this definition with the class.

**Wrap Up:**

1. Students work independently to revisit their “do now” vocabulary sheets, adding a smiley face ( ) that represents the degree to which they *now* understand the word in the “after activity” column of the paper.
2. On the back of the paper, students will complete a 3-2-1 as follows:

- 3 concepts/facts they learned during class
- 2 questions they now have about any of the topics
- 1 prediction about *I Am Malala*

**Rationale and Hesitations**

Smith, Appleman, and Wilhelm as well as Sheridan Blau all discuss the importance of background knowledge or “frontloading” texts as a form of “proactivity” (Smith 68). While this is not a “skill” listed in the Common Core Standards, the activity here will serve threefold purposes: for the teacher to assess students’ prior knowledge, to activate this prior knowledge, and to engage students in collaborative discussions. One hesitation about the lesson is the very real possibility that misconceptions could become prevalent in student work, but active teacher circulation throughout the room can serve to minimize this.

**Artifact 1**

The page below represents a poster that the teacher would prepare ahead of class, one large chart paper for each topic. Students will then rotate around the room as they add information to the charts on each topic.

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>What do you know about this topic?</b>	<b>What other words do you think of as similar or related to the topic?</b>
<b>Use the topic word in a sentence.</b>	<b>Questions about the topic.</b>

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