



**ROBERT F.
KENNEDY
HUMAN
RIGHTS**

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

**HUMAN RIGHTS
DEFENDERS WHO
ARE CHANGING
OUR WORLD**

**MALALA YOUSAFZAI: SPEAKING UP FOR THE
RIGHT TO EDUCATION – I AM MALALA**

MALALA YOUSAFZAI

(SHE/HER/HERS)



**“SOME PEOPLE ONLY ASK
OTHERS TO DO SOMETHING. I
BELIEVE THAT, WHY SHOULD
I WAIT FOR SOMEONE ELSE?
WHY DON’T I TAKE A STEP AND
MOVE FORWARD?”**

Malala Yousafzai was born in 1997 in the Swat district of Pakistan. In 2007, the Taliban began fighting the Pakistani government for control of Swat. Among their restrictive laws, the Taliban declared girls would no longer be allowed to go to school. Yousafzai, who was only 11, was willing to risk speaking out. Originally posting online under a pseudonym, she shared stories about life under the Taliban. Inspired by her father’s pro-education activism, she eventually revealed her real name and began advocating for education as a human right for girls.

Her international renown came with increased danger. On October 9, 2012, a gunman shot her on a bus full of girls. Yousafzai was rushed to the hospital, treated by the best doctors, and survived to continue her fight. With her father, she established the Malala Fund, a charity dedicated to giving every girl access to free, safe, quality education. Yousafzai has also held world leaders accountable for their promises to girls. In recognition of her work, she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, becoming the youngest-ever Nobel laureate. Malala Yousafzai, who graduated from the University of Oxford in 2020, remains dedicated to education, equality, and her message of peace.

INTERVIEW WITH MALALA YOUSAFZAI

REMARKS BY MALALA YOUSAFZAI ON YOUTH TAKEOVER (“MALALA DAY”) AT THE UNITED NATIONS, JULY 12, 2013.

In the name of God, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful. Honorable UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, respected President General Assembly Vuk Jeremic, Honorable UN Envoy for Global Education Mr. Gordon Brown, respected elders, and my dear brothers and sisters: Today it is an honor for me to be speaking again after a long time. Being here with such honorable people is a great moment in my life.

I don't know where to begin my speech. I don't know what people would be expecting me to say. But first of all, thank you to God for whom we all are equal and thank you to every person who has prayed for my fast recovery and a new life. I cannot believe how much love people have shown me. I have received thousands of good wish cards and gifts from all over the world. Thank you to all of them. Thank you to the children whose innocent words encouraged me. Thank you to my elders, whose prayers strengthened me. I would like to thank my nurses, doctors, and all of the staff of the hospitals in Pakistan and the UK and the UAE government who have helped me get better and recover my strength.

I fully support Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the secretary-general, in his Global Education First initiative and the work of the UN Special Envoy, Mr. Gordon Brown. And I thank them both for the leadership they continue to give. They continue to inspire all of us to action.

Dear brothers and sisters, do remember one thing. Malala Day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights. There are hundreds of human rights activists and social workers who are not only speaking for human rights, but who are struggling to achieve their goals of education, peace and equality. Thousands of people have been killed by the terrorists and millions have been injured. I am just one of them. So here I stand...one girl among many.

I speak—not for myself, but for all girls and boys. I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so

that those without a voice can be heard. Those who have fought for their rights: their right to live in peace. Their right to be treated with dignity. Their right to equality of opportunity. Their right to be educated. Dear friends, on the 9th of October 2012, the Taliban shot me on the left side of my forehead. They shot my friends too. They thought that the bullets would silence us. But they failed. And then, out of that silence came thousands of voices. The terrorists thought that they would change our aims and stop our ambitions, but nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear, and hopelessness died. Strength, power, and courage was born. I am the same Malala. My ambitions are the same. My hopes are the same. My dreams are the same.

Dear sisters and brothers, I am not against anyone. Neither am I here to speak in terms of personal revenge against the Taliban or any other terrorist group. I am here to speak up for the right of education of every child. I want education for the sons and the daughters of all the extremists, especially the Taliban.

I do not even hate the Talib who shot me. Even if there is a gun in my hand and he stands in front of me, I would not shoot him. This is the compassion that I have learnt from Muhammad—the prophet of mercy, Jesus Christ, and Lord Buddha. This is the legacy of change that I have inherited from Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This is the philosophy of nonviolence that I have learnt from Gandhi Jee, Bacha Khan, and Mother Teresa. And this is the forgiveness that I have learnt from my mother and father. This is what my soul is telling me, be peaceful and love everyone.

Dear sisters and brothers, we realize the importance of light when we see darkness. We realize the importance of our voice when we are silenced. In the same way, when we were in Swat, the north of Pakistan, we realized the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns. The wise saying “The pen is mightier than sword” was true. The extremists

are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women. The power of the voice of women frightens them. And that is why they killed 14 innocent medical students in the recent attack in Quetta. And that is why they killed many female teachers and polio workers in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa and FATA. That is why they are blasting schools every day. Because they were and they are afraid of change, afraid of the equality that we will bring into our society.

I remember that there was a boy in our school who was asked by a journalist, “Why are the Taliban against education?” He answered very simply. By pointing to his book he said, “A Talib doesn’t know what is written inside this book.” They think that God is a tiny, little conservative being who would send girls to hell just because of going to school.

The terrorists are misusing the name of Islam and Pashtun society for their own personal benefits. Pakistan is a peace-loving, democratic country. Pashtuns want education for their daughters and sons, and Islam is a religion of peace, humanity, and brotherhood. Islam says that it is not only each child’s right to get education, rather it is their duty and responsibility.

Honorable Secretary General, peace is necessary for education. In many parts of the world, especially Pakistan and Afghanistan, terrorism, wars, and conflicts stop children to go to their schools. We are really tired of these wars. Women and children are suffering in many parts of the world in many ways. In India, innocent and poor children are victims of child labor. Many schools have been destroyed in Nigeria. People in Afghanistan have been affected by the hurdles of extremism for decades. Young girls have to do domestic child labor and are forced to get married at an early age. Poverty, ignorance, injustice, racism, and the deprivation of basic rights are the main problems faced by both men and women.

Dear fellows, today I am focusing on women’s rights and girls’ education because they are suffering the most. There was a time when women social activists asked men to stand up for their rights. But, this time, we will do it by ourselves. I am not telling men to step away from speaking for women’s rights; rather,

I am focusing on women to be independent to fight for themselves. Dear sisters and brothers, now it’s time to speak up.

So today, we call upon the world leaders to change their strategic policies in favor of peace and prosperity. We call upon the world leaders that all the peace deals must protect women and children’s rights. A deal that goes against the dignity of women and their rights is unacceptable. We call upon all governments to ensure free compulsory education for every child all over the world. We call upon all governments to fight against terrorism and violence, to protect children from brutality and harm. We call upon the developed nations to support the expansion of educational opportunities for girls in the developing world. We call upon all communities to be tolerant—to reject prejudice based on cast, creed, sect, religion, or gender, to ensure freedom and equality for women so that they can flourish. We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back. We call upon our sisters around the world to be brave—to embrace the strength within themselves and realize their full potential.

Dear brothers and sisters, we want schools and education for every child’s bright future. We will continue our journey to our destination of peace and education for everyone. No one can stop us. We will speak for our rights and we will bring change through our voice. We must believe in the power and the strength of our words. Our words can change the world because we are all together, united for the cause of education. And if we want to achieve our goal, then let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must not forget that millions of people are suffering from poverty, injustice, and ignorance. We must not forget that millions of children are out of school. We must not forget that our sisters and brothers are waiting for a bright, peaceful future. So let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty, and terrorism, and let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one pen, and one book can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education First.

SPEAKING UP FOR THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION – I AM MALALA

LESSON GRADE LEVELS 7 TO 12

FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH, AND RIGHT TO EDUCATION

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

- **ARTICLE 3:** Right to life, liberty, and security of person.
- **ARTICLE 5:** Right to freedom from degrading treatment and punishment.
- **ARTICLE 7:** Right to freedom from discrimination.
- **ARTICLE 19:** Right to freedom of expression.
- **ARTICLE 26:** Right to education.

TIME REQUIREMENT

80–160 minutes

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What obstacles have an impact on girls' education, and what barriers keep girls from attending school?
- What can be done to remove these barriers?
- What is the impact of a girls' education on a family or community?
- How has Malala Yousafzai used her voice to stand up for her rights and the rights of others?

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Discuss the importance of education and the importance of equal access to education.
- Identify the reasons girls face barriers and discrimination in educational access.
- Describe the impact of a girl's education on the global community.
- Discuss ways they can speak for others in the same way as Malala.

COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS

- CCSS.Math.Content.HSS.IC.A.1
- CCSS.Math.Content.HSS.IC.A.2
- CCSS.Math.Content.HSS.IC.B.3
- CCSS.Math.Content.HSS.IC.B.4
- CCSS.Math.Content.HSS.IC.B.5
- CCSS.Math.Content.HSS.IC.B.6

CONCEPTS

- Global poverty
- Courage
- Right to education
- Compassion
- Peace
- Humanity
- Brotherhood
- Discrimination
- Pacifist

STUDENT SKILLS

- Collecting data and statistics.
- Written expression.
- Using information from oral, written, and online resources.
- Building background knowledge.

VOCABULARY

- Taliban
- Advocacy
- Nobel Peace Prize
- Iman
- Swat Valley
- Pakistan
- United Nations
- Bravery
- FATA
- Pashtun
- Islam

MATERIALS

- [Diane Sawyer interviewing Malala Yousafzai on ABC](#)
- [CNN's Christiane Amanpour interviewing Yousafzai](#)
- [Yousafzai's speech to the UN on her 16th birthday](#)
- [Statistic sheet from "Girl Rising"](#)
- [World Bank statistics sheet](#)
- [Information about girls' education](#)
- <https://malala.org/girls-education>

ANTICIPATORY SET

- In small groups ask students to:
 - Identify future career or college interests.
 - List the education they would need to achieve their future goals.
- Have students come back together as a group and ask one member from each group to list the answers. Stress that even if a student is not college-bound, a high school diploma is a necessity in today's society.
- Ask students what would have happened if they were never able to attend school, and if they were unable to read or write. What if they had been forced to leave school after elementary school? How would that affect their ability to achieve their goals?

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1

- Introduce the statistic that there are 32 million fewer girls than boys in primary school around the world. (Education First: An Initiative of the United Nations Secretary General, 2012.)
- Hang blank poster paper around the room. Have students walk around to brainstorm reasons for the above statistic. Bring the class back together and write down the commonalities among groups.
- Share the links on the girls' education listed above. Write down the reasons for girls' absences. Have students see how many reasons that they brainstormed. Discuss what it would be like to be a girl who was one of the statistics. Remind them of their own hopes and dreams. Prompts for small pair share/breakout groups or journaling:

ACTIVITY 2

- Remind students about the previous discussion about girls' education.
- Distribute or show [page 3 of the World Bank statistics on girls out of school](#)
- Have students locate these areas on the map.
- Tell students there is a young human rights

defender who is trying to change those statistics. Show either the 20/20 or CNN interview with Malala Yousafzai.

- Engage the students in a discussion with the following questions:
 - What does it mean to have courage?
 - How is Malala Yousafzai an example of bravery and courage?

ACTIVITY 3

- Show [the video of Malala Yousafzai's address to the United Nations](#) or have the students read [the transcript](#).
- Discuss their reactions to her speech..
- Yousafzai talks about many different concepts, including compassion, brotherhood, nonviolence, peace, and equality. Ask the students to write in their journals about how she expresses these concepts in her speech (students may need to have the transcript next to them for this activity).
- Have students either discuss or write about how she connects her philosophy with that of great peacemakers and advocates of nonviolence.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

Since the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations (UN) in 1948, many other international documents—also called treaties, covenants, resolutions, or conventions—have been drafted to develop these rights further. Countries commit to protect the rights recognized in these treaties by ratifying them, and sometimes a specific institution is created within the UN to monitor their compliance.

Here are examples of relevant international documents:

THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

- **ARTICLE 2:** Right to be free from discrimination.

- **ARTICLE 13:** Right to freedom of expression.
- **ARTICLE 14:** Right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
- **ARTICLE 28:** Right to education.

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

For more information, visit the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' website: www.ohchr.org.

BECOMING A DEFENDER

- Think about this quote from Malala Yousafzai's speech: "I speak—not for myself, but for all girls and boys. I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard."
- What does it mean to be an advocate or defender?
 - How does Malala Yousafzai exemplify what it means to be a defender?
 - What does that quote mean to you?
 - How can you raise your voice for those without a voice?
 - What can you do to become a defender?
- Form an action groups with three to five classmates/friends.
- Identify a school, community, national, or international issue you feel passionate about.
- Work on over creating an action plan that you can present at school, maybe for a school-wide Day of Action.
- Consider the following in developing your action plan:
 1. What is the goal? Do you want to educate your community about an issue? Do you want to change a law or policy? Do you want to publicly support a human rights defender?
 2. Who do you need to work with or influence to help you achieve your goal? Examples could be a politician, journalist, other students, community members, or school administrators.
 3. How can you reach that person or those people? What action will your group take? For example, you might create a public service announcement, a video, write a letter to the local newspaper, organize a letter writing campaign, or bring in a speaker.
 4. What materials or resources will you need to take action?
 5. Take action!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

THE MALALA FUND

<https://www.malala.org/>

An organization dedicated to empowering girls through education

I AM MALALA: THE GIRL WHO STOOD UP FOR EDUCATION AND WAS SHOT BY THE TALIBAN, BY MALALA YOUSAFZAI, AND CHRISTIAN LAMB

Little, Brown & Company. N.Y. 2013.

Malala Yousafzai's autobiography.

WASHINGTON POST REVIEW

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/book-review-i-am-malala-by-malala-yousafzai/2013/10/11/530ba90a-329a-11e3-9c68-1cf643210300_story.html

A review of Malala Yousafzai's autobiography.

“MALALA INSPIRES ADVOCACY CURRICULUM AT GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY”

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/malala-inspires-new-curriculum-at-george-washington-university>

An article about GW's creation of multimedia curriculum tools to accompany Malala Yousafzai's book: <https://malala.gwu.edu/>

“DIARY OF A PAKISTANI SCHOOLGIRL”

news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7834402.stm

The writings that first gained Malala Yousafzai national and international attention.

“MY CONVERSATIONS WITH MALALA YOUSAFZAI”

<https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Global-News/2012/1011/My-conversations-with-Malala-Yousafzai-the-girl-who-stood-up-to-the-Taliban>

An account of the day of the assassination attempt.

SHINING HOPE FOR COMMUNITIES

www.shofco.org

An organization transforming the face of urban poverty in Kenya through free education.

GIRL RISING

www.girlrising.com

A movie about girls around the world fighting for the right to an education.

UN GLOBAL FIRST EDUCATION INITIATIVE

<https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Global%20Education%20First%20Initiative.pdf>

A five-year initiative to accelerate progress toward the Education for All goals and the education-related Millennium Development goals.

CLINTON FOUNDATION NO CEILINGS

<http://www.noceilings.org/>

An effort led by Hillary Rodham Clinton at the Clinton Foundation to bring together partner organizations to evaluate and share the progress women and girls have made in the 20 years since the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

MALALA YOUSAFZAI'S NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LECTURE

www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/yousafzai-lecture.html

Given December 10, 2014, at the Oslo City Hall, Norway.