



# YOUTH ACTIVISM AND THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

## ELEMENTARY RESOURCES



Malala Yousafzai speaks at the Clinton Global Initiative.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- The Nobel Peace Prize was established in the will of wealthy Swedish businessman and inventor Alfred Nobel. It is to be given to the person who “shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses.”
- The recipient is selected by a Norwegian parliament elected five-person committee. The youngest person to win was 32-year-old Tawakkol Karman in 2011. Karman is a women’s rights activist from Yemen. The only Canadian to win the Nobel Peace Prize was Lester B. Pearson in 1957, for helping end the Suez Crisis. Pearson went on to become Prime Minister of Canada.
- Malala Yousafzai is a 16-year-old girl from the Swat region of Pakistan. In 2009, she wrote a blog for the BBC about the conflict in her region between the Taliban and the government, and living under Taliban rule. She became an activist for girls’ education. In October 2012, she survived a Taliban

assassination attempt when a terrorist boarded her school bus and shoot her in the head. In 2013, she won the International Children’s Peace Prize. Malala is one of 259 nominated for the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize.

- In June, 1976, as many as 20,000 black high school students in Soweto, South African walked out of school to protest Apartheid laws requiring 50 per cent of class instruction to be given in Afrikaan, which was considered the “language of the oppressor.” The protest turned violent, with police shooting at protesters, and students throwing stones. More than 170 people were killed in what came to be known as the Soweto Uprising.
- In 1989, students in Beijing, China occupied Tiananmen Square to call for government transparency and democracy. As many as one million people ultimately gathered. On June 4, the Chinese government responded by sending tanks and soldiers who opened fire on protestors. The Chinese government has kept secret how many people were killed, but estimates are as high as 4000.

### NOTE TO EDUCATORS

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects.

Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. The activity is structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Students are encouraged to further reflect on the issues.

### KEY TERMS

**Millennials**—The generation of people born roughly between the early 1980s and the early 2000s. Sometimes also called “Generation Y”.

**Civil disobedience**—Peaceful acts that nevertheless break the law—such as blocking a road or access to a government building—as a means of non-violent protest.

**Accolade**—An award, honour, or other public recognition of merit, an outstanding action or contribution by a person or group.

**Pseudonym**—A made-up name someone uses to hide their real identity.

## THEMES AND COURSE CONNECTIONS

- Themes: activism, education, inspirational figures, child rights, women's rights, global issues
- Course Connections: Language, Social Studies, Geography

## MATERIALS

- Global Voices column
- Front board
- Paper and writing utensils
- Computer with internet capabilities and projector

## SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS AND LEARNING GOALS

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in writing, orally or visually.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express and defend a position on an issue.

## MAP IT

Have students locate the different locations mentioned in the article to gain an understanding of the international expanse and involvement of youth-led movements.

- Soweto, South Africa (Soweto Uprising)
- Beijing, China (Tiananmen Square protests)
- Middle East (Arab Spring)
- Washington D.C., USA (March on Washington)
- India (Gandhi's civil disobedience movement)
- Vietnam (student protests of American involvement in the war took place across the USA)
- Pakistan (birthplace of Malala Yousafzai)

## DISCUSS

1. Who is Malala Yousafzai? Catalogue Malala's accomplishments. Why should Malala win the Nobel Peace Prize?
2. What is the Nobel Peace Prize? What is the significance of the Peace Prize laureates? Do you know of any past Peace laureates? (E.g., The European Union 2012, Barack Obama 2007, Lester B. Pearson 1957.)
3. The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 1901 and every year since then a committee has chosen the recipient(s) based on the guidelines from Alfred Nobel's will. The prize is to be awarded to the person "who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." What does this mean? In your opinion, does Malala qualify for this prize? Why or why not?

4. When the Prize is awarded, the Nobel Peace Laureate receives a medal, personal diploma and a sum of money, currently 8 million Swedish kronor (roughly more than \$1.3 million CDN). While there are no specific responsibilities, the laureate becomes a global public figure. What are the risks associated to this type of fame? Some Nobel experts believe the Prize would be "too much of a burden" for Malala, what do you think? Explain your answer.
5. The article points to importance of having a family that supports you. Why is it important to have the support of family? Why might it be particularly significant in Malala's case?

## DIVE DEEPER

Show students Malala Yousafzai's addressing the United Nations on June 12, 2013 (two Youtube options are provided in the resource section).

After viewing the address, have students write their own 1-3 minute speech if they were addressing the United Nations. Tell students that the UN brings together member nations representing countries around the world to work for peace and development based on the principles of justice, human dignity and the well-being of people. By addressing the UN, speakers bring attention to their cause and raise awareness of their mission. They should write their speech accordingly.

For their speech, students should select a topic they are passionate about. Provide class time for research and development. Assign a due date and presentation date. Gather the class in an semi-circle, assign country cards (pieces of paper folded in half vertically with a UN member's name written on one side) and hold a UN day. Have students address their class (United Nations members).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information, share these resources with your students:

- Malala Yousafzai addressing the United Nations speech, ABC News (19:36): [youtube.com/watch?v=QRh\\_30C8l6Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QRh_30C8l6Y) highlight reel (4:36): [youtube.com/watch?v=gCg2FyTiBoI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCg2FyTiBoI)
- Nobel Peace Prize website [nobelpeaceprize.org](https://nobelpeaceprize.org)
- Nobel Prize website [nobelprize.org](https://nobelprize.org)
- The United Nations website [un.org](https://un.org)
- Free The Children [freethechildren.com](https://freethechildren.com)
- Weday.com [weday.com](https://weday.com)