

Underline the main idea or most important part (you will add this to your AOW worksheet)

Circle any words that you don't know and use context clues to guess the meaning OR look up the definition.

? – (8 minimum) Make a note about what confuses you. What do you question/ want to know?

! – (8 minimum) Make a note about any parts that you have a strong reaction to (positive or negative). **Explain why.**

Malala: The girl who was shot for going to school One year ago schoolgirl

Malala Yousafzai was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen - her "crime", to have spoken up for the right of girls to be educated. The world reacted in horror, but after weeks in intensive care Malala survived. Her full story can now be told. She is the teenager who marked her 16th birthday with a live address from UN headquarters, is known around the world by her first name alone, and has been lauded by a former British prime minister as "an icon of courage and hope".

She is also a Birmingham schoolgirl trying to settle into a new class, worrying about homework and reading lists, missing friends from her old school, and squabbling with her two younger brothers. She is Malala Yousafzai, whose life was forever changed at age 15 by a Taliban bullet on 9 October 2012.

I have travelled to her home town in Pakistan, seen the school that moulded her, met the doctors who treated her and spent time with her and her family, for one reason - to answer the same question barked by the gunman who flagged down her school bus last October: "Who is Malala?"

The Swat Valley once took pride in being called "the Switzerland of Pakistan". It's a mountainous place, cool in summer and snowy in winter, within easy reach of the capital, Islamabad. And when Malala was born in 1997 it was still peaceful. Historically, the north-west has been one of Pakistan's least developed regions. But Swat, interestingly, has long been a bright spot in terms of education.

Until 1969, it was a semi-autonomous principality - its ruler known as the Wali. The first of these was Miangul Gulshahzada Sir Abdul Wadud, appointed by a local council in 1915 and known to Swatis as "Badshah Sahib" - the King. Although himself uneducated, he laid the foundation for a network of schools in the valley - the first boys' primary school came in 1922, followed within a few years by the first girls' school.

The trend was continued by his son, Wali Miangul Abdul Haq Jahanzeb, who came to power in 1949. Within a few months, he had presented the schoolgirls of Swat to the visiting prime minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan, and his wife Raana. As his grandson Miangul Adnan Aurangzeb says: "It would have been unusual anywhere else in the [North-West] Frontier at that time, but in Swat girls were going to school."

The new Wali's focus soon turned to high schools and colleges, including Jahanzeb College, founded in 1952, where Malala's father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, would study many years later. Soon, Swat became known across Pakistan for the number of professionals it was producing - especially doctors and teachers. As Adnan Aurangzeb says, "Swat was proud of its record on education... one way to identify a Swati outside of Swat was that he always had a pen in his chest pocket, and that meant he was literate."

Against this backdrop, the fate that befell the schools of Swat in the first years of the 21st Century is particularly tragic. By the time Malala was born, her father had realized his dream of founding his own school, which began with just a few pupils and mushroomed into an establishment educating more than 1,000 girls and boys.

It is clear that her absence is keenly felt. Outside the door of her old classroom is a framed newspaper cutting about her. Inside, her best friend Moniba has written the name "Malala" on a chair placed in the front row. This was Malala's world - not one of wealth or privilege but an atmosphere dominated by learning. And she flourished. "She was precocious, confident, assertive," says Adnan Aurangzeb. "A young person with the drive to achieve something in life." In that, she wasn't alone. "Malala's whole class is special," headmistress Mariam Khalique tells me.

And from the moment I walk in, I understand what she means. Their focus and attention is absolute, their aspirations sky-high. The lesson under way is biology, and as it ends I have a few moments to ask the girls about their future

plans - many want to be doctors. One girl's answer stops me in my tracks: "I'd like to be Pakistan's army chief one day." Part of the reason for this drive to succeed is that only white-collar, professional jobs will allow these girls a life outside their homes. While poorly educated boys can hope to find low-skilled work, their female counterparts will find their earning power restricted to what they can do within the four walls of their home - sewing perhaps.

"For my brothers it was easy to think about the future," Malala tells me when we meet in Birmingham. "They can be anything they want. But for me it was hard and for that reason I wanted to become educated and empower myself with knowledge."

It was this future that was threatened when the first signs of Taliban influence emerged, borne on a tide of anti-Western sentiment that swept across Pakistan in the years after 9/11 and the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

Like other parts of north-west Pakistan, Swat had always been a devout and conservative region, but what was happening by 2007 was very different - radio broadcasts threatening Sharia-style punishments for those who departed from local Muslim traditions, and most ominously, edicts against education. The worst period came at the end of 2008, when the local Taliban leader, Mullah Fazlullah, issued a dire warning - all female education had to cease within a month, or schools would suffer consequences. Malala remembers the moment well: "How can they stop us going to school?" I was thinking. "It's impossible, how can they do it?"

But Ziauddin Yousafzai and his friend Ahmad Shah, who ran another school nearby, had to recognise it as a real possibility. The Taliban had always followed through on their threats. The two men discussed the situation with local army commanders. "I asked them how much security would be provided to us," Shah recalls. "They said, 'We will provide security, don't close your schools.'" It was easier said than done.

By this time, Malala was still only 11, but well aware of how things were changing. "People don't need to be aware of these things at the age of nine or 10 or 11 but we were seeing terrorism and extremism, so I had to be aware," she says. She knew that her way of life was under threat. When a journalist from BBC Urdu asked her father about young people who might be willing to give their perspective on life under the Taliban, he suggested Malala.

The result was the [Diary of a Pakistani Schoolgirl](#), a blog for BBC Urdu, in which Malala chronicled her hope to keep going to school and her fears for the future of Swat. She saw it as an opportunity. "I wanted to speak up for my rights," she says. "And also I didn't want my future to be just sitting in a room and be imprisoned in my four walls and just cooking and giving birth to children. I didn't want to see my life in that way."

The blog was anonymous, but Malala was also unafraid to speak out in public about the right to education, as she did in February 2009 to the Pakistani television presenter Hamid Mir, who brought his show to Swat.

"I was surprised that there is a little girl in Swat who can speak with a lot of confidence, who's very brave, who's very articulate," Mir says. "But at the same time I was a bit concerned about her security, about the security of her family." At that time it was Ziauddin Yousafzai, Malala's father, who was perceived to be at the greatest risk. Already known as a social and educational activist, he had sensed that the Taliban would move from the tribal areas of Pakistan into Swat, and had often warned people to be on their guard.

Malala herself was concerned for him. "I was worried about my father," she says. "I used to think, 'What will I do if a Talib comes to the house? We'll hide my father in a cupboard and call the police.'"

No-one thought the Taliban would target a child. There were however notorious incidents where they had chosen to make an example of women. In early 2009, a dancer was accused of immorality and executed, her body put on public display in the centre of Mingora. Soon afterwards, there was outrage across Pakistan after a video emerged from Swat showing the Taliban flogging a 17-year-old girl for alleged "illicit relations" with a man.

Ziauddin Yousafzai must have known that Malala's high profile in the valley put her at some risk, even though he could not have foreseen the outcome.

"Malala's voice was the most powerful voice in Swat because the biggest victim of the Taliban was girls' schools and girls' education and few people talked about it," he says. "When she used to speak about education, everybody gave it importance."

By the time Malala was shot in 2012, the worst days of Taliban power in Swat had receded. A high-profile military operation had cleared out most militants but others had stayed behind, keeping a low profile. "Life was normal for

normal people, but for those people who had raised their voice, it was now a risky time," says Malala. She was one of those people.

On the afternoon of 9 October, she walked out of school as normal and boarded a small bus waiting outside the gates. These vehicles are seen everywhere in Mingora - a little like covered pickup trucks, open at the back, with three lines of benches running the length of the flatbed. Each could carry about 20 people and would be waiting to take the girls and their teachers home at the end of the school day.

In Malala's case, it was only a short journey, past a small clearing where children played cricket, and along the canal bank to her house. Once she had walked, but then her mother, Tor Pekai, intervened. "My mother told me, 'Now you are growing up and people know you, so you must not go on foot, you must go in a car or a bus so then you will be safe,'" Malala says. That day, she was in the middle of her exams, and had a lot on her mind. But there was still the usual after-school chat and gossip to share with Moniba, who was sitting next to her. But as the bus progressed along its route Malala says she did notice something unusual - the road seemed deserted. "I asked Moniba, 'Why is there no-one here? Can you see it's not like it usually is?'"

Moments later, the bus was flagged down by two young men as it passed a clearing, only 100 yards from the school gates. Malala doesn't recall seeing them but Moniba does. To her they looked like college students. Then she heard one ask: "Who is Malala?" In the seconds between that question and the firing beginning, Moniba at first wondered if the men were more journalists in search of her well-known friend. But she quickly grasped that Malala had sensed danger. "She was very scared at that time," she remembers. The girls looked at Malala, thereby innocently identifying her. The two girls sitting on Malala's other side, Shazia Ramzan and Kainat Riaz, were also injured.

On 12 July, nine months after the shooting, came a major milestone - Malala stood up at the UN headquarters in New York and addressed a specially convened youth assembly. It was her 16th birthday and her speech was broadcast around the world. "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world," she said.

How did it feel to speak in public once again - this time on a bigger stage than she could ever have imagined? "When I looked at 400 youth and people from more than 100 countries... I said that I am not only talking to the people of America and the other countries, I am talking to every person in the world," she says.

Ziauddin Yousafzai remembers it as the biggest day of his life. For him, Malala's speech was an assault on negative perceptions of Pashtuns, of Pakistanis and of Muslims. "She was holding the lamp of hope and telling the world - we are not terrorists, we are peaceful, we love education." Malala was introduced to the audience in New York that day by former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the UN's special envoy on global education.

He has no doubt about her power to focus attention on the bigger picture of nearly 60 million out-of-school children around the world. "Because of Malala," he says, "there is a public understanding that something is wrong and has got to be done." There is even speculation she could be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The girl from Swat has gone global, but she still believes she can and will return home to Pakistan. Few would advise her to do that anytime soon. There are still fears for her security and also criticism that she attracts too much attention, especially in the West. But she seems sanguine about any criticism. "It's their right to express their feelings, and it's my right to say what I want," she says. "I want to do something for education, that's my only desire."

The danger for Malala is that the more time she spends away from Pakistan, the less she will be seen at home as a true Pakistani, and the more she will be identified with the West. But she has little time for distinctions between East and West. "Education is education," she says. "If I am learning to be a doctor would there be an eastern stethoscope or a western stethoscope, would there be an eastern thermometer or a western thermometer?"

Still only 16, she has to balance being the world's most high-profile educational campaigner, in demand around the world, with the completion of her own schooling.

I ask if he would like to send a message to Malala. Yes, he says. "She should continue her struggle. We are all with her." The voice of the girl whom the Taliban tried to silence a year ago has been amplified beyond what anyone could have thought possible. When I ask her what she thinks the militants achieved that day, she smiles.

"I think they may be regretting that they shot Malala," she says. "Now she is heard in every corner of the world."