**LET’S CROSS COLOUR AND OTHER DIVIDES – “GALLERY OF HEROES” FACT FILES**

**Who is Malala Yousafzai (1997 - )?**

Malala Yousafzai is a young girl who lived in Mingora, a small town in the Swat Valley of Pakistan, with her mother, father and two brothers. A group of people, called the Taliban, were very powerful in the region where Malala lived. They were very extreme religious believers. They believed that girls should not learn and did not want girls to go to school. Malala came from an educated family. Her family ran a chain of schools in the area where she lived, so she was lucky enough to be one of the few girls in that region who did attend school.

When Malala was only about 11 or 12 she wrote a blog explaining what life was like for a girl living in that part of the world at that time. She explained that girls in her region were being stopped from going to school and that she believed that girls must be allowed to go to school and learn.

Even though she was very young, Malala appeared in a documentary on television and became quite well known for her views.

One day, on 9 October 2012, Malala was on the bus on her way to school when a Taliban gunman got on the bus. He asked for Malala. Then he pointed his gun at Malala and shot her three times. Luckily, Malala survived. Malala was quickly sent to hospital in England where she got much better.

People all over the world heard about Malala’s story. Through her story they got to know that there are many girls in the world that are being denied the right to learn.

Malala has become a very famous person. She has been awarded many awards for her bravery in fighting for the right of all children, including girls, to have an education and, in 2014, she was the youngest person ever to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which is a very special award for the lesson she has taught people – that all children should have the right to an education.

**Who is Iqbal Masih (1982-1995)?**

Iqbal Masih was a young boy from a village called Muridke, near a big town called Lahore, in Pakistan. His family was very poor. His father had left home and his mother needed money to pay for his elder brother’s wedding. So, when he was 4 years old, Iqbal’s mother borrowed money (not more than £10) from the owner of a carpet factory to pay for the wedding. She soon found that she could not repay the debt and was forced to “loan” Iqbal to the carpet factory so that he could work to pay off the debt.

Iqbal worked for the carpet owner 14 hour days, six days a week, in hot, cramped and awful working conditions, but never earned enough money to pay off the debt.

When he was ten years old Iqbal and some of his friends decided to escape from the carpet factory. Sadly, he was returned to his owner and forced back to work. But he still didn’t give up. When he was 12 Iqbal managed to attend a freedom day celebration and learned that he was not allowed to be forced to work in the carpet factory in this way and that he should have been freed by law. He told his story to some important adults at the celebration and they helped him to gain his freedom.

Even though he was only 12 years old, Iqbal became an important activist fighting to free other children like himself. He would sneak into factories and help children understand their rights and encouraged them to escape. He helped thousands of children to become free. He even visited other countries and inspired children everywhere.

Iqbal won the Reebok Human Rights Award for his efforts in 1994.

He was shot and killed while riding his bicycle in Pakistan. He was twelve at the time.

**Who is Nelson Mandela (1918 – 2013)?**

Nelson Mandela was a black man, who was born in South Africa, on 18 July 1918. He grew up poor, in a small South African village called Qunu. When Mandela was nine, he was adopted by, and sent to live with, his father’s friend, a wealthy clan chief.

His real name was Rolihlahla Mandela – (Rolihlahla means troublemaker). He was given the name “Nelson” by a teacher at school. In school, Mandela learned about African history and his ancestors’ struggles with discrimination - by this we mean that in South Africa at that time people were treated differently simply because of the colour of their skin. From that time on Mandela wanted to help his people.

Later, when he was older, he travelled to Johannesburg, where he studied law and opened the country’s first black law practice. He also joined the African National Congress (the ANC), a group that fought for racial equality – which means that all people should be treated fairly and equally no matter what the colour of their skin.

In 1948, the South African Government introduced a system of racial discrimination called apartheid. Under apartheid only white people could vote and control the country and have certain privileges. There were also laws that separated black and white people so that they could not live in the same area, go to school together, marry each other, eat at the same restaurant, or share the same buses, movie houses, even beaches and park benches. This meant that black people and mixed race people living there had a very harsh life.

Mandela and the ANC had learned from another hero called Mahatma Gandhi. They encouraged people to take part in non-violent demonstrations against apartheid. But this did not always work. Later, Mandela and the ANC also encouraged people to try to overthrow the government and apartheid using violence as well. Mandela was arrested by the government for organizing anti-government activities and was sent to prison for life. Many people around the world protested his imprisonment and countries all over the world imposed sanctions (which means that they refused to sell to or buy things from South Africa or even play sport with South Africa so as to teach them that all people should be treated equally).

Mandela spent 27 years in prison for fighting to end apartheid and free black people. Fortunately, after many years, things changed in South Africa and on 11 February 1990, South African president F.W. de Klerk released Mandela from prison, and the two worked together to end apartheid.

Mandela and de Klerk won the Nobel Peace Prize for their joint efforts to end apartheid and three years later, in 1994, for the first time in South African history, all people in South Africa voted in the country’s first ever democratic elections. Mandela was elected president by a very large majority of votes and became the country’s first black President.

Mandela died in 2013 after a long illness. He was 95.

**Who is Helen Keller (1880 – 1968)?**

Helen Keller was born a long time ago, in 1880, in Alabama, America. She was a happy, healthy baby, but when she was around one and a half years old she became very sick and although she survived her illness she lost her sight and her hearing. She tried to communicate with people around her, but she knew she was different and life was very difficult for her.

Luckily for Helen, her parents managed to get some help. Helen’s helper was a woman called Annie Sullivan. Annie had been blind, but had her eyesight restored by surgery. Annie was able to teach Helen words. She would press the letters of words into Helen's hand. For example, she would put a doll in one of Helen's hands and then press the letters of the word D-O-L-L into the other hand. She taught Helen a number of words. Helen would repeat the words into Annie's hand. However, Helen still didn't understand that the hand signs had meaning. Then one day Annie put Helen's hand into water coming from a pump. Then she spelled out W-A-T-E-R into Helen's other hand. Something clicked. Helen finally understood what Annie was doing. An entire new world opened up for Helen. She learned a number of new words that day. In many ways it was one of the happiest days of her life.   
  
Next, Annie taught Helen how to read. Helen must have been very bright and Annie an amazing teacher, because soon Helen could read entire books in Braille. Braille is a special reading system where the letters are made out of little bumps on a page.   
  
Imagine trying to learn how to read if you can't see or hear. It's truly amazing what Helen and Annie were able to achieve. At the age of ten Helen could read and use a typewriter. Next, she wanted to learn how to talk.   
  
Helen Keller learned how to talk from Sarah Fuller. Sarah was a teacher for the deaf. By resting her hand on Sarah's lips, Helen learned how to feel sound vibrations and how the lips moved to make sounds. She started off learning a few letters and sounds. Then she advanced to words and, finally, sentences. Helen was so happy that she could say words.   
  
At sixteen years old Helen attended Radcliffe College for women in Massachusetts in America. Annie attended school with her and helped to sign the lectures into Helen's hand. Helen graduated from Radcliffe in 1904, with honours.   
  
During college Helen began to write about her experiences being deaf and blind. She first wrote a number of articles for a magazine called the *Ladies' Home Journal*. These articles were later published together in a book called *The Story of My Life*. A few years later, in 1908, she published another book called *The World I Live In*.   
  
As Helen grew older she wanted to help other people like herself. She wanted to inspire them and give them hope. She joined the American Foundation for the Blind and traveled the country giving speeches and raising money for the foundation. Later, during World War II, she visited with wounded army soldiers encouraging them not to give up. Helen spent much of her life working to raise money and awareness for people with disabilities, especially the deaf and the blind.   
  
Helen Keller died in 1968.

**Who is Emmeline Pankhurst? (1858 – 1928)?**

Emmeline Pankhurst (born Goulden) was a British political activist who became leader of the British suffragette movement – a movement that helped women in the United Kingdom win the right to vote. At the time that Emmeline lived in the United Kingdom, only men, but not women, could vote in the United Kingdom.

Emmeline was born in Manchester and went to school in Paris. She married Richard Pankhurst, a barrister, who was 24 years older than she was. Richard Pankhurst supported women’s right to vote and Emmeline’s activities to try to achieve this goal.

Emmeline founded and became involved with the Women’s Franchise League, which was a group that fought for women to be able to vote. The group fell apart, but Emmeline continued her struggles and later started the group called the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU) to fight for women’s rights.

The WSPU used some violent methods to make their cause known, such as smashing windows and assaulting police officers. Emmeline, her daughters, and other WSPU activists were sentenced to prison sentences a number of times, where they staged hunger strikes to get better conditions.

Eventually, in 1918 men over the age of 21 and women over the age of 30 were allowed to vote and later in 1928 all men and women over the age of 21 in the United Kingdom were allowed to vote.

**Who is Martin Luther King (1929-1968)?**

Martin Luther King was born on 15 January 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia (US) to his Baptist minister father and schoolteacher mother. Originally named Michael, he was later renamed Martin Luther. He married Coretta Scott in 1953. He, like his father before him, became a Baptist minister and in 1954 took up the position of Minister at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama.

At that time in the southern states of the United States of America there were laws that separated white people and black people. These were called the segregation laws or “Jim Crow” laws. For example, these laws said that white and black people were not allowed to sit together on a bus; eat at the same restaurant; go to the same school; or marry each other.

On 1 December 1955, Rosa Parks, a black woman, was sitting on a bus in Montgomery and refused to give up her place for a white man – which at that time she would have had to have done by law. She was arrested for this and was found guilty of having broken the law. On the day of Rosa Parks’ trial, leaflets were handed out encouraging black people to stop using the buses in protest against the unfair laws. So many people refused to use the buses and walked to work instead - showing that they disagreed with the laws. That night, following this great success, people gathered together and decided that they needed a leader to help them fight these harsh laws. They chose Martin Luther King. Under his leadership “the bus boycott” (the decision to stop using the buses) continued for over a year and King got lots of support. The bus boycott ended when the courts agreed that the bus segregation laws were wrong. Martin Luther King became famous for his speeches and as leader of what became known as the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

Martin Luther King used the same protest methods as Mahatma Gandhi had in India and Nelson Mandela initially did in South Africa – he organised massive non-violent acts of civil disobedience, which means that people broke unjust laws, but did not hurt others in doing so. Rather, they would stop going on the buses; organise large demonstrations and marches and things like that. Martin Luther King and many of his fellow activists were arrested and jailed many times for their efforts. One time, after King was released from jail following protests in Birmingham, USA, the group organised the Children’s Crusade. Thousands of school children and students staged marches in Birmingham. Television images of police using violence against the children made people all over the world very angry and won public support for King’s cause.

Then, in 1963, King led a march on Washington, protesting for freedom and jobs. More than 200,000 people marched with him and were present at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington when King delivered his famous ‘I have a dream’ speech. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDWWy4CMhE>

In 1964, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. That same year, and the year after, laws were passed ending segregation in America and ensuring that all black people had the right to vote in the United States of America.

King also tried to help poor people. In 1968, following a march against poverty, Martin Luther King was shot dead.

**Who is Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948)?**

Mahatma Gandhi was one of the most famous freedom fighters in the history of mankind. He led India in its struggle for freedom against British rule.

Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat, India. His real name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, but he became known as “Mahatma” which means “great soul”.

Gandhi studied law in London and when he finished his studies he accepted a job in South Africa. At that time South Africa treated its people unfairly and non-white people were treated badly. Gandhi was supposed to work in South Africa for only one year, but he stayed for 21 years because he felt that he had much to do there. One day, during a train journey in South Africa, Gandhi was thrown out of the train even though he had a first class ticket. He decided then that he would never accept racial discrimination at the hands of white people and would fight against it. It was in South Africa that he developed his method of resisting unfair laws passively – which means that he used examples of non-violent protest such as marches, sit-ins, and breaking unjust laws to show the laws to be unfair. This is also known as civil disobedience.

Later, Gandhi returned to India and became very involved in the India’s freedom struggle against its British rulers. He always followed non-violent methods of protests like going on hunger fasts and marches. His most famous march was the Dandi march when he led many people 250 miles to the sea to get his own salt to protest against the British rulers for making a simple thing like ‘salt’ expensive. He also thought it was unfair that the British bought raw cotton cheaply from the Indian farmers, then made the cotton into clothes and sold it back to the Indian people at high prices. So he promoted ‘cottage industries’, which meant he encouraged small groups of people to work together from home and make their own clothes rather than buy them from the British.

Still later, Gandhi led the ‘Quit India Movement’ against the British.

Finally, India received independence from British rule on 15 August 1947.

Gandhi survived five assassination attempts on his life, but did not survive the sixth.

Although Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times, he never received it. Gandhi's life and teachings have inspired many people including Dr. Martin Luther King in the United States, Nelson Mandela in South Africa and Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar.

**Who is Anne Frank (1929 -1945)?**

Anne Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany on 12 June 1929. Otto Frank, Anne’s father, was a businessman. Her mother Edith took care of Anne and her older sister, Margot. Anne was popular and had lots of friends. She loved reading and wanted to be a writer.   
  
In 1933 Adolf Hitler became the leader of Germany. He wanted to create a perfect German and people who did not fit into his idea of a perfect German were either treated badly or killed under his rule. Jewish people, gypsies, black people, disabled people and many others did not fit into Hitler’s ideal.

The Frank family were Jewish.   
  
When Anne was four the Frank family fled to the Netherlands to escape Hitler. Anne lived quite happily in the Netherlands until 1939 when Hitler decided to fight against Poland and started a very big war called World War II.

In 1940, Germany turned its attention to the Netherlands too. The Franks did not have time to escape this time.

Under Hitler, Jews in the Netherlands were not allowed to own businesses, have jobs, go to the movies, or even sit on the benches at the park. Otto Frank turned his business over to some non-Jewish friends. Still, the Franks tried to go on as normal. On Anne’s thirteenth birthday she received a red journal and began to write a diary.

Later, the Germans made all Jewish people wear yellow stars on their clothing. Some Jews were rounded up and taken away. One day the Franks were told that Margot would have to go to a labour camp where she would be forced to work. Instead, Otto Frank arranged for the family to go into hiding in a secret attic next to his place of work.

Anne wrote all about hiding away from Hitler in her diary which she named "Kitty" after a friend of hers. Each entry into her diary began "Dear Kitty". Anne wrote about all sorts of things. She didn't think others would be reading it. She wrote about her feelings, books she read, and the people around her. From Anne's diary we find out just what it must have been like to live in hiding for years, fearing for her life. She explained about having to be extra quiet so that no-one would know they were there. She wrote about other people moving in with the Franks to hide away from Hitler too.

Anne and her family were in hiding for nearly 2 years and thought that they would soon be free. Sadly, on 4 August 1944 the Germans found their hiding place and sent them away and only Otto Frank survived the war. He published Anne’s diary, which is how we all know how hard it was for this young girl to have been Jewish at that time.

Anne Frank and other Jews were forced to think they were lower human beings than others just because they had a different religious belief.

**Who is Mother Theresa (1910 – 1997)?**

Mother Teresa was born in Uskub, Ottoman Empire on 26 August 1910. This city is now called Skopje and is the capital of the Republic of Macedonia.

Mother Theresa’s real name was Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. She was raised by her mother, as her father died when she was eight.

Mother Theresa was a Roman Catholic. At a young age she decided that she wanted to devote her life to serving God. When she was eighteen she joined the Sisters of Loreto and became a missionary. She first went to Ireland to learn English at the Loreto Abby and then a year later started her missionary work in Darjeeling, India.

When in India she learned Bengali, the local language where she lived, and taught at the local school. She soon took her first vows as a nun and took the name Teresa. She taught for many years in India and became the headmistress at a school in eastern Calcutta.   
  
When she was 36 years old she felt the call from God to help the poor of India. She received some basic medical training and then set out to help the sick and needy. This wasn't an easy task in 1948 India. She had very little support and, while trying to feed and help the poorest of the poor, she herself was constantly hungry and even had to beg for food.   
  
She started an organisation called the Missionaries of Charity to take care of "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone".

Many women joined her and continue her work among the poor and homeless.

Mother Teresa worked looking after the poor and needy almost up until her death on 5 September 1997.

Mother Teresa has been beatified by the Catholic Church. This is a step on the way to becoming a Saint. She is now called Blessed Teresa of Calcutta.

She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979.

**Who is the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (1935-?)?**

The Dalai Lamas are very important Buddhist monks from Tibet, an area that was previously its own country, but was taken over by China in 1950.

Buddhists believe in reincarnation, which means that one’s spirit comes back to this world in another body after we die. They believe that after each Dalai Lama dies, his spirit is reincarnated in another’s body. There have been 14 Dalai Lama’s so far.

The current Dalai Lama is the fourteenth Dalai Lama. He was born on 6 July 1935 in the Tibetan region of Amdo. When the thirteenth Dalai Lama died a search party was sent to look for the next Dalai Lama. They found the fourteenth Dalai Lama when he was only two years old. They showed the little boy some of the thirteenth Dalai Lama’s things and some things that were not his and the fourteenth Dalai Lama was able to choose the things that had belonged to the thirteenth Dalai Lama and said “That’s mine!”

He was declared as the Dalai Lama when he was a little older, aged about 4, but he was still too young to govern. He had people to help him govern while he grew up and a lot of tutors to teach him. He took full political control over Tibet in 1950, at the age of 15.

Just before he took political control of Tibet, China invaded Tibet. The Dalai Lama co-operated with China and signed an agreement with China to keep the peace in Tibet. Later, in 1959, there was an uprising in Tibet and the Dalai Lama fled to India.

In India he explained that he disagreed with China ruling Tibet and since that time he has lived outside of Tibet, in exile.

The fourteenth Dalai Lama has used his role as such an important Buddhist leader to travel the world speaking about many important matters including the difficult situation that Tibetans find themselves in and urging countries to support Tibetans desire to be a self-governing area of China; talking about the importance of compassion as the source of a happy life; encouraging peace and non-violence; investigating how Buddhism can work together with science; encouraging communication amongst people of all faiths; promoting that we care for the environment and animals and many other things that encourage human beings to work peacefully together and show kindness to one another.

The 14th Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.