

Genius reading A: Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son

Follow the instructions on your worksheet.

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Nguyen Ngoc Truong Son learnt to play chess by watching his parents in their home. When he first asked to play as well they refused. But he insisted. So eventually they agreed and were astonished that he understood how to play. Why? Because little Truong Son was only three years old at the time! Chess is a difficult game to learn with different pieces having different moves but Truong Son knew them all. And, even more amazing, a month later he was beating his parents at their favourite game. Truong Son's incredible ability for chess was soon well known and he was selected to be a pupil of the provincial school of talents.

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One year later, at the age of just four, Truong Son took part in the national young chess championship. Then at seven, he won a silver medal at the under-nine national chess championship. He was later chosen to take part in the world young chess championship held in Spain in 2000. Here Truong Son played so successfully that he became the second Vietnamese chess player to win the world under-10 chess championship and take home a gold medal. Now he is Vietnam's youngest champion and on his way to becoming a grand master.

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Born in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam, Truong Son is a great surprise to his parents. They are both teachers, earning less than US\$100 a month, and cannot explain how their child can play so well. His father thinks that Son was perhaps born with the ability, he didn't train his son to play, Son simply picked it up.

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And what does Truong Son himself think? "I just see things on the board and know what to do," he says. For him the game is logical and has come naturally to him. "It's just always made sense to me."



Genius reading B: Mohammed Hussain Tabatabai

Follow the instructions on your worksheet.

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It is not unusual for Muslims to know the Koran - the Islamic Holy book - by heart. Like others Mohammed Hussain Tabatabai has memorised the entire Koran and, when asked, can recite any of the 6,000 verses. But what is even more astonishing is that he can also understand and interpret the text. Why? Because Mohammed Hussain is just a boy, and one who has the confidence to give a lecture on the teachings of the prophet Mohammed, who died nearly 1400 years ago. For Muslims the Koran is the word of God. It is written in classical Arabic. For a young boy to learn the Koran, understand it, and to explain it to adults, is remarkable.

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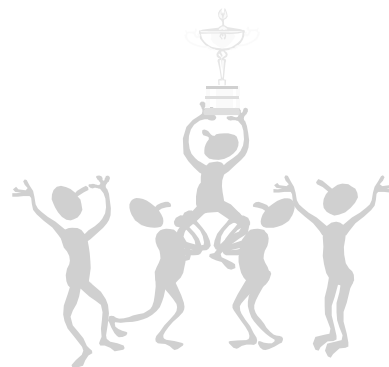
Mohammed Hussain is seen as a miracle of the Muslim world. When he was just seven years old he went to the Islamic Centre in the UK where he spoke to thousands of Muslims about the Koran. Questions were asked to test Mohammed Hussain. He was also given the name of many different verses and asked to recite them. Each time he got the answer right, using his photographic memory. He has been described as a religious child prodigy.

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Educated by his father young Mohammed Hussain comes from Iran. He already has a clear idea of what he wants to be when he is older. His aim is to be a religious leader and it is incredible that at the age of seven he already had a doctorate.

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So why is it important to learn the Koran by heart? Because it makes him a better person, he replies. If he does not feel like praying, the Koran encourages him to pray, and if he wants to say something bad, the Koran tells him not to. But is he ever naughty? "Yes, sometimes."



Genius reading C: Fredua Koranteng Adu

Follow the instructions on your worksheet.

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For many little boys playing football in the street with friends their dream is to become another Pelé or Beckham. For Fredua Koranteng Adu his dream seems to be coming true. Already he has football clubs like Manchester United and Chelsea showing great interest. Why is this so remarkable? Because Freddy Adu is only fourteen years old. He is the teenager every major European football team wants to sign but until recently homework was still important! When Freddy was 11, Inter Milan wanted to take him to Italy. But his family wanted to keep him closer to continue his education.

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Freddy Adu's talent was noticed from the moment he was first taken on to a US football pitch by a friend at the age of eight. Two years later the coach of Washington DC saw how good he was and decided he could train for the team. When Freddy made his debut for the USA's Under-20 team his remarkable ability impressed many. Now playing the position of striker for Washington DC Freddy is the youngest in any American professional sport since 1887. Bruce Arena, boss of the US national team, said: "This may be our first superstar. Maybe this is the guy."

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Freddy was born in Ghana, Africa but moved to the USA when he was eight after his mother won a special lottery to live in America. He still lives with his mother and brother in Maryland. He is now an American citizen.

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Freddy is already a millionaire: his annual salary is \$500,000 and he has a \$1 million contract with Nike. But what is Freddy's aim in life? "I would love to end up playing in England for someone like Manchester United," he said. "I've loved them ever since I was a baby - I still am a baby!"

