

'She believed in every one of us': ex-pupils on their inspirational teachers

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Match the singers below with their nationalities.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. Adele | a. Australian |
| 2. Rihanna | b. Colombian |
| 3. Sia | c. Canadian |
| 4. Ariana Grande | d. English |
| 5. Shakira | e. American |
| 6. Celine Dion | f. Barbadian |

2 Key words

a. Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

hug

impact

regularly

tears

viral

1. If a person is in _____, they are crying.
2. If a picture, story, or video goes _____, a lot of people share it on the internet.
3. An _____ is the effect that something or someone has.
4. A _____ is when you put your arms round someone to show your love or friendship.
5. If something happens _____, it happens quite often.

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anxiety

immigrant

inspire

spot on

struggle

6. _____ is a worried feeling you have because you think something bad might happen.
7. If you _____ someone, you give them the enthusiasm to do or create something.
8. An _____ is someone who comes to live in a country from another country.
9. If you _____ to do something, you find it difficult to do.
10. If you are _____, you are absolutely correct.

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- 1 "So cool." That's how the singer Adele described her English teacher at her school in London, Ms McDonald. Adele said: "She really made us care, and we knew that she cared about us." There are pictures of Adele in tears when McDonald surprised her on stage at a concert and they have gone viral. Now a lot of people are talking about the impact teachers can have on the lives of their pupils.
- 2 Max Daniels described how the kindness of his teacher Miss Coyle had a lasting impact. "I could talk about her lessons, but the impact she had was far more personal. My father died when I was 14 and, during a parents' evening shortly after, Miss Coyle gave my mum a huge hug. It made me realize how much she cared about the lives of the people she taught."
- 3 Sometimes teachers can help pupils face deep, personal problems. Jack Haywood, a doctor, said his last teacher at primary school, Miss Stuart, helped him deal with anxieties about his sexuality. "Miss Stuart would regularly talk to me one-to-one. She told me it was OK if I was gay and that there was nothing to be afraid of. She made me feel safe and valued."
- 4 Sophie Smith-Tong, a primary-school teacher, said her teacher Ms Rea changed her journey in education. "We met at 13 and she has continued to inspire me throughout my life. She is the reason that I went to university. She believed in all of us. We are still friends 24 years later and she still has a major impact on the life decisions I make today."
- 5 Mandeep Rai is the child of immigrants to the UK. She said: "English was not my first language – I was born in the UK but we spoke Punjabi at home so I could talk to my grandparents. I only learned to speak English when I started school. I struggled with English, in particular vocabulary. In my first year of secondary school, I did badly in an exam, which surprised my teacher, Mr Holmes.
- 6 "He encouraged me to read as much as I could, to understand sentence structure better and improve my vocabulary," Rai said. "It was tough feedback for an 11-year-old but he was spot on. I took his advice and I think it was a huge help in passing exams and performing well at work."

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. What subject did Ms. McDonald teach?
2. Why was Adele in tears?
3. What happened when Max Daniels was fourteen?
4. What did Miss Coyle do that made Max Daniels realize how much she cared?
5. What is Jack Haywood's job now?
6. What was he worried about when he was at primary school?
7. How old was Sophie Smith-Tong when she first met Ms Rea?
8. Where was Mandeep Rai born?
9. What language did she speak at home?
10. What did Mr Holmes encourage her to do?

4 Key language

a. Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column to make expressions from the text.

- | | |
|--------------|------------------------|
| 1. have | a. an exam |
| 2. take | b. a problem |
| 3. pass | c. anxieties |
| 4. show | d. an impact |
| 5. face | e. kindness to someone |
| 6. deal with | f. someone's advice |

5 Discussion

a. Discuss this question.

- What are the qualities of a good teacher?

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6 In your own words

- a. Use an internet search engine to find out more about Adele. Find as much information as you can, including:
- her age
 - where she was born
 - when she started performing
 - when she released her first record
 - how many records she has sold
 - how many followers she has on Facebook
 - the names of her albums
 - what her latest album is called and when it was released