

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

### Level 2: Intermediate

#### 1 Warmer

a. Adele is one of the most talented and famous female singers in the world. Do you know where she is from? Match the singers with their nationalities.

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

#### 2 Key words

a. Find the following words in the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. an adjective meaning *shared by a large number of people on the internet*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 1)
2. a noun meaning *the effect that something can have* \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 1)
3. an adjective meaning *continuing to have an effect for a long time* \_\_\_\_\_  
(paragraph 2)
4. a two-word verb meaning *die* \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 2)
5. a noun meaning *a worried feeling you have because you think something bad might happen*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 3)
6. a noun meaning *the process of changing from one situation to another*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 3)
7. a noun meaning *making someone feel less worried about something*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 3)
8. a verb meaning *give someone the enthusiasm to do or create something*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 4)
9. a verb meaning *say very firmly that something must happen or must be done*  
\_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 5)
10. a two-word adjective meaning *absolutely correct* \_\_\_\_\_ (paragraph 7)

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

### Level 2: Intermediate

**Jamie Grierson**

**22 November, 2021**

- 1 "So cool, so engaging." That's how the singer Adele described her English teacher at her school in London, Ms McDonald, when someone asked who had inspired her. Adele said: "She really made us care, and we knew that she cared about us." Pictures of Adele in tears when McDonald surprised her on stage have gone viral, leading to people talking about the impact teachers can have on the lives of their pupils.
- 2 Max Daniels, a communications consultant, described how the kindness shown by his teacher Miss Coyle had a lasting impact. "Miss Coyle was an enthusiastic Irish woman who taught me English and media studies," he said. "I could talk about her lively and fun lessons, but the impact they had was far more personal. My father passed away when I was 14 and, during a parents' evening shortly after, Miss Coyle gave my mum a huge hug. It was something that made me realize how much she cared about the lives of the people she taught."
- 3 Sometimes teachers can help pupils face deep, personal challenges. Jack Haywood, a doctor, said his last teacher at primary school, Miss Stuart, helped him deal with anxieties about his sexuality at a young age. "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. Because of her, leaving primary school was a smooth transition, and I worked hard all the way through secondary school because of the confidence and reassurance she gave me."
- 4 Sophie Smith-Tong, a primary-school teacher, said her teacher Ms Rea changed her journey in education. "We met at 13 when, in a drama lesson, she had dressed up a classroom as a police station," she said. "She has continued to inspire me throughout my life. She is the reason that I realized I could apply to go to university and that I had something to offer, even though I felt so different to all of my classmates. She took me to perform my first professional theatre production at the Edinburgh Festival at 16. She believed in every single one of us. We are still friends 24 years later and she still has a major impact on the life decisions I make today."
- 5 For Mandeep Rai, her teacher Mr Holmes helped her with the challenges of being a child of immigrants to the UK, particularly language difficulties. She now has a senior position at a pharmaceutical firm and said: "English was not my first language – I was born in the UK but my parents insisted we speak Punjabi at home to ensure I could communicate with my grandparents."
- 6 "This meant I only learned to speak English when I started school at around three years old. I struggled with English, in particular vocabulary. In my first year of secondary school, I did badly in an end-of-term geography exam, which surprised my teacher Mr Holmes as I was usually the first to raise my hand in class and clearly enjoyed the topic."
- 7 "He encouraged me to read as much as I could, anything I enjoyed, 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 in the workplace."

© Guardian News and Media 2021

First published in *The Guardian*, 22/11/2021

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

### Level 2: Intermediate

#### 3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements True (T) or False (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Pictures of Adele crying on stage have gone viral on the internet.
2. Max Daniels was impressed when his teacher hugged his mum after his father had died.
3. Jack Haywood was anxious about his exams when he was at school.
4. He was confident at secondary school after the help his teacher had given him.
5. Sophie Smith-Tong first met Ms Rea at primary school.
6. Sophie performed at the Edinburgh Festival when she was thirteen.
7. Mandeep Rai was born in the Punjab.
8. She spoke Punjabi to her grandparents.
9. She didn't speak English until she started school.
10. Her teacher encouraged her to watch as much TV as she could.

#### 4 Key language

a. Complete the phrases from the text using these prepositions.

in    on    through    throughout    in    about    with    of

1. care \_\_\_\_\_ someone
2. nothing to be afraid \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ my life
4. a major impact \_\_\_\_\_ someone
5. believe \_\_\_\_\_ someone
6. deal \_\_\_\_\_ a problem
7. all the way \_\_\_\_\_ secondary school
8. \_\_\_\_\_ tears

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

### Level 2: Intermediate

#### 5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "You never forget your first teacher."
- "Your schooldays are the best years of your life."

#### 6 In your own words

- a. Use an internet search engine to find more information about the concert where Ms McDonald came on stage when Adele was performing. Tell your classmates what information you have found.