

## Unsung heroes

### Topic

Women who have achieved something remarkable

### Learning outcomes

- Learn about some relatively unknown remarkable women for International Women's Day
- Develop reading and speaking skills through a running dictation
- Build vocabulary related to social issues
- Revise relative clauses

### Age/level

Age 13–17 and adults, B1+

### Time

75 minutes. This can be done over two shorter lessons.

### Materials

Running dictation: one copy cut up  
Worksheets 1 and 2: one per learner or one per two learners  
Presentation: for a low-print lesson without worksheets

### Introduction

This lesson, devised for International Women's Day, will help to raise awareness of some not very famous, but nonetheless important, women. The lesson begins by asking learners to think of well-known people that they consider to be heroes. It is likely that many of these will be men, so the learners then go on to learn about five remarkable women in a jigsaw reading activity.

The learners discuss these women's achievements and learn some useful vocabulary for talking about social issues. There is then a focus on relative clauses, before the final task of writing about another female hero, using the vocabulary and relative clauses where appropriate. For a 50- to 60-minute class, the writing stage could be done at home.

### Procedure

<b>Before lesson</b>	<p>Put the five running dictation texts on the wall so that they can be easily accessed by learners in groups. (Learners will be divided into five groups in stage 3.)</p>
<b>1. Lead-in (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the word 'Heroes' on the board or share <b>slide 2</b>. (Don't mention International Women's Day at this point.) Ask learners to write down the names of at least five people they would regard as heroes. Set a time limit of three minutes and set a timer.</li> <li>• Then ask learners to compare their list with a partner's and explain why they chose the people they did.</li> <li>• Elicit some names and explanations from the class. Then ask how many people on their list were women. If not at least 50 per cent of the names, ask them why not. Discuss as a class. For example, women were/are expected to give up work when they got/get married.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Introduction (3 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the names of the five women on the worksheet up on the board [Mary Seacole, Mary Anning, Dr Megan Coffee, Irena Sendler, Hilary Lister]. You can also use <b>slide 3</b>.</li> <li>• Ask learners if they have heard of them. If someone knows quite a lot about one or more of them, ask them not to tell the class just yet.</li> <li>• Explain that all these women are 'unsung heroes' (or heroines), which means heroes that not many people know about or make a fuss about.</li> <li>• Tell the class that they are going to find out about these women.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Running dictation (15 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divide the class into five groups. Make sure they all have easy access to one of the texts.</li> <li>• Explain that one group member is a reader, and the others are all writers. The learners can use their notebooks. They must <u>all</u> write.</li> <li>• The reader reads the first sentence of the text, memorises it and tells their group the sentence. The reader may need to go back to read the text a few times, only memorising a few words at a time.</li> <li>• The writers and the reader all copy the sentences into their notebooks.</li> <li>• When all group members have written the whole sentence, they give a signal, for example putting their hands up or clapping. You can award points for the first group to complete.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask group members to change roles so that there is a new writer for sentence two. Repeat this process until each group has written the whole paragraph.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> All texts have seven sentences and are of a similar length.</p> <p><b>Tip 1:</b> Make sure that the groups are set up so that there is a mix of abilities to ensure they all complete the task in time.</p> <p><b>Tip 2:</b> Learners who struggle with memorisation or reading activities can remain writers, as they can get support with their texts from the other group members.</p> <p><b>Tip 3:</b> With younger groups, give additional points for fast walking by the reader to avoid learners running around the classroom. You can also award points for quiet working.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When groups have completed their paragraph, give them the text from the wall to check their grammar and punctuation. Get feedback from each group on how they did.</li> <li>Briefly feed back as a class. Why are these women considered heroes?</li> </ul>
<b>4. Cross groups (12 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make new groups, ensuring that each group has at least one member from each of the original five groups.</li> <li>Learners take turns to tell the others in their group about the woman from their text. Encourage learners to use their own words if possible.</li> <li>Briefly feed back as a class. Why are these women considered heroes? Which woman are they most impressed by?</li> <li>This could be the end of lesson 1.</li> </ul>
<b>5. Further comprehension work (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell learners that they are going to check how much they remember about the heroic women. Individually ask learners to complete the gaps with the correct name (worksheet 1, exercise 1). You can also display <b>slide 4</b>.</li> <li>They should try to do it from what they heard at the previous stage first, but can go back and read the other texts to check their ideas within their group.</li> <li>Answers: 1. Hilary Lister; 2. Mary Anning; 3. Dr Megan Coffee; 4. Mary Seacole; 5. Mary Anning; 6. Irena Sendler; 7. Hilary Lister; 8. Irena Sendler</li> <li>You can show the answers on <b>slide 5</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Vocabulary (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell learners they are going to learn some vocabulary to talk about social issues. Point out the words in bold on exercise 1 or <b>slide 5</b>. Tell learners they should read the sentences and note any words that are new to them.</li> <li>Individually they match the words in bold with the definitions, using either worksheet 1, exercise 2 or <b>slide 6</b>. Show the answers on <b>slide 7</b>.</li> <li>Answers: disease – 9; poverty – 3; spread – 10; Racism – 5; sexism – 2; achievements – 7; bravery – 1; discrimination – 4; able-bodied – 8; prejudice – 6</li> </ul>
<b>7. Speaking – Think, Pair,</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show <b>slide 4</b> again or ask learners to look at their notes. They individually spend one or two minutes deciding which heroic woman they most admire and why. Put</li> </ul>

<b>Share (10 minutes)</b>	<p>learners in pairs and give them two minutes to share their ideas and try to agree together which woman they think is the biggest hero.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Then open this out to a class discussion. Encourage learners to use the vocabulary from the previous stage where appropriate.</li> </ul>
<b>8. Grammar focus – relative clauses (15 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask learners to look at worksheet 2, or show <b>slide 8</b>. Elicit from the group the best relative pronoun to use with the first five sentences, giving tips as needed. Click on the powerpoint to reveal the answers.</li> <li>• Learners complete all sentences individually. You can display <b>slide 9</b>. Check together as a whole group or ask learners to refer to their texts for the answers.</li> <li>• Answers: 1. which; 2. where; 3. where; 4. which; 5. who; 6. which; 7. which; 8. which; 9. which; 10. which; 11. who; 12. who</li> <li>• Ask learners to read the rules about defining and non-defining clauses, and check understanding. At this level, this should be revision. Display <b>slide 10</b> or ask learners to look at worksheet 2, exercise 2.</li> <li>• Ask learners to look at the first five sentences again on worksheet 2 or show <b>slide 11</b>. Learners identify which sentences contain defining or non-defining relative clauses.</li> <li>• Answers: 1. non-defining; 2. defining; 3. defining; 4. non-defining; 5. defining</li> </ul>
<b>9. Written (Homework) (20–30 minutes)</b>  OPTIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask learners to either choose a female hero of their own or choose from a list that the teacher provides them with. They should find out about their chosen person and write a short text about her. Remind them to include some of the vocabulary and to use relative clauses correctly.</li> <li>• Ideas for other female heroes: Ada Lovelace; Hedy Lamarr; Mala Zimetbaum; Aphra Behn; Fatima bint Muhammad Al-Fihriya Al-Qurashiya; Grainne Ni Mhaille; Rita Levi-Montalcini; Elizabeth Fry; Marie Curie; Varisa Pongrakhananon; Witri Wahyu Lestari</li> </ul>

### Contributed by

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