**Malala Yousafzai’s Courage: Discussion Questions**

An assassination attempt was not enough to curtail the human-rights work of teenage activist Malala Yousafzai. In fact, her brush with death at the hands of the Taliban only served to strengthen her resolve and led to her recognition as a joint winner of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize.

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The 17-year-old Pakistani rose to prominence as a vocal advocate for girls’ right to education. The Taliban, which ardently disagrees with Yousafzai’s position, was fearful that her activism would inspire others to act. The group planned to silence the teen, and while she rode a school bus, a Taliban gunman shot her in the head.

Yousafzai was flown to England, where she received emergency care and eventually recovered from her injuries. Rather than go into hiding, she remained steadfast in her attempts to provide Pakistani girls with the right to an education. In October 2013 she [visited the U.S.](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57607041/malala-yousafzai-survivor-of-taliban-visits-u.s/) to share her story.

Her work, including her best-selling book *I am Malala,* landed her on the shortlist of Nobel candidates in 2013. Despite being the odds-on favorite to win the award, Yousafzai was edged out by Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, a watchdog group that conducts investigations into the use of chemical weapons.

Yousafzai is the youngest recipient of the prize since it was created in 1901, said [an article in *The New York Times*](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/11/world/europe/kailash-satyarthi-and-malala-yousafzai-are-awarded-nobel-peace-prize.html?_r=0). Yosafzai won the prize along with Kailash Satyarthi, an Indian veteran known for his efforts to end child labor and free children from sex trafficking.

"The Nobel Committee regards it as an important point for a Hindu and a Muslim, an Indian and a Pakistani, to join in a common struggle for education and against extremism," said Thorbjorn Jagland, the committee's chairman. "Children must go to school and not be financially exploited. It is a prerequisite for peaceful global development that the rights of children and young people be respected. In conflict-ridden areas in particular, the violation of children leads to the continuation of violence from generation to generation."

In response to her award, Yousafzai expressed hope "that the leaders of Pakistan and India would come together on education and asked for them to jointly attend the award presentation in December," said an [article on NBCNews.com](http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/peace-prize-winner-malala-thanks-dad-not-clipping-her-wings-n222746).

"I'm proud that I am the first Pakistani and I am honored that I am the first young woman or the first young person to receive this award," she said in a press conference from Britain. "I am thankful to my father for not clipping my wings and for letting me to fly."

Malala said she was in chemistry class when she learned that she won the award, NBCNews said.

"I was totally sure that I hadn't won it," she said, and added she was accepting the award on behalf of children everywhere. "When I found that I got the Nobel Peace Prize..I decided that I would not leave my school I would continue to learn."

**Student Discussion Questions**

1. If you were a 16-year-old girl in Pakistan, could you have imagined doing what Malala did? What do you admire about Malala?
2. Why are her actions significant in terms of the worldwide struggle for human rights (in particular, women's rights)? If you could have spoken to the Nobel Prize committee, what would you have said in her support?
3. Malala gave an [address to the United Nations](http://storify.com/cbccommunity/malala-day-un-education?utm_source=story&utm_media=embed&utm_content=related). Choose a quote from her address and explain why it’s particularly meaningful or memorable.
4. What are some of the serious women’s rights issues going on around the world today? (Research using a reliable source!)
5. Using what you heard from Malala’s father and the article above, how could encouraging women to get an education help resolve some of these issues?