

Malala's Story



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Malala Yousafzai was born in 1997 in Pakistan and grew up in the Swat Valley. For many years, the Swat Valley was a very popular vacation spot for tourists. The lush valley, with its mountain vistas, is both beautiful and idyllic, making it the perfect spot for a restful vacation and a safe place to raise young children.

Malala attended the nearby school that her father, Ziauddin, founded. Malala enjoyed exploring nature and learning at school. She enjoyed life. But things began to change rapidly in 2007 when the Taliban moved in and took control of the valley.

The Taliban is a Muslim terrorist organization. It is a militant group, which means that it has an army that attacks and takes control of towns and cities. Members of the Taliban have extreme views on how people should live. The Taliban won't let people listen to music or have celebrations of any kind. The Taliban doesn't believe that women or girls are equal to men. In fact, they don't believe women should get an education of any kind. Wherever the Taliban takes control, it forbids girls to attend school by shutting down—and often destroying—girls' schools.

Malala's Story

Malala couldn't just stand by and do nothing—she believed that all children (both boys and girls) have the right to get an education and go to school. In 2008, 11-year-old Malala gave a speech called, "How dare the Taliban take away my basic right to education?"

A year later, Malala began blogging for the BBC online, which is a major British news network. In her blog, Malala described what it was like to live under the Taliban's rule. Malala wrote her blog under the fake name Gul Makai because the Taliban is a very violent and merciless organization. If the Taliban found out who was writing the blog, Malala would've been in great danger. But later that year, the New York Times featured a short documentary about Malala's fight to protect girls' education in the Swat Valley. The documentary publicly revealed Malala's true identity and the Taliban swiftly named her one of its main targets, despite the fact that she was just a young girl.

By 2011, the Pakistani army forced the Taliban out of Swat Valley and Malala and her friends were able to return to school. Less than a year later, disaster happened.

In 2012, a masked gunman boarded Malala's school bus and shot her in the head. Miraculously, Malala survived the attack and was rushed to a local hospital. She was treated for her injuries in Pakistan, but soon after, she was moved to a hospital in England for more advanced surgeries and treatments.

After about six months of medical rehabilitation, Malala was deemed well enough to return to school. Malala's story went viral and people all over the world were amazed by the young girl who was brave enough to stand up to the Taliban. Malala began to travel all over the world to meet world leaders, and the news media, and other girls who were fighting for their own educations.

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Malala became famous for her work in promoting and supporting girls fighting for the right to an education. People all over the world noticed the big impact that one little girl could make (she wasn't so little anymore, but she was still pretty young). She founded the Malala Fund, an organization that advocates for girls' education worldwide. Malala traveled around the world listening to girls' struggles and advising them on how to stand up for their rights—she called this the Girl Power Trip. She even opened a school for girls in Lebanon.

In 2014, when Malala was 17, she became the youngest person ever to receive a Nobel Peace Prize. However, Malala's work is not done. She continues to fight for children's rights and girls' rights. In 2016, she launched a campaign to encourage people around the world to support education for girls. It's called #YesAllGirls.

In 2017, 20-year-old Malala was accepted to Oxford University in England. Oxford is one of the world's most prestigious universities. She plans to study subjects that will help her continue to make a difference and help improve the lives of girls all over the world.

Malala meets with President Obama in the Oval Office in 2013



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