

World Teachers' Day

October 5 is World Teachers' Day. Find out which famous people want to say thank you to their school teachers for their success.

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary

1. influential
2. a founder
3. withdrawn
4. the spotlight
5. to inspire
6. to take on
7. a spark
8. to survive

Definition

- a. to fight and win against something difficult
- b. a place where everyone is looking at you; the front of the stage
- c. to continue to live despite difficult things in your life
- d. having an effect on other people that makes them change the way they do things
- e. shy, quiet
- f. an interest in something
- g. to make someone want to be a better person
- h. the person who starts a company

World Teachers' Day

Who shapes the person you are the most? Parents or other family members are probably at the top of the list for many people. But a close second place is very likely to go to a teacher. Some of the most influential and successful people in the world have a teacher in their childhood to thank for their success.

The teachers behind famous people

Can you imagine life without the personal computer? Well, without two of Bill Gates's high school teachers, that could be our world today. Gates's maths teacher, Fred Wright, asked him to push himself just a little bit harder. Maybe that's why the founder of Microsoft sometimes slept under his desk in the office instead of going home to relax after work. And his drama teacher, Anne Stephens, helped him discover a love of the spotlight when she made the sometimes withdrawn schoolboy the star of the school play. Gates thanked his teachers, saying, 'There's no way there would be a Microsoft without them doing what they did.'

And he's not the only one. Oprah Winfrey, talk show host, actress and TV producer, was inspired by her fourth grade (age 9–10) teacher, Mrs Duncan. Because of her, Oprah says, 'I felt I could take on the world. You did exactly what teachers are supposed to do. They create a spark for learning that lives with you from then on. It's why I have a talk show today.'

An adult you can trust

For some children, teachers are the only positively influential people in their lives. Antwone Fisher, a best-selling writer, grew up in foster homes, and didn't have many adults that he could trust. But a primary school teacher, Mrs Profitt, was the first adult he ever trusted. 'She spoke to all of us the same way – with respect. No one spoke to me that way before. I think that being with her for three years made all the difference.'

Celebrate teachers

There are thousands more stories like this, from famous people and ordinary people all across the world. That's why UNESCO celebrates teachers on 5 October every year. UNESCO wants us to remember that education is a basic human right and every child should have free education. UNESCO hopes to train 69 million new teachers by 2030 so that everyone can go to school, because, sadly, 264 million children in the world today are not in school because there aren't enough teachers. Those children are often in places where life is already very difficult because they live in poor areas or far away from cities and towns, or they are escaping war in their own countries.

A day to say 'Thank you'

So, if you have a teacher, you're one of the lucky ones. One day, you'll probably look back at your life, your successes, the dreams you've made come true or the difficult things you've survived. The chances are high that you'll find a teacher's words have helped you achieve these things. Perhaps you already know who that teacher will be. Why not find them and say thank you today on World Teachers' Day?

Tasks

Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

| | Answer | |
|---|---------------|-------|
| 1. Bill Gates slept under his desk at school. | True | False |
| 2. Bill Gates's drama teacher helped him to be good at public speaking. | True | False |
| 3. Oprah Winfrey's teacher taught her how to act. | True | False |
| 4. Mrs Profitt gave Antwone Fisher the belief that he was good enough. | True | False |
| 5. The world needs 264 million new teachers. | True | False |
| 6. Most people have probably had a teacher who inspired them. | True | False |

Task 2

Put the words and phrases in order to make sentences.

1. you are. shape the Teachers person
2. a Microsoft There's my teachers. there would be no way without
3. inspired her teacher. was by Oprah Winfrey
4. for create Teachers learning. a spark
5. the world. can I feel on take I
6. ever was Mrs Profitt Antwone Fisher the first adult trusted.

Discussion

Who is the best teacher you've ever had?

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. h
3. e
4. b
5. g
6. a
7. f
8. c

Task 1

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. True

Task 2

1. Teachers shape the person you are.
2. There's no way there would be a Microsoft without my teachers.
3. Oprah Winfrey was inspired by her teacher.
4. Teachers create a spark for learning.
5. I feel I can take on the world.
6. Mrs Profitt was the first adult Antwone Fisher ever trusted.