

**CLASS B' LYCEUM**  
**OXFORD FUTURES 3**  
**UNIT 4**

**What makes a hero?**

**Teacher: Jovanna Xenophontos**

**PART II: READING AND WRITING**

**TASK 1: Questions 1-5**

**Read the text and questions below. For each question, choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.**



**Villains: Are they all that bad?**

**Par. 1** One of my heroines is Eleanor Audley. Despite the fact that most people have never heard of her, we've all heard her: She was the iconic voice behind such classic Disney villainesses as *Maleficent* and *Lady Tremaine* (aka, Cinderella's stepmother).

**Par. 2** Your next thought might be something like, "Well, knowing who played the villains is great but all little girls really want to be Disney princesses." Well, I have always been a bit of an oddball so, ever since I was little, I've always preferred the villains over the princesses. I appreciated them because they were multidimensional and seemed to have more going on behind the eyes than the dazzling damsels waiting to be rescued from the latest distress, they'd managed to get themselves into.

**Par. 3** Moreover, Audley's early influence on me as a child even revealed itself throughout my theatrical acting career as an adult: every part I've ever played has been that of the villain. And it's so much more agreeable than playing the princess. But more than being fun, diving into the psyche of a supposed psycho is enlightening because very few of them are inherently evil and none of them view themselves as villains. More often than not they're just misunderstood. It's true: Rather than rushing to judgement, try to see things from their perspective for a moment.

**Par. 4** What better example than *Maleficent* (from *Sleeping Beauty*). How would you like it if you were the only person in town intentionally excluded from the biggest event in years? When *Maleficent* shows up to Aurora's christening, she's not met with an "Oh dear, your invitation must have got lost in the mail!" or even an "It's nothing personal but when the guest list grew to 5,000, we had to cut it off somewhere and, ugh, it looks like you were 5,001." Nope. Poor *Maleficent* is the recipient of a very publicly humiliating "You weren't wanted"! And this, coming from Merryweather, the Good Fairy. That doesn't sound like a very merry or good thing to say to someone, now does it? *Maleficent* had no

other choice but to react harshly because she was called out in front of the entire kingdom. Is it any wonder she was a little quick to fly off the handle?

**Par. 5** Maybe that's why I was so drawn to the villainesses as a kid – being told they were bad only made me like them more. But by paying more attention to them, I was able to understand them, and they actually taught me more about kindness and the ability to understand and share the feelings of others than those poufy little princesses ever did.

**Par. 6** So don't worry if your daughter shows more interest in the villainesses than the princesses, because they just might help her become the heroine of her own story. And if nothing else, every fairy tale needs a good villain so they can always find work following in Eleanor Audley's footsteps.

Adapted from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/05/29/villains-are-they-all-that-bad/>

**1. The writer preferred the villains in books or films because she thought they \_\_\_\_.**

- A. they were more complex and, therefore, more fascinating
- B. were more troubled and, therefore, more interesting
- C. were easily misunderstood and pitied them
- D. made more sense and were easier to understand

**2. Which sentence best reflects the content of par. 3?**

**The writer thinks that \_\_\_\_.**

- A. emotions could cloud our judgement and make us lose sight of what matters
- B. we should empathise with villains before forming an opinion about them
- C. self-reflection is an extremely important aspect of bringing perspective to our lives
- D. actors can distinguish themselves by playing villainous roles

**3. The writer \_\_\_\_ *Maleficent* from *The Sleeping Beauty*.**

- A. is prejudiced in favour of
- B. is indifferent about
- C. sympathises with
- D. feels admiration for

**4. The villainesses of her childhood taught the writer \_\_\_\_.**

- A. forgiveness
- B. sympathy
- C. pity
- D. empathy

**5. The author's purpose is to \_\_\_\_.**

- A. give a different perspective on a controversial issue
- B. explain what it takes to be a villain

- C. distinguish between heroes and villains
- D. help people hone their parenting skills

## **TASK 2- Questions 6-10**

**Read the magazine article about three unsung heroes(A-C) who shaped history. Then answer questions 6-10.**

### **Three unsung heroes who shaped history**

Since time began, pioneers, campaigners and activists have been airbrushed from history for reasons ranging from sexism to confidentiality and career rivalry. Our readers have given us a list of history's unsung heroes.

The logo for 'UNSUNG HEROES' is displayed in a bold, gold, 3D-style font. The text is arranged in two lines: 'UNSUNG' on top and 'HEROES' below it. The background behind the text is a light gray grid pattern.

#### **A. James**

##### **Thomas Clarkson**

The name William Wilberforce is synonymous with the abolition of British slavery, but it was Thomas Clarkson who instigated the cause. In the years before the slave trade was outlawed, Clarkson gathered evidence to show the inhumanity of conditions by sneaking onboard slave ships. He became a target for rich slave owners who tried to assassinate him and shut down his campaign, way before Wilberforce even heard of it. It was only when Clarkson realised he needed someone in government to help him that the young MP got involved, and the men became great friends. But after Wilberforce's death, the politician's sons wrote a biography claiming Clarkson was just a hired hand who carried out errands for their father. Their book became a key source for historians and the myth that Wilberforce acted singlehandedly was soon settled as fact.

#### **B. Mark**

##### **Alan Turing**

Until the release of the Oscar-nominated film *The Imitation Game*, the name Alan Turing was not widely known. Turing's mathematical genius allowed the secret team of codebreakers at Bletchley Park to decipher Germany's 'uncrackable' Enigma Code, shortening the war and saving untold thousands of lives. Since it used electronic devices running algorithmic programmes at extremely high speeds, this war-winning work can also be considered the dawn of the computer age. In 1954, he was found dead from cyanide poisoning. An inquest ruled that it was suicide. Turing was never fully recognised for his achievements, which remained classified until the 1970's .

## C. Steve

### Stanislav Petrov

On September 26, 1983, just three weeks after the Soviet military had shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007, Petrov was the duty officer at the command center for the Oko nuclear early-warning system when the system reported that a missile had been launched from the United States, followed by up to five more. Petrov assessed the situation and concluded the reports were a false alarm. His decision is credited with having prevented an erroneous retaliatory nuclear attack on the United States and its NATO allies that could have resulted in large-scale nuclear war. Investigation later confirmed that the Soviet satellite warning system had indeed malfunctioned.

Adapted from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk>

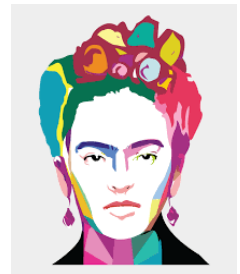
Who wrote about ...?	
6. the overlooked mastermind behind the unravelling of a mystery	
7. someone whose sound judgement prevented a full-scale disaster	
8. an activist who was edited out	
9. someone whose work was kept secret until after his death	
10. someone who fought against owning people	

### TASK 3: Questions 11-16

Read the article and answer the following questions.

#### Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo's life was one marked by extreme suffering, extreme heroism, and extreme genius. Stricken with polio as a child, then severely injured in a bus accident at the age of eighteen, Kahlo defied the odds, not only by learning to walk again (twice), but by taking the world by storm with her unique artistic vision.



Frida Kahlo was born July 6, 1907 near Mexico City. However, she always claimed to be born in the year of the Mexican Revolution, 1910, in order to link her own birth to that of modern Mexico.

The desire to be remembered was always a central theme of Kahlo's art, as reflected in the many self-portraits she painted (the images for which she is best known). Once she embroidered a pillow for her husband, the muralist Diego Rivera, which read, "Remember me, my love."

Once over the polio, Kahlo seemed determined to live life to the fullest. At school she enjoyed doing things boys traditionally do and was the leader of a group of rebellious

youngsters (mostly boys) who pulled endless pranks at the National Preparatory School they attended.

In 1925, Kahlo suffered another tragedy when the school bus on which she was riding collided with a streetcar. A metal pole pierced her body, leaving her with multiple injuries, including a broken spinal column. During a long recuperation from her serious injuries, Kahlo discovered her love for painting.

Miraculously Kahlo regained the ability to walk, though she would be tortured by pain and fatigue throughout her life and would undergo more than 30 operations for her injuries. "I never lost my spirit," she once said, "I always spent my time painting." Kahlo also began wearing traditional Mexican clothing, which consisted of long, colourful dresses and exotic jewellery. Her intention was to both hide her physical disability as well as express her radical political beliefs.

After her recovery, Kahlo became friendly with a group of Mexican artists who introduced her to well-known Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera. Rivera immediately recognized her talent and encouraged her to continue painting. In August of 1929, Rivera and Kahlo married, but their 25-year union would prove to be a stormy one.

Frida liked to be alone. She thought it was a privilege to be with herself and to express herself however she wished (though she wasn't a woman who cared about how others judged her). Of her 143 paintings, 55 were self-portraits. Frida once said, "I paint myself because I am often alone, and I am the subject I know best."

The pain of Kahlo's complex marriage was often reflected in her paintings, such as one entitled, "Frida y Diego." Although the couple did divorce in 1939, they reunited in less than a year. For all their troubles, they remained one another's greatest loves and greatest fans.

Kahlo is considered a hero as she constantly overlooked society's standards when she portrayed herself in her own way and prevented her agony from serving as a limitation by using it as a strength. Frida Kahlo is not only a famous artist; she displays significant courage by developing a purpose within her insecurities, and self-confidence when defying society's standards for women.

Adapted from: [https://myhero.com/f\\_kahlo](https://myhero.com/f_kahlo)

11. Why did Frida say she was born in 1910 when, in fact, she was born in 1907?

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12. What was Frida like at school? Give two details.

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13. When did Kahlo discover her love for painting?

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14. Why did she start wearing traditional Mexican clothes? Give two details.

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15. What is common element of Kahlo's paintings?

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16. What does the article tell us about Frida Kahlo's character? Give three (3) details.

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**TASK 4 -Question 17**

**Read the following article about what makes a hero.**

**Write a summary about the factors which may influence the shaping of a heroic personality.**

**Your summary should be about 100 words long (and no more than 120 words long).**

**You should use your own words as far as possible**

**What makes someone a hero**

What makes us good? What makes us evil? Research has uncovered many answers to the second question: Evil can be fostered by dehumanization, diffusion of responsibility, obedience to authority, unjust systems, group pressure, moral disengagement, and anonymity, to name a few. But when we ask why people become heroic, research doesn't yet have an answer. It could be a combination of many things.

Through my work on heroism, I have come to the conclusion that each of us may possess the capacity to do terrible things. But we also possess an inner hero; if stirred to action, that inner hero is capable of performing tremendous goodness for others. I am convinced that acts of heroism don't just arrive from truly exceptional people but from people placed in the right circumstance, given the necessary tools to transform compassion into heroic action. Building on these insights, I have managed to learn more of heroism and how to create the heroes of tomorrow.

Most acts of heroism occur in urban areas, where there are more people and more people in need. It is highly unlikely that you will be a hero if you live in the suburbs. Nothing much happens in the suburbs! So you need an occasion or situation that makes it possible to become heroic.

Also, the more educated you are, the more likely you are to be a hero, mainly because you are more aware of situations. Educated people understand how valuable it is to live in a stable and secure community. They are more prone to taking part in projects that help improve not only their neighbourhood but society, as well. After all, it is quite important to get involved and give a hand to the less fortunate in order to build a better place for all of us to live in. In fact, one third of all the sample who were heroes also had volunteered significantly, up to 59 hours a week. Helping other people willingly and without being forced to is a key aspect of a heroic personality.

Research has also revealed that males reported performing acts of heroism more than females. I think this is because women tend not to regard a lot of their heroic actions as heroic. It's just what they think they're supposed to do for their family or a friend. In addition, blacks were eight times more likely than whites to qualify as heroes. We think that's in part due to the fact that black people suffer more personal tragedies than white people. Having survived a disaster or personal trauma makes you three times more likely to be a hero and a volunteer.

So, every person is part of humanity. Each person's pulse is part of humanity's heartbeat. Heroes circulate the life force of goodness in our veins. And what the world needs now is more heroes—you. It's time to act against evil.

Adapted from: [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what\\_makes\\_a\\_hero](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_makes_a_hero)

### **TASK 5: Question 18**

**(15 marks)**

You recently met a real-life hero. Write an email to a friend telling him/her about the experience.

In your email, you should:

- describe the person
- explain what makes him/her heroic
- say how the experience made you feel

**Your email should be between 150-200 words long.**



**TASK 6-Question 19**

Your teacher has asked you to write an article for the school magazine entitled “Not all heroes wear capes.”

Your article should be between 150-200 words long.

