

The Dip

Stories to read



Simone Biles
Gymnast



Zendaya Coleman
Singer



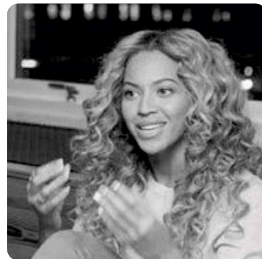
Thomas Edison
Inventor



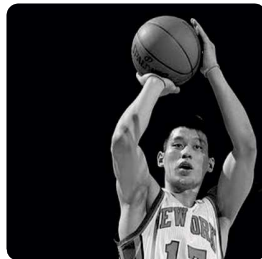
Bethany Hamilton
Surfer



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Activist



Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, Singer



Jeremy Lin
Basketball player



Lin-Manuel Miranda
Actor, Playwrite



Elon Musk
Technologist



Bill Nye
Scientist, Comedian



Michelle Obama
First Lady



J.K. Rowling
Author



Oprah Winfrey
Media owner



Malala Yousafzai
Activist

Simone Biles

The Dip Packet - Story #1



ClassDojo

Simone Biles is an African-American gymnast who won four gold medals in the 2016 Summer Olympics—the most won by an American female gymnast in a single Olympics. She's also won 14 world championship medals, the most in U.S. history. Some commentators consider her the greatest gymnast of all time.

Simone was born in 1997 in Columbus, Ohio. Sadly, she had to face one of the biggest challenges of her life when she was very young. Simone's biological mother was not able to care for Simone, and she spent a short time in foster care before moving in with her grandparents at age six. It took some time to adjust, but now they are a very happy family.

At six years old, Simone went on a field trip to a gymnastics center. She loved it and told her family she wanted to be a gymnast. Soon after, she started training and would work hard. Even when she felt discouraged, she never missed a day of training.

When she was 14, Simone chose to be home-schooled so she could devote more time to gymnastics. She spent 32 hours training every week! As her ambitions grew, so did the pressure she felt. Simone found the strength she needed to keep going in her family, who reminded her that it's most important to try your best.

Simone's path to Olympic stardom was not always smooth. In one of her first competitions, she scored a zero on one of her exercises. In 2013, she performed so poorly in a competition that she didn't finish it. These setbacks caused Simone to feel a lot of self-doubt.

Her family supported her to overcome that self-doubt by minimizing stress and developing a positive attitude, and Simone did not give up. In the months leading up to the Olympics, she sometimes practiced every single day for weeks. She pushed her body so hard that she often wondered if she'd reached her limit. But she did not stop!

Now, Simone has seen her dreams come true. She's known not only for her gold medals, but also for her positive and fun-loving attitude. And she has a strong family and community cheering her on.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Simone on
Twitter: @Simone_Biles

Zendaya Coleman

The Dip Packet - Story #2



ClassDojo

Zendaya Coleman is a biracial actress, singer, and activist. She is best known for starring on the Disney Channel shows ***Shake It Up*** and ***K.C. Undercover***. As a celebrity, Zendaya has used her voice to promote racial equality, positive body image, and education.

Zendaya was born in 1996 in Oakland, California. As a young girl, she was extremely shy—so much so that she had to repeat kindergarten. She spent her youngest years watching performers on TV and in theater, but she was too nervous to do it herself. But at the age of six, and with her parents' support, Zendaya found the courage to try performing. She sang a duet with her dad at her school's winter concert and immediately loved being on stage.

As she grew up, Zendaya continued to develop her talent. She went to the Oakland School for the Arts starting in sixth grade, and studied acting in the summers with California Shakespeare Theater. Zendaya and her dad took long, tiring trips between Oakland and Los Angeles, just so Zendaya could audition for TV. She got her big break at the age of 13 when she got the part of Rocky Blue in the TV show ***Shake It Up***.

Being in the spotlight meant that Zendaya started putting more pressure on herself. She felt self-doubt about her talent and the direction of her career. In those low moments, Zendaya called on her friends for support. They gave her the strength to keep going.

Not only did Zendaya deal with self-doubt, but she also faced unfair criticism. A television personality once made fun of her hairstyle, which made Zendaya feel disrespected. She was tempted to reply with equally harsh words but she knew she was a role model, and responded calmly instead. Zendaya explained that even though some people have a prejudice against African American hair, it is as beautiful as any other kind.

Zendaya's career has grown to include acting in movies, singing, and designing clothing. She's doing what she loves, and she takes criticisms in stride. But the most important thing to Zendaya is making a positive difference in the world. She's traveled to South Africa for health-related charity work, and on her 18th birthday, she raised money to fight hunger. Thanks to her charitable work, Zendaya truly feels that she's fulfilling her purpose.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Zendaya on
Twitter: @Zendaya

Thomas Edison

The Dip Packet - Story #3



ClassDojo

Thomas Edison is known as the most productive inventor in U.S. history. His most famous inventions include the light bulb, a sound-recording machine, and a motion picture camera. Over the course of his life, he received over 1,000 patents (official documents showing that someone invented something). He famously said that “genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.”

Thomas Edison was born in 1847 in Milan, Ohio. He asked tons of questions in school—but instead of seeing that as a good thing, his teacher got annoyed with him. Thomas’s mother knew better, so she homeschooled him instead and encouraged his curiosity.

Thomas really wanted to make his mother proud. His mom got him a science book called *The School of Natural Philosophy*, and he did all the experiments in it. In his basement, Thomas also performed his own experiments. Sometimes his experiments even caused huge explosions that shook the house!

Thomas’s experiments were never truly failures in his mind because he always learned from each one. He also learned by taking electrical equipment apart to see how it worked. Thomas was fascinated by telegraphs—machines that sent messages—and at the age of 16, he built his own!

Thomas’s career as an inventor got off to a rocky start. Many of his early inventions failed, and he lost funding for them. He was broke, but he did not give up on his dream of becoming a great inventor and businessman. Instead, he moved to New York for a fresh start.

In New York, Thomas got his big break when he offered to fix a broken stock ticker (machine that displays financial information) on Wall Street. He was offered a new job as an engineer’s assistant the next day. Eventually, Thomas earned enough money to open a laboratory in New Jersey. He pulled together a team of scientists, and they often stayed in the lab all night, working to come up with the next great invention. In this stage of his career, Thomas created the phonograph, a machine that could record people’s voices and play them back. The first words he successfully recorded were the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

From there, Thomas became known worldwide as a talented inventor. He developed other great inventions, like the light bulb and the motion-picture camera. When asked, Thomas insisted he was successful because of his hard work. From his struggles with education to his exploding experiments, nothing came easy, but Thomas achieved his dream by being persistent.

Bethany Hamilton

The Dip Packet - Story #4



ClassDojo

Bethany Hamilton is one of the world's best professional surfers. After losing her arm in a shark attack at age 13, she went on to become a top athlete. In 2016, she won third place in the World Surf League's Fiji Women's Pro competition, ahead of the world's number-one surfer.

Bethany was born in 1990 in Lihue, Hawaii. Both her parents loved surfing, and Bethany began surfing at age two. She quickly developed a passion for the sport—so much so that while she practiced, she would squeal with joy. Bethany dreamed of becoming a professional, and to improve her technique, she would study videos of herself surfing.

Tragically, she faced a huge obstacle at the age of 13. While she was in the water, a shark attacked her and caused her to lose her arm. After the accident, Bethany badly wanted to try surfing again. She didn't want anything to get in the way of her dream. However, she had two big challenges ahead of her: overcoming her fear of the water, and adjusting to her new body.

Both challenges were very difficult, and Bethany's confidence was shaken. Even so, she did not give up. To overcome her fears, Bethany always focused on the present, instead of imagining what lied beneath the surface of the water. She started surfing again just four weeks after the accident. To keep her fears away, she decided not to look down too much while surfing. After doing this for a while, she felt much better.

Building her physical strength was another big challenge for Bethany. She almost doubled the intensity of her exercises from before the accident. She focused on strengthening her legs so she could move as quickly as any other surfer.

Bethany made progress over time. Just over a year after the shark attack, she won her first national championship. At the age of 18, she won an even bigger title—third place at the Roxy Pro in Australia. Then, for a few years, she struggled because she did not win any major titles, and her self-doubt came back. In that moment, her husband reminded her that growth and improvement are more important than just winning.

Bethany found the strength in herself to keep going. Starting in 2014, Bethany was winning major titles again. More importantly, she was proudly sharing her story of perseverance so she could inspire others to do the same.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Bethany on
Twitter: @BethanyHamilton

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Dip Packet - Story #5



ClassDojo

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a civil rights leader and Baptist minister. In the 1950s and 1960s, his writing, speeches, and protests helped to overturn laws unfair to African Americans and other minorities. His famous “I Have a Dream” speech outlined a vision of racial harmony among all people.

Martin was born in 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. Judging people based on the color of their skin was a very serious problem at that time. As a child, Martin could not go to any public park, many public schools, and certain restaurants because he was black. Black people were also forbidden from sitting in the front of public buses—but Martin promised himself that one day, he’d change that.

As a young man, Martin lived in Montgomery, Alabama, where he worked as a pastor. In that city, he worked hard to fight the forced separation of different races, also known as segregation. For over a year, he led a boycott of the city’s buses, which means that he and his followers refused to ride the buses at all. Not everyone agreed with Martin’s ideas, though, and some people even threatened him and his family. Still, he didn’t give up on his dream of ending segregation. His commitment made a difference, and in 1956, the Supreme Court agreed that segregating buses should stop because it was unconstitutional.

In the spring of 1963, Martin organized protests against segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. Hundreds of people participated. Unfortunately, the local police didn’t agree with Martin’s ideas, and released dogs and firehoses on Martin and other protesters. Martin was arrested, but in spite of the setback, he never lost sight of his goal. In jail, he wrote the inspirational “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” which explained how he was fighting for everyone to be treated equally.

Martin was arrested over 20 times while fighting for equal rights, but even with all the obstacles he faced, he continued to find inner strength and remained committed to his vision.

After leaving jail in 1963, Martin helped to lead the March on Washington, which brought more than 200,000 people together in Washington, DC. He delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech there, and said that people should be judged not “by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” The speech was broadcast on television, and it inspired people across the country.

Soon after the march, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed two new laws: the Civil Rights Act, which outlawed segregation in public places, and the Voting Rights Act, which removed barriers that kept black people from voting. Martin was present when President Johnson signed both laws.

Tragically, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968, when he was only 39 years old. Though he had a short life, he accomplished his goal of ending segregation laws, and inspired people all over the world. Current-day activists remember his devotion to equality and all the changes he made because he did not give up.

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter

The Dip Packet - Story #6



ClassDojo

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter is an African-American singer-songwriter. She has been nominated for 53 GRAMMY awards, more than any other female artist. All six of her solo albums have sold more than a million copies, making her one of the most popular musicians in the world.

Beyoncé was born in 1981 in Houston, Texas. She knew that she loved to sing from a young age, and when she was nine, she joined an all-female music group called Girls Tyme. To practice, the girls used to make videos of their rehearsals and review them carefully, watching for strengths and weaknesses.

After three years, the group was chosen to perform on the TV talent contest Star Search. Beyoncé was thrilled about the opportunity and believed that if Girls Tyme won, they might receive a record deal.

Though Beyoncé and the other group members tried their best on Star Search, they did not win. It was a huge letdown for Beyoncé. She felt deeply disappointed. Instead of giving up, though, Beyoncé used the rejection as motivation to try even harder.

The members of Girls Tyme practiced by running in the park while singing, to ensure they wouldn't get tired onstage. Their manager, Beyoncé's father, built a deck in the yard for the girls to use as a stage, and they took voice lessons in the summers. It took years of practicing and performing before Girls Tyme finally received a record deal.

In the late 1990s, the group—now called Destiny's Child—released two very successful albums. Their singles sold by the millions. Beyoncé had finally made it big as a singer, but her troubles were not over.

Just as Destiny's Child was reaching the peak of its popularity, two group members left. Some said it was Beyoncé's fault. These remarks hurt Beyoncé, and she spent a long time feeling down. She was tempted to give up. Instead, a heart-to-heart conversation with her mother turned things around. Beyoncé decided she would keep trying to reach greater heights with her singing career.

Thanks to her determination, Beyoncé achieved her dreams. Destiny's Child recorded three more albums, becoming the third-biggest girl group of all time. She's also found huge success as a solo artist—every song on *Lemonade*, her 2016 album, was a top-seller! Most importantly, Beyoncé reached her goals as a singer and songwriter by believing in herself, having confidence, and never giving up.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Beyonce on
Twitter: @Beyonce

Jeremy Lin

The Dip Packet - Story #7



ClassDojo

Jeremy Lin is a Harvard-educated professional basketball player and one of the first Asian-American NBA players. He's most famous for leading a seven-game winning streak for the New York Knicks in 2012.

Jeremy was born in Torrance, California in 1988. Jeremy's dad had a passion for basketball, which he shared with his sons. In childhood, Jeremy, his dad, and his two brothers would spend 90 minutes, three days a week shooting hoops at the YMCA.

In high school, Jeremy was accepted on to the varsity team when he was still a freshman. During games, he heard insults from members of the opposing team because of his race. His dad encouraged him not to react to these remarks, and to focus instead on doing his best. Jeremy took this advice to heart and ignored the comments. He led his team to a 32-win, two-loss season his junior year, and a 32-win, one-loss season his senior year. He was also named Northern California Division II Player of the Year his senior year.

In spite of his obvious talent, Jeremy was not offered a basketball scholarship to college. He's said that racial stereotypes stood in his way—for example, the stereotype that Asians aren't good at basketball. But he was accepted to Harvard and earned a spot on the basketball team. Jeremy played 115 games at Harvard, a record number of games for that school. During that time, he scored a remarkable 1,483 points!

Still, Jeremy was not selected in the NBA draft after college, which left him feeling deeply discouraged. He was tempted to try for one more year, and then give up if it didn't work out. Then, he got a glimmer of hope when he signed with the Golden State Warriors. Over the next 18 months, he was dropped, signed by a different team, and then dropped again before joining the New York Knicks.

Everything changed for Jeremy when he entered his now-famous winning streak for the Knicks. In his first five NBA games where he was part of the starting lineup, he set a record by scoring at least 20 points per game! Jeremy Lin merchandise flew off the shelves in the NBA store, and he became an inspiration to young athletes, especially Asian-Americans.

In 2016, Jeremy signed with the Brooklyn Nets to play as a starter. As part of the Nets, he'll continue to develop as an athlete and take on a leadership role. Even better, Jeremy will work with a coach and teammates that truly support him, on and off the court.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Jeremy on
Twitter: @JLin7

Lin-Manuel Miranda

The Dip Packet - Story #8



ClassDojo

Lin-Manuel Miranda is a Latino actor, songwriter, playwright, and rapper. His work has won an Emmy, as well as multiple GRAMMY and Tony awards. He is best known for writing the hip-hop musical “Hamilton,” in which he played the lead role. “Hamilton” was celebrated for having one of the most diverse Broadway casts of the decade.

Lin-Manuel was born in 1980 in New York City. Both his parents loved musical theater, and they took him to see shows like “Les Miserables” and “Cats.” When he was seven, he played his first piano recital. He loved making others happy with music.

Lin-Manuel started writing plays as a teenager. Then, in college, he wrote a musical called “In the Heights,” which was inspired by his Puerto Rican background and love of hip-hop. When he graduated, he set out to bring “In the Heights” to a wider audience.

For Lin-Manuel, the road to musical theater stardom was bumpy. He worked as a substitute teacher at his old high school, and struggled with money, as he tried to get “In the Heights” made. For more than five years, he met with producers who misunderstood his story or who rejected him. Even so, Lin-Manuel remained determined.

In 2007, he finally succeeded in getting his play noticed. “In the Heights” debuted in New York and ran for three years on Broadway, winning four Tony awards! Its success represented a turning point for Lin-Manuel. It made him feel that he truly belonged in the world of theater.

Lin-Manuel knew he wanted to make another musical but wasn’t sure what it should be about. While reading a book on vacation, he had the idea for “Hamilton,” a hip-hop musical about the historical figure Alexander Hamilton. Everybody thought it was crazy to write a musical about a historical figure, but Lin-Manuel was passionate about it. He spent six years developing the story, writing songs, visiting historic sites, and reading everything he could about Hamilton.

Sometimes, he got discouraged and wished things would come together faster. His wife, and his own passion, motivated him to push through those times. And it’s a good thing he kept going! When the play came out in 2015, it was a huge success. Lin-Manuel had put together a cast from all different backgrounds and people loved it. “Hamilton” was nominated for 16 Tony awards, more than any other musical in history!

Lin-Manuel has made his dream come true: he’s now a famous Broadway playwright, songwriter, and actor. To Lin-Manuel, though, the fame isn’t what matters. Instead, he continues to focus on developing his talent and staying true to himself.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Lin-Manuel on Twitter: @Lin-Manuel

Elon Musk

The Dip Packet - Story #9



ClassDojo

Elon Musk is an engineer and businessman. In 2015, Forbes magazine called him one of the world's most powerful people. Elon is best known for founding SpaceX, a company that builds spacecraft, and for running Tesla, a company that makes electric cars. He's said that one of his goals is to bring human life to other planets.

Elon was born in 1971 and grew up in Pretoria, South Africa. He became interested in technology at a young age. In fact, Elon sold a video game to a computer magazine when he was only 12! Though he was very talented, Elon's early life was a constant struggle. Bullies tormented him in school. Once, they hurt him so badly that he had to go to the hospital.

Elon did not feel at home in South Africa and believed he'd have better opportunities in the U.S. At the age of 17, he moved—first to Canada and then to the United States—to get a college education.

After he graduated from college, Elon started a technology company called Zip2. He had so little money at the time, he slept in his office and showered at the YMCA. In spite of these challenges, Elon pushed forward, and he surrounded himself with others who cared about the work. The company became valuable after four years, and Elon sold it. His next company was also a success, and he sold that one, too. Finally, Elon had resources to devote to one of his biggest passions: space travel.

In 2002, Elon founded SpaceX with the goal of making affordable spacecraft. Lots of people tried to talk him out of founding the company—one friend even made him watch videos of rockets exploding! But Elon ignored the naysayers. He prepared to launch the company by reading textbooks about rocket science and talking to experts in the field.

SpaceX got off to a rough start. The company's first three rockets did not reach orbit, and Elon thought he might become bankrupt. He tried very hard to turn SpaceX around, regularly working for 100 hours a week. When he tried launching a rocket for the fourth time, the fate of the company was on the line. But the fourth rocket succeeded, and so did SpaceX.

Since 2008, Elon has also been CEO of Tesla, an electric-car company, and helped transform it into a valuable business. He's now famous for his scientific mind and business sense. But Elon is not finished reaching for the stars. He says that he hopes SpaceX will bring humans to Mars in his lifetime!



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Elon on Twitter:
@ElonMusk

Bill Nye

The Dip Packet - Story #10



ClassDojo

Bill Nye is a scientist and comedian. He's best known for creating and hosting the TV program Bill Nye the Science Guy, which aired between 1993 and 1998. He's said that his goal is to "change the world" by inspiring others, especially kids, to pursue science.

Bill was born in Washington, DC in 1955. His fascination with science began at a young age. For example, Bill liked to take apart his bicycle to see how it worked. His teachers encouraged his interest in math and science—one teacher taught him college algebra in sixth grade!

Bill continued to study science at Cornell University. His senior year, one of Bill's friends pointed out that he looked like the comedian Steve Martin. About a year later, Bill won a Steve Martin look-alike contest, which sparked his interest in comedy. Once he found that he could make people laugh, he never wanted to stop.

After college, Bill worked as an engineer—someone who designs and builds machines—by day, and performed stand-up comedy by night. He did stand-up for about 10 years, but never became a headliner...possibly because he joked about engineering! But Bill did not give up on his dream of mixing science and comedy. In 1986, he quit his job to pursue his dream full-time.

Soon after he quit, Bill found work as a writer for a Seattle-based TV comedy called Almost Live! One day, the show needed a performer to fill a six-minute time slot. Bill filled the time with a mix of jokes and science experiments. The piece was a hit, and it became a recurring part of the show. Finally, he had found an audience for his type of comedy. Bill did not have steady work with Almost Live!, so he was always looking for more work. At that time, it still wasn't clear whether he had a future as a professional scientist-comedian. Then, he met a couple producers at the Almost Live! office, and they worked together to make a full-length episode of Bill Nye the Science Guy. That first episode got lots of positive attention, but Bill still didn't know if he'd ever make another until he got a deal in 1993—seven years after he'd started doing comedy full-time.

Bill Nye the Science Guy won 18 Emmys in five years. Kids responded to his comedy, and they learned a lot, too—like how planet Earth is a huge magnet! Most importantly for Bill, many of his fans grew up to become physicians and scientists. In a small way, his TV show had changed the world!



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Bill on Twitter:
[@BillNye](#)

Michelle Obama

The Dip Packet - Story #11



ClassDojo

Michelle Obama is a lawyer, writer, and the first African-American First Lady of the United States. She is married to President Barack Obama. Michelle is known worldwide as a supporter of education and young people's health.

Michelle was born in 1964 in Chicago, Illinois. Her family was close-knit—she spent lots of time reading with her parents and brother. However, Michelle had troubles as a child. Her father had multiple sclerosis, a serious illness. Watching her father struggle with his health made Michelle very sad. She knew the best way to show her father she loved him was to do well in school and work toward her dreams.

Michelle was accepted into a high school for talented students. She had to ride the bus for more than an hour each way to get to school! Not everyone believed in Michelle: some teachers told her she could never get into Princeton University, her dream school.

Those discouraging words got her down at first. But Michelle was determined to attend college, so she studied hard and focused on getting good grades. She was set on proving the naysayers wrong, and she did so when she was accepted into Princeton! She knew her father was proud of the education she earned, which made her very happy.

When she was in her 20s, Michelle faced another hard time when her father passed away. During this low point, Michelle thought carefully about her life and career as a lawyer. Her father had always wanted her to aim high and follow her dreams. In a tough situation, Michelle found the inspiration to change her career and focus on making the world a better place for kids.

Now, as First Lady of the United States, Michelle has founded programs that help young people pursue college education and stay physically active. She's become a world-famous champion of the causes she cares about most: health and education for young people and families. Not only that, but Michelle continues to draw strength from her own family—she even brought her mother to live with her in the White House!



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Michelle on
Twitter: @MichelleObama

J.K. Rowling

The Dip Packet - Story #12



ClassDojo

Joanne (J.K.) Rowling is the author of the bestselling Harry Potter series. She is one of the world's most famous living authors.

Joanne was born in 1965 in southwest England. She always knew she wanted to be a writer. Her mom and dad loved to read and she did, too. When she was six, she wrote her first book, called Rabbit. She kept writing and, as a teenager, wrote stories to amuse herself and her friends.

When she was on a train, she came up with the idea of Harry Potter. She immediately got started writing down the stories in her head. It took years for the book to be published, though. Even though she sometimes felt discouraged or tired, Joanne kept working on her dream to publish a book.

After coming up with the idea for Harry Potter, Joanne moved to Portugal to teach English. This was where she had her daughter, Jessica. After a few years in Portugal, Joanne moved with her daughter to Scotland. It was a hard time because she did not have much money. Sometimes, she even struggled to afford food. She felt very discouraged and sad but Jessica motivated her to keep going. Joanne signed up for job training to be a teacher and spent any time she could writing Harry Potter. She would spend hours writing in cafes with Jessica sleeping beside her. Her hard work paid off and in 1995 she finished writing the first Harry Potter book.

The first book was rejected by 12 publishers but Joanne did not give up! She kept going and Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone was published in 1997. Since then, the Harry Potter books have become some of the most popular books in the world and have won many awards. But most importantly, Joanne feels fulfilled. It wasn't easy, but she achieved her dream of being an author. Joanne does not have to worry about money anymore, and now she can focus on giving back. She helps others by donating millions of dollars to charity.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with J.K. Rowling on
Twitter: @JK_Rowling

Oprah Winfrey

The Dip Packet - Story #13



ClassDojo

Oprah Winfrey is a talk show host, actress, businesswoman, and charity donor. She is best known as the host of The Oprah Winfrey Show, which was the highest-rated talk show ever. She was the first African-American woman to have a national weekday talk show. With her millions of fans, Oprah is widely considered one of the world's most influential people.

Oprah was born in 1954 in Kosciusko, Mississippi. She spent the first years of her life living with her grandmother with very little money. Her talent was visible early on. When she was three years old, she pretended to interview the crows in her yard! Unfortunately, it would be another 10 years before Oprah got the support she needed to develop her abilities.

At the age of six, Oprah went to live with her mother. At that time, some of her family members treated her cruelly. She misbehaved to get attention, and once she even ran away from home. Her mother became frustrated with her troublemaking, and when she was 14, she was sent to live with her father in Nashville, Tennessee.

Oprah's father was a stricter parent than her mother, but he gave her the encouragement she needed. With his support, Oprah brought up her grades and read at least one book a week outside of school. She started developing her interest in speaking and performance by joining the drama club in high school, and she also received a college scholarship when she won a speech competition. Her situation began to improve.

After college, Oprah worked as a news reporter in Baltimore. But her troubles were not yet behind her. She was inexperienced, and she worked in an industry where there weren't many women who were African American, like her. On top of that, the news show's co-host did not like her. She was fired, which left her feeling humiliated and deeply disappointed.

Oprah did not give up, and in 1978, she began co-hosting a talk show called People Are Talking. At first, she wasn't sure of herself, but then the show took off. People Are Talking opened the door for Oprah to host a talk show in Chicago. That show, The Oprah Winfrey Show, ran for 14 seasons and earned 34 Emmys! It made Oprah into a household name.

Since then, Oprah has acted in movies and TV and started her own magazine. She understands the benefit of education from her own experience, and opened a school in South Africa to help girls get to college. Just as important, she is telling stories on her terms and helping to make the world a better place.



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Oprah on
Twitter: @Oprah

Malala Yousafzai

The Dip Packet - Story #14



ClassDojo

Malala Yousafzai is an education activist and author. She won the Nobel Peace Prize for promoting children's rights to education in 2014. At the age of 17, she was the youngest person ever to win the prize. Malala is celebrated worldwide for standing up to the Taliban, an extremist group that doesn't believe girls should attend school.

Malala was born in 1997 in Mingora, a small town in Pakistan. Out of any country, Pakistan has the second-highest number of children who are not in school. Fortunately, Malala's father ran a school in town, which she attended. Her passion for education arrived early—she used to walk into classes as a toddler and pretend she was the teacher!

In 2007, the Taliban took control of Swat, the region of Pakistan where Malala lived. They used violence to take away people's freedoms. Television and music were banned, and girls were not allowed to go to school. The Taliban destroyed more than 400 schools at that time.

When Malala's right to education was threatened, she felt even more protective of it. She realized that keeping girls out of school was a way of limiting their potential. Instead of waiting for someone else to take action, Malala took matters into her own hands.

Malala spoke out against the Taliban in an online diary for the BBC, and was featured in a documentary for the New York Times. She received threats for her activism, but she did not give up on her dream of making education available for every child. She gathered courage from her parents and continued to raise her voice.

In 2012, things took a turn for the worse. A Taliban fighter shot Malala in the head, attempting to kill her just for going to school. She was badly hurt, and stayed in the hospital for about three months. Still, she did not let the Taliban scare her into silence.

After weeks of therapy, Malala entered high school in the United Kingdom. In addition to doing classwork, she also aimed to protect other children's right to education. She started the Malala Fund to help develop educational programs for girls around the world. For her activism, Malala won the Nobel Peace Prize. She's now an icon of the movement to support girls' education, and her words are moving people to action. "This is where I will begin but it is not where I will stop," she said when accepting the Peace Prize. "I will continue this fight until I see every child in school."



Love this story?

Fill out The Dip Worksheet and share it with Malala on
Twitter: @MalalaFund