

Great Britons

Task 1 Famous Britons Quiz

Do this quick quiz in pairs.

- Can you name a famous from British person for each of the titles below?
The Prime Minister
 - The Queen
 - A well known footballer
 - A well known singer
 - A famous group
 - A well known writer
 - A famous artist
 - An inventor
 - A scientist
 - An explorer
- Check with your class.
- Can your teacher do the same for your country?

Task 2 People past and present

The BBC recently asked the British public to nominate their favourite famous Britons. Some people nominated are celebrities alive today. Some of the nominees were historical figures who contributed to Britain's past.

Tick the names that you recognise

Ask about the people you don't know:

- What do you know about Churchill?
- Is he still alive?
- What does/did he do?

Divide the names in to historical, political, sporting or entertainment figures.

Princess Diana

Daniel Radcliffe
John Lennon
Isaac Newton
Winston Churchill
David Beckham
Charles Darwin

Isambard Kingdom Brunel
William Shakespeare
Horatio Nelson
George Orwell
Captain James Cook
Sean Connery

Task 3 Guess the person

Read these clues and match a name from the nominees to each description.

Text 1

More than a million people participated in the BBC poll to find the most popular famous Briton. This important twentieth century politician and statesman received the most votes. He led the British people during the Second World War and his inspirational speeches helped people continue to hope for peace during very difficult times. He is known for his determination and his ability to unite people with strong words. Many older Britons would be able to recognise the sound of his voice immediately. Some voters argue that more modern celebrities do not offer the same role models and inspiration as historical figures.

Text 2

This brilliant and very popular footballer has been in the British papers for a month. The stories surrounding his celebrity marriage, his move to Spain and the scandal of a recent affair with another woman continue to make him and his wife Victoria front page news. The couple invited a celebrity magazine to photograph their wedding and it cost the magazine over one million pounds. He is best known as a Manchester United player and captain of his country's team. He is frequently presented as a role model for young boys and, until recently, as a perfect family man and father. His clothes and his hair are copied by many youngsters. This month his photograph is part of an exhibition at the National Portrait gallery. The exhibition shows a video sequence of him sleeping in bed.

Text 3

The cult of Monarchy began in Tudor Britain and for centuries the British looked to their Royal family for an example. However, the royals had a distant and very private life. The start of the 1980s saw the Royal family in a difficult and not very popular position. They were considered old fashioned and out of touch with real people. Then this young British aristocrat married the heir to the throne, Charles. It was like a fairy tale with a new Princess. When she died tragically in a car accident in Paris the British public showed their affection and admiration for this very special royal. She had improved the popularity of the Royal family because she made friends with ordinary people and was famous for being very modern and in touch with the real world. She was famous for her work with charity but her clothes and her physical image were as famous as well. Newspapers around the world continue to write stories about her life and her tragic death.

Task 4 Fame and the British

What do the clues tell you about fame? Answer 'True' or 'false'

- The public voted for a celebrity footballer as their most important Briton.
- The British public look for a good example from their Royal family.
- The public are not interested in the private life of the royals.
- Famous people are allowed to have a private family life.
- Magazines are prepared to pay huge sums of money for pictures of famous people.
- Modern celebrities are not just famous for what they do or say.

Task 5 Make your own clues

- Write a description of a famous person from your country.
- Get your classmates to guess who is being described.

Task 6 Celebrities and role models

The BBC recently asked young people using its 'Newsround' site to talk about the people who influence them. This is the poll question they asked.

Who influences you most?

- Your parents
 - Your friends
 - Your teachers
 - Your favourite celebrities
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- Answer the question from the BBC poll.
 - Check your answers with the whole class.

The BBC poll and other recent research in Britain showed that celebrities have more influence over young people than parents or teachers. Some youngsters think of their celebrities as 'pseudo-friends'. Many people are worried that these celebrities have too much influence. Here are some of the comments made by young people. Do you agree with any of them?

'We see the lives of famous people every day and that makes us envious and dissatisfied with our own lives.'

'The Media makes the lives of pop stars seem more glamorous and happier than they are in reality. They write and talk about them too much.'

'It is awful to be famous because you cannot do ordinary things like shopping. People always speak to you and you can't be alone.'

'There is terrible pressure to be perfect and I blame celebrities. They are too thin and too plastic. We cannot be like them.'

'Famous people can give young people good ideas and ambitions. If a black footballer is successful or a girl from a poor background becomes a well known dress designer, it gives us all hope. We can all make something of our lives.'

- Would you be influenced by a celebrity? Why? Why not?
- What do you think of celebrity magazines?
- Do you think famous people should be allowed some privacy?
- Do you think celebrities or people in the public eye should set a good example?
- Would you like to be famous?

Task 7 Nominate a good role model

Choose a well known figure in your country or simply a person you know locally.

- Say what makes them a good role model.
- Write a definition of a good role model for young people.

Task 8 Projects on media and role models

The media is often criticised for offering the wrong types of role models for young people.

- Teen magazines were recently criticised for their bad models and so are films and TV. Choose one of the following areas to study. Take some teen publications from your country. Look at the role models offered by them. Are they good models? What types of messages do they send young people? Give examples.
- Look at a selection of TV programmes offered to young people. Are the stars very dominant in the programmes? Do the programmes reflect life in your country? Can you suggest better programmes? Are you satisfied with the types of people presenting the programmes?
- Some critics say that films should not show celebrities smoking because this influences teenagers and they might follow the example. The same criticism has been aimed at hip hop. Critics say hip hop promotes gun culture and this encourages young people to be more violent and to accept violence. Find some examples from your culture to support the critics or to argue against them.