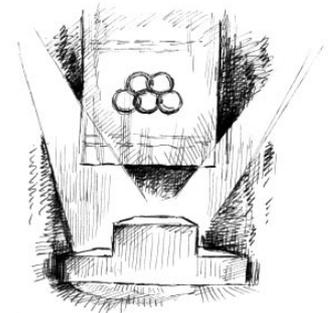


Heroes



UNIT A1

This unit begins by presenting popular concepts of heroism as displayed in legend and story. It then compares them with heroes of our time as a basis for considering what lasting qualities we value. The question, 'Who are your heroes?' is quite deliberately put twice: first as a point of comparison with fictional heroism, then again later after the criteria for assessing heroism have been examined. As the unit unfolds, the distinction between 'heroes' whose commendable actions mark them out as those to be admired and emulated, and 'idols' who are worshipped irrespective of their behaviour, needs to be drawn. This is especially explored in the middle section of the unit (1.4 - 1.9).

Consequently, the unit is best worked through rather than dipped into, though some of the exercises can be omitted - or supplemented - as preferred.

Aims

- To explore the concept of heroism, from Victorian times to the present day.
- To consider what lasting qualities we value and the criteria by which we assess them.

Using the unit

Heroes of legend and story

1.1 A legendary hero

Macaulay's poem is readily available in anthology, often abridged as, for example, in David Owen, (ed) *'Seven Ages'* (Penguin, 1995) where it is given the title *How Horatius Kept the Bridge*.

Macaulay's Victorian concept of bravery was very different from our contemporary understanding of the term. While it may not be necessary to delve too deeply into this, it could provide an interesting point for discussion.

What are the truly important things?

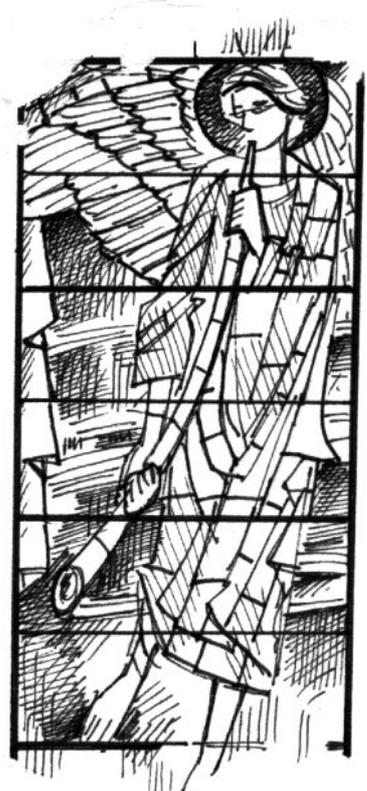
1.10 A research project

There is scope here for liaison with colleagues in RE and History.

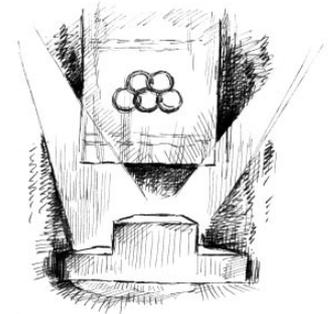
Twentieth century martyrs

1.11 Checking the facts

Again, there is scope here for liaison with colleagues in RE and History.



Heroes



UNIT A1

Heroes of legend and story

Heroes have often been men and women of legend, associated in some way with their nation's history, fighting bravely and winning, against enormous odds. Lord Macaulay is the writer of a long poem published in 1842 that tells the story of *How Horatius Kept the Bridge*. He is in no doubt as to what a hero should be like.

The story

It is 507 BC. The city-state of Rome is being invaded by the neighbouring Etruscans who have marched against Rome. Only the River Tiber stands between them and the city gates. As the invaders prepare to advance over the bridge, Horatius, a captain in the Roman army, suggests a daring plan. He offers to defend the narrow bridge for sufficient time to allow the defendants to destroy it and stop the enemy from crossing the river. Two volunteers join him and the three successfully fight off the invaders while the wooden bridge is cut down behind them. The advancing army can go no further.



1.1

A legendary hero

- Working in pairs, read through the brief extract from this poem and then answer the questions that follow.
- Make a list of all the words and phrases that tell us about Horatius and his actions.
- What is especially 'brave' about what Horatius says?
- Why is he prepared to be 'brave'?
- The poet comments about 'the brave days of old' in the fourth verse. What does this tell us about his ideas of what it means to be a hero?

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods?"

Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius;
Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

1.2

From our own correspondent - 1

- Working in pairs, draft a live report from the battle area explaining the situation and the plan that Horatius has come up with. One of you can be the reporter and the other an eyewitness - the Consul perhaps.

This involves retelling the story so far, with plenty of emphasis on the bravery of the three soldiers.

Try to make full use of the speech of Horatius - quoting from it and asking him about what he said.

The plan is very successful. The three soldiers hold back the enemy while the bridge is destroyed. Then Horatius stays to defend it single-handed as the last plank is cut down. Finally, in full armour, he dives into the river and swims back to the city side, where he is welcomed as a hero.

1.3

From our own correspondent - 2

- Ask your teacher for a copy of the poem *Horatius* so that you can read it for yourself. It is quite long so you may prefer to concentrate on the last part (from about line 400).

- Working again in pairs, or small groups, write a special television news report, including an 'exclusive' interview with Horatius himself.

What questions are you going to ask? Think what the listeners - the TV audience - will want to hear about: not just what happened, but how Horatius felt about it too!



1.4

Story book heroes

- Horatius was a hero in an ancient legend. Can you think of other, more up-to-date 'story book' (or even 'cinema') heroes and heroines - Tarzan, James Bond, perhaps? List as many as you can.
- Now compare your list with those of others around you.
- What characteristics do these fictional heroes share? Discuss this with the person next to you. Write down your findings.

Think of the words and phrases used to describe them.

What do they look like? What do they do?

What situations do they find themselves in?



1.5

Who are your heroes?

- Perhaps your heroes are from the world of sport or pop music. Who do you admire?
- Make a list of your heroes. Try to include some variety in your choice.
- Show your list to the person next to you. Explain what you admire about the people you have chosen.
- Write a short description of one of them.

This can be done in the form of a spider chart if you wish.

1.6

How famous?

- Now look at the list of famous people of the 20th century printed below.

Sir Winston Churchill	Pelé
Princess Diana	Pablo Picasso
Anne Frank	Elvis Presley
Nelson Mandela	Mother Teresa
Marilyn Monroe	Margaret Thatcher

There are 5 men and 5 women.
 3 were still living at the beginning of 1999.
 3 were political leaders.
 1 died in a concentration camp in her teens.
 3 changed their name when they became well known.
 1 took his mother's name.
 2 were famous writers, though others have also done some writing.
 2 were painters.
 2 were film stars.
 1 was a famous sportsman.
 3 are British, 2 American, the rest Brazilian, Dutch, Macedonian, South African and Spanish.

- Can you identify which is which?
- See what other information you can find about them. Choose one or two to investigate in detail.

1.7

Putting them in order

- Now try placing the ten in order, with the most important first. This is not easy to do, so answer the following questions to get you thinking:

Who are you going to put first? It is a matter of deciding which qualities are the most significant and who you think made the biggest contribution to their time.

Are political leaders the most important?

How important are the famous from the world of sport and entertainment?

How highly do you rate the contribution of an artist?

Who made the greatest sacrifices?

Who do you think will be remembered and looked up to by your children?

Use your answers to help you to make your list.

- Discuss your list with the person next to you. Try to explain why you have made the selection you have.

1.8

Pick 'n Mix

- What are the ingredients that produce a hero or heroine?
Try setting down your suggestions.
You can do this in the form of a recipe if you wish:

*Take one ordinary human being.
Pour in a generous helping of . . . (you choose)
Simmer gently and add . . . (as many ingredients as you like)
Leave to mature . . .
Season with . . .
Serve with lashings of praise.*

and many other words and phrases from the cookery book!

**Abstract nouns**

You will need to include a number of abstract nouns. These are words that name qualities or ideas. Here are some to get you started:



1.9

A collage

- Another way of showing what a hero is made of is to create a collage. This is a poster made up from pictures, phrases, quotations, descriptions and so on, about your hero, or one of the ten listed.

For example, a collage of Churchill might include:

- pictures from the Second World War;
- an extract or two from his speeches e.g. 'I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat.';
- a story from his schooldays at Harrow;
- a list of the various government offices he held;

and so on.

What are the truly important things?

Some of the people we most admire are famous because they spoke out against what they saw as evil or unfair. For example, the Black Civil Rights leader, Martin Luther King, who was murdered in 1968, is famous for the stand he took against racial inequality. Are there any others who have already been mentioned whose fame rests on what they believed and their readiness to try to do something about injustice or prejudice?

Twentieth century martyrs

Martin Luther King is among the ten people of the last hundred years whose statues are placed on the West Front of Westminster Abbey. They stand above figures representing truth, justice, mercy and peace. They were all killed because of their beliefs. The stories of two more of them are told below.

1.10

A research project

• See what you can discover about any of the following, especially about the cause that they were involved in:

Elizabeth Fry
Gandhi
Trevor Huddleston
Emmeline Pankhurst
The Earl of Shaftesbury
William Wilberforce



Manche Masemola lived in the desert of Transvaal in South Africa. She was murdered by her own parents in February 1928, when she was just sixteen. She had never been to school but worked at home. Her parents were members of the Pedi tribe, who worshipped the spirits of trees and animals. Manche became a Christian but was forced by her parents to undergo pagan rituals in preparation for marriage to another member of the tribe. Manche refused to give up her faith in Jesus Christ in spite of being severely beaten. 'If they cut off my head, I will never leave my faith', she said. When they realised that nothing that they did to her would make her abandon her faith in Christ, her parents finally took Manche to an isolated spot, where they beat her to death, unaware that their actions were being watched by an eye-witness.

Oscar Romero was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of San Salvador in Central America, where he became known as the priest of the people. He did all he could to help the poor and oppressed and was concerned especially at the frequent abuse of human rights in El Salvador. The government there ruled by force and committed murder unchecked. Romero began to keep a list of the people who disappeared without trace. When one of his friends, another priest, was murdered, Romero called repeatedly for an official enquiry and appealed to the Pope. The government, the press, even the church authorities, gave him little support, but the people of El Salvador loved him and he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. His life was threatened on a number of occasions and he was shot dead in 1980 while celebrating Mass in a hospital chapel.

1.11

Checking the facts

Suppose you had been given the job of deciding whether these two deserved a place among the heroes of faith commemorated in the Westminster Abbey statues. You might have made up your mind by completing a table like this one:

	Actions	Beliefs	When, how, and why killed
Manche Masemola			Murdered by her own parents
Oscar Romero	Priest of the people		

- Make a copy of this table. In the boxes write the words and phrases from the reports that tell us what Manche and Oscar did, what they believed and when, how and why they were killed. Some entries have been filled in already to get you started.
- When you have finished, write a short account in your own words of what they did. Then go on to say why you think they should - or should not - be included among the Westminster Abbey statues.

1.12

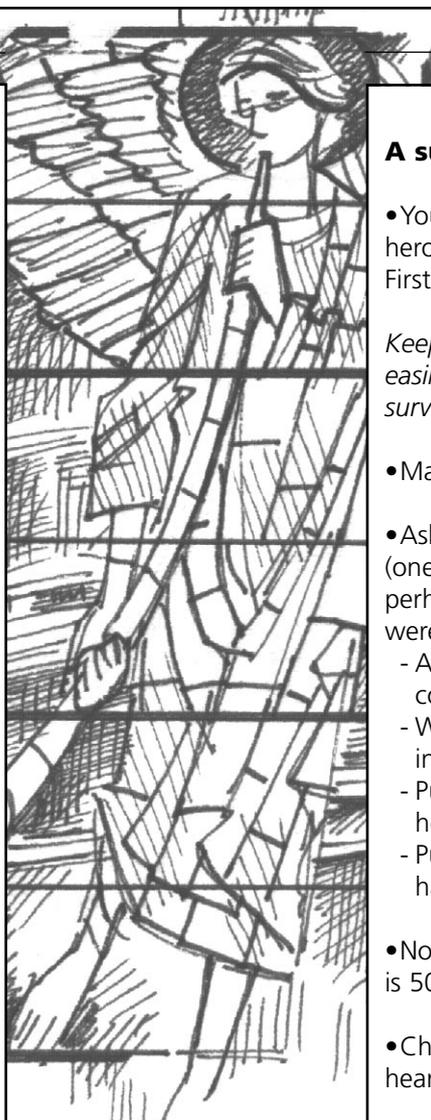
'Let us now praise ...'

- You have been asked to make suggestions for a stained-glass window in your school or a local church. The portrayal of someone who can be an example to young people, a hero that they can look up to, is wanted rather than a 'stained-glass saint'. Who would you choose?

Try to choose someone who is important to you for some reason. Perhaps someone who you think is in danger of being overlooked.

- Write a letter to your Head teacher, or youth leader, making your recommendation. You will need to give an outline of that person's life, adding the reasons for your choice.

You may wish to give suggestions for the design of the window. What things could be included in the design to remind people about your choice?



1.13

A survey

- You are going to find out who the heroes were 20, 40 & 60 years ago. First, prepare a list of questions.

Keep them simple so that they are easily understood by everyone in your survey.

- Make these into a chart.
- Ask someone who is 30+ years old (one of your parents or a neighbour perhaps) to tell you who their heroes were when they were your age.
 - Ask them to tell you whom they consider the most important.
 - Write down the names they tell you in your chart.
 - Put a tick against those you have heard of.
 - Put a cross against those that you haven't.
- Now do the same with someone who is 50+ years old and with someone 70+.
- Choose one of those that you haven't heard of to find out about.

1.14

So, who are your heroes?

- Look again at the list of people you admire that you made in answer to 1.5. Do you want to make any changes to it? There is a difference between admiring people for the special ability they have been given - to run fast or to sing well - and looking up to them for the quality of their lives.
- Discuss with the person next to you any changes you want to make.
- Who would you want to tell your children and grandchildren about in the hope that they might follow their example?
- Now make your carefully revised list.

One solitary life

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in still another village where he worked in a carpenter's shop until he was thirty. He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness. He had no credentials but himself. He was only thirty-three when public opinion turned against him. He was turned over to his enemies and was crucified. When he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave. Nineteen centuries have passed and today he is a central figure of the human race. No-one has affected the life of people on earth as much as that.

ONE SOLITARY LIFE
Author unknown

