

## Malala Yousafzai

### Introduction

Swat Valley, Pakistan was a beautiful place full of majestic hills and valleys. *A paradise*, describes Malala. It was all of these things up until 2004 - the year the Taliban came. The Taliban are a group of terrorists who believe in an extreme version of Islam. They are a collected group of young men from rural Pakistan and Afghanistan that came to Swat Valley and killed dozens of people. Their goal is to set laws prohibiting women and girls from doing basic things such as leaving the house without a man, or even going to school. In order to narrate Malala's journey as a teen activist, I will start by telling you about her home, Swat Valley. Then I will talk about the Taliban. After that, the shooting and Malala's recovery, until finally closing with some of Malala's achievements.



*Malala was born and raised in Mingora, Swat Valley*

### The Taliban & Swat Valley

When the Taliban came in 2004, they were not a huge threat. They did not become violent until 2007, which is the year that they started to seize control of Swat. At this time, the Pakistani army tried to fight back, but instead of improving the situation, they aggravated the Taliban who responded by bombing government buildings and murdering police officers. They left bodies on the streets as a warning to those who would dare to stand up to them (Scholastic 6). Malala's once beautiful city was turned into a war zone as people lived in fear that they too, would have their life taken from them.

### Attack/Recovery

It was October 9, 2012. Malala was riding on her school bus, singing songs with all of her friends. Her friends' faces had been covered, but brave Malala had not covered hers. The school bus was approached by two bearded gunmen. "Who is Malala?!" one of them had demanded. When no one answered, the

children thought of many terrible things that might happen, but none as terrible as what actually happened. One of the men stepped forward, and opened fire at point-blank range. Two of the bullets pierced the arms of Malala's friend but the other hit Malala right above her left eye. Only 15 years old, Malala was rushed to the local hospital, which only had basic first aid. Two hours later, a plane was able to pick her up and bring her to a military surge where they spent five hours trying to decrease the swelling in her brain and remove clots. By some miracle, there was a top doctor who specialized in pediatric trauma that was there for the first time. This doctor, named Fiona Reynolds, was attending a long governmental reading on medical programs when she was called to see Malala (Diane Sawyer: ABC News).

Many problems had occurred since Malala had been taken to the surge. The tubes the doctors had inserted into Malala had caused an infection, the machines had been set improperly, her lungs and kidneys were beginning to fail, and her blood wasn't clotting. If Malala was going to make it through this, she needed to go to a bigger and more prepared medical facility. A neighboring Muslim country donated a plane fitted with medical equipment and Malala began the risky eight-hour trip to England. The left side of Malala's face was paralyzed and she could not hear through her left ear, but she was still lucky. The bullet had taken a nearly impossible route. As it headed for her brain, the bone there was so strong, it ricocheted off, severing her eardrum and lodging itself in her shoulder (Diane Sawyer: ABC News). If the bullet had hit her brain, she probably would not be with us today. Now, she is happy, healthy, and fully recovered. She has definitely changed, but will always be the same Malala that fought for education and women's rights.



*Malala Receives the Nobel Peace Prize December 14, 2014*

### **Achievements/ Voice**

Malala won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, and has won many other awards too; including The Glamour Award for The Girls' Hero, and even the National Youth Peace Prize in Pakistan- later named the National Malala Peace Prize in her honor (Google). Malala is still fighting for education, and has opened up many schools in Pakistan. She donated some of the money from the Nobel Peace Prize to her own fund, called the Malala fund, and is using it to help people from all over the world. "This is where I will begin, but it is not where I will stop," she says on the day she receives her Nobel Peace Prize (Nobel Peace Prize Speech Video).

## Conclusion

Malala made the journey as a teen activist as a strong young woman. She overcame the Taliban, the shooting, and for it she received multiple awards. She did it with grace, and with the help of her friends and family. Malala's father always says, "Malala will be free as a bird." She thanks him for not clipping her wings, and for letting her fly. She showed the world that education is a human right. The only way for people to come out of poverty is for them to be educated. If they have an education, it opens up a world of opportunities for them so that they can get jobs to support their families. Malala changed the lives of so many people, and touched so many hearts, and that is why we celebrate her today.

## Work Cited

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