

## **Yusra Mardini**

Yusra Mardini was born on March 5, 1998, in Damascus, Syria. Yusra learned to swim at a young age and quickly became a strong swimmer. By the age of 14, she competed in the World Swimming Championships. Many predicted she would one day represent Syria in the Olympics.

By 2011, Syria was in the middle of a civil war. Training in a war-torn country was difficult. Many pools were destroyed or used for war efforts and her home was destroyed.

In 2015, 17-year-old Yusra and her sister, Sara, fled Syria. They escaped through Lebanon and then traveled to Turkey. In Turkey, they paid smugglers about \$1500 each for help getting to Greece to seek asylum. They boarded an inflatable raft containing 20 refugees and began their journey across the Aegean Sea. As their overloaded boat began sinking, Yusra, her sister, and two other passengers swam for over three hours in the icy waters. They pulled the boat and its passengers to safety.

As refugees in Germany, they had limited resources and uncertain living conditions. Yusra continued swimming. She joined the Refugee Olympic Team and competed in the 2016 Rio Olympics.

In 2017, she became the youngest ever Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. On June 20, 2023, UN World Refugee Day, she officially started the Yusra Mardini Foundation to support sports and education in refugee communities. During the 2024 Olympic Games, she was hired to be a reporter for the Refugee Olympic Team.

Today, Yusra Mardini advocates for refugee rights and humanitarian issues. She frequently speaks at events and works with organizations to support her cause.

I want everyone to not give up on their dreams  
and do what they feel in their hearts.

## **Bethany Hamilton**

Bethany Hamilton was born on February 8, 1990, in Lihue, Hawaii. Growing up, Bethany was immersed in a surfing culture, with her family being avid surfers themselves. She began competing in surfing events at a young age and showed exceptional talent. She became passionate about surfing and dedicated her free time to training.

On the morning of October 31, 2003, Bethany was attacked by a shark while surfing with her friend. The shark bit off her left arm but her friend's dad was able to rush her to the hospital and save her life. She faced the difficulties of recovery and rehabilitation while dealing with the shock of the attack. Bethany was determined to continue surfing.

Bethany Hamilton returned to surfing just 26 days later. On January 10, 2004, she entered her first major competition. Within two years she had won her first national surfing title. Her positive attitude and resilience enabled her to continue her career. She became a motivational speaker and an advocate for personal strength, using her experiences to encourage others.

Currently, Bethany Hamilton is a professional surfer who also works to inspire others with her story. Her foundation, Beautifully Flawed Foundation, raises money to support youth amputees and their families. She works to help others face challenges while becoming more confident.

Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid.  
Courage means you don't let fear stop you.

## **Haile Thomas**

Haile Thomas was born in Dallas, Texas on February 23, 2000. Her parents moved to the United States from Jamaica before she was born. Her passion for nutrition was sparked by her father's diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes in 2009. This motivated her to learn about the impact of diet on health. With the support of her family, she became committed to promoting wellness and healthy eating.

Haile wanted to help her family, especially her father, become healthy. She worked with her mom to make better choices and to cook more meals together. Together, they learned how to include more nutrient-dense ingredients in their favorite Jamaican recipes. She began talking with her friends and finding ways to help educate others about choosing a healthy diet.

Haile Thomas founded the nonprofit organization HAPPY (Healthy Active Positive Purposeful Youth) when she was only 12 years old. Through this initiative, she has been able to promote healthy eating and active living among young people. Many people, including Michelle Obama and Rachael Ray, have recognized the contributions she has made to helping children make healthier choices.

Haile Thomas opened a tea shop named Matcha Thomas at the age of 20. She remains an active advocate for health and wellness, engaging in public speaking and community outreach. Her dedication to making a difference continues to inspire others.

Who we are is an endlessly emerging possibility.

## **Marley Dias**

Marley Dias was born on January 7, 2005, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. From a young age, Marley was an avid reader and noticed a lack of diverse books in her school library. This led her to start a campaign advocating for more representation in literature.

Marley Dias launched the #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign. She has since collected and donated over 13,000 books featuring black girls. At the same time, she has started a database of the books collected for others looking to add to their own libraries. Her efforts have received widespread recognition and inspired others to advocate for diversity in media.

In recognition of her work, she has spoken at events with Michelle Obama and Oprah. TIME magazine recognized her as one of the 25 most influential teens in 2018. The same year, she was the youngest member of the Forbes 30 under 30 list. She has received the Smithsonian Ingenuity Award, Ebony 100, and many others.

Today, Marley Dias is a graduate from Harvard University. She is the ambassador for the National Educational Association's Read Across America. She wrote the book *Marley Dias Gets It Done: And so Can You!* and is the host and executive producer of a Netflix show. Her ongoing efforts reflect her commitment to making a difference in the world of literature.

Frustration is fuel that can lead to the development  
of an innovative and useful idea.

## **Aditya Mukarji**

Aditya Mukarji was born on March 7, 2004, in New Delhi, India. At the age of 13, he became aware of the impact of plastic waste on the environment and wanted to act. With the help of his supportive family, he became involved in community projects focused on sustainability.

Ms. Bharati Chaturvedi, his mentor, taught him how harmful single use plastic products were. They are made from a material called polypropylene that can not be easily recycled or degraded. A study showed him that India generates 9.46 million tons of plastic waste each year and Aditya wanted to find a way to reduce this amount. He began by urging businesses to stop using single-use plastics like straws, stirrers, and cutlery. He went door to door to speak with local businesses. Within months, he had convinced numerous restaurants to switch to more eco-friendly options.

Aditya has been recognized across the world for his efforts to make a difference. He has received the Youth Mentor National Geographic award and been named as an earthday.org youth ambassador. In July of 2020, he began a new campaign titled “Forests of Hope” which is dedicated to growing native trees for children throughout the countries in the world.

Currently, Aditya Mukarji continues to work on environmental projects while studying at Trinity College in Toronto, Canada. Aditya’s work reflects his dedication to creating a more sustainable future and promoting eco-friendly practices.

Refuse if you cannot reuse.

## **Jaylen Arnold**

Jaylen Arnold was born in St. Petersburg on April 28, 2000. He grew up with Tourette Syndrome, Asperger's Syndrome, and OCD. Jaylen faced bullying due to his conditions but was determined to make a positive impact on the world around him. His family supported his advocacy efforts, and he became involved in raising awareness about bullying.

Due to having Tourette's, Jaylen has vocal and motor tics that he cannot control. He began attending a smaller school where he knew everyone and felt comfortable. In second grade, Jaylen wanted to try a larger school but was bullied by classmates. The stress this put on him made his tics worse and he was put on homebound instruction. After this experience, he returned to his original school and created Jaylen's Challenge. The goal of this program is to educate others about bullying and promote acceptance.

In 2023, Jaylen graduated from Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida. He earned a degree in film and business. He actively promotes understanding and acceptance through his foundation and speaks at schools and events. Jaylen encourages teens with disabilities to advocate for themselves and ask for accommodations when they are needed.

The number one thing, I push through, and I drive through the heads of our youth is to really speak up.

## **Sir Darius Brown**

Sir Darius Brown was born in Newark, New Jersey on June 8, 2006. At two years old, he was diagnosed with a speech comprehension and fine motor skills delay. When he was eight, his fine motor skills began improving when he helped his older sister cut fabric and sew. Sir Darius soon learned to make bow ties.

After Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in 2017, Sir Darius wanted to find a way to help displaced dogs find new homes. He was saddened when he learned many shelters did not have space to keep the animals alive. He started the PAWsome Mission in 2019 to fulfill his dream. His plan was to add cute bow ties and take pictures to show off pets who needed to be adopted. Sir Darius worked to raise funds and gather resources for his project. He then created and distributed bow ties for the animals.

Through his store Beaux & Paws, Sir Darius has created and donated thousands of bow ties to shelters. For each bow tie sold in his store, one is donated to a shelter. His work has helped many animals find new homes and brought attention to his cause.

In 2023, Sir Darius authored a book, Project PAWsome: Saving Shelter Pets One Bow Tie at a Time. In the book, he shares his story along with tales of adopted and rescued pets he has helped. The book even teaches readers how to make bow ties.

Sir Darius Brown graduated from high school in June of 2025. His hard work in school paid off when he received a scholarship from The Gates Foundation. He currently attends Morehouse University.

When it gets hard or when you make a mistake,  
just adjust, be resilient, and learn from it.

## **Rebeca Andrade**

Rebeca Rodrigues de Andrade was born on May 8, 1999 in Guarulhos, Brazil. She grew up with a mom who worked as a maid and seven siblings. When her aunt began working at a gym the same week of gymnastics tryouts, Rebeca came with her. Her natural talent was obvious in her tryout and she began her training. When her family was unable to afford a bus pass, her brothers would walk her to the gym, a two-hour journey.

When she was 9, Rebeca moved away from her family to a training center in Curitiba and then to Rio de Janeiro a year later. At the age of 13, she began competing internationally at a junior level, earning medals in multiple competitions.

She has competed in three Olympics games. During the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, Rebeca became the first South American woman to earn a medal in the gymnastics all-arounds. Earning a gold medal in vault made her the first Olympic champion in the history of Brazilian women's gymnastics.

One of her biggest competitors is Simone Biles. Despite their rivalry, they speak highly of each other. Biles has called Andrade a “phenomenal gymnast” and recognizes that they push each other to do their best.

Andrade has earned 22 medals in senior competitions throughout her career, making her the most decorated Brazilian gymnast of all time. She took the year of 2025 off from competition to rest. She returned at the 2026 Pan Am Games, competing only in vault. She plans to train in preparation for the LA 2028 Olympics.

You don't need to be like anyone else. Be yourself. You are extraordinary.

## **Easton LaChappelle**

Easton LaChappelle grew up in the small mountain town of Mancos. As a child, Easton was often curious about how things worked. He would spend time taking apart toys and building robots with the parts. Much of what he learned came from watching YouTube videos and online communities.

When he turned 16, Easton was given a 3D printer. He used this gift to create a robotic hand that could open and close its fingers. While sharing his invention at a science fair, he met a 7-year-old girl with a prosthetic arm. He learned that the arm had cost \$80,000 and needed to be replaced each year as she grew. He was inspired to make a difference by her story.

Easton began networking with engineers, medical professionals, and business leaders. He showcased his work across the country to help him find collaborators and supporters. In high school, Easton launched a company he named Unlimited Tomorrow. His goal was to help reshape the way people think of prosthetics. Their first product, TrueLimb weighs only 1.1 pounds (3 pounds lighter than a typical prosthetic arm for children). The limb is customized to fit the child, match the skin tone, fingernails, and cost only \$8,000 instead of \$80,000. They can be delivered within three weeks.

Today, Easton's company has worked to provide prosthetics to victims of the Ukraine war. He speaks to audiences, sharing his journey from a self-taught teenager to being the CEO of a company. He continues his commitment to making prosthetics more accessible to everyone, freely sharing his designs on-line for others to use.

Technology should serve people, especially those who have the greatest need.

## **Brigitta Maria Andrea Gunawan**

Brigitta Maria Andrea Gunawan was born in 2004 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Growing up on a part of the world's largest archipelago has impacted her desire to protect the ocean. The water was an important part of her childhood. From taking her first steps on a beach in Bali to becoming a competitive swimmer as a teenager, she was always in the water. Today Brigitta recognizes that the ocean is a vital part of her country with many communities depending on the ocean as a source of livelihood.

During the pandemic, she was encouraged to find ways to volunteer. As part of a fellowship with Earth Echo International, Brigitta visited a marine protected area where she first saw a coral reef. At the same time, she learned that most coral reefs are predicted to vanish by 2050. This inspired Brigitta to launch 30x30 Indonesia. The goal of the program is for governments to designate 30% of Earth's land and ocean as protected areas by 2030.

In 2023, Brigitta founded Diverseas. This is designed to be a resource for anyone wanting to learn about the ocean. The company is building an immersive library containing virtual reality, training, field experiences, and more. Along with educating, it is a place where organizers can plan workshops and connect with ocean conservation efforts.

Brigitta believes that collaboration is the key to finding ways to protect our oceans. She encourages everyone to work together to find innovative solutions.

Recognize your passion, keep it in focus, hold on to it, and never let it go.

## Habit Connection

Plan your response here. Use what you have read to help you form your answer.

## What is a habit demonstrated?

The habit is: \_\_\_\_\_

This habit means: \_\_\_\_\_

My text evidence is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Using your notes above, write a four to five sentence response explaining the habit you identified and the reason you chose the habit.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.