

Malorie Blackman

Malorie Blackman is a well-known author who has written lots of books that have won many awards. Malorie uses her books to talk about tricky topics and different issues. In her spare time, Malorie enjoys playing video games and writing music. She is still writing books today and continues to speak about important issues.



Early Life



Malorie was born in London on 8th February 1962. She enjoyed spending time in the library as a child and she read many books ranging from classic stories to science fiction.

Malorie trained in computer science and worked as a computer programmer before making the decision to leave computing to become a writer.

Becoming an Author

Malorie noticed that none of the books that she read when she was younger featured characters who were Black people. Wanting to change this, she decided to start writing the books that she would have wanted to read when she was a child. These were sci-fi books, adventure tales and more, all of which featured Black characters.



Malorie spent over two years sending stories that she had written to different publishers. She was rejected 82 times before somebody said that they wanted to publish her writing. In 1990, her first book 'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories' was published.



In 1997, Malorie's book 'Pig Heart Boy' was published. This book was made into a television series where it won an award for best children's drama.

Since her first book was published, Malorie has written lots more books for young children, older children and young adults.

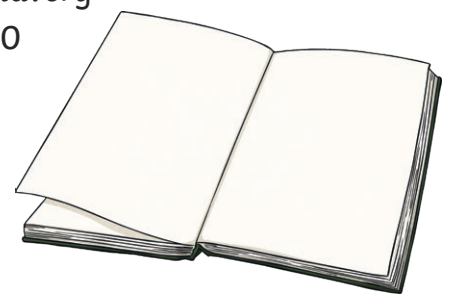


Tackling Important Issues



Malorie believes that books can help people to see things from another person's point of view. She suggests that by representing a range of cultures, beliefs and **ethnicities** within stories, we can give people the opportunity to walk in other people's shoes and help to address issues like **racism** and **discrimination**. During an interview in 2016, Malorie said, "Books should be mirrors as well as windows."

In 2007, Malorie collected short poems and stories about slavery for a book called 'Unheard Voices'. The book marked 200 years since slavery was outlawed in the British empire. At the start of the book, Malorie wrote that she made the collection because 'more often than not, the only way to move forward is to first look back and learn from the lessons of the past.'



Becoming Children's Laureate

Between 2013 and 2015, Malorie was the Children's Laureate. This award celebrates the amazing achievements of writers and illustrators of children's books.

Malorie said that her aim as Children's Laureate was to bring books and teenagers together. During the two years, she helped to set up the first YALC (Young Adult Literature Convention). This was an event that helped people to celebrate their enjoyment of television programmes, films, books, video games and graphic novels.



During her two years as Children's Laureate, Malorie travelled across the UK and talked to children and young adults about reading for pleasure. Malorie often talks about how much she enjoyed meeting so many amazing and talented young people as she visited different parts of the country.



Glossary

discrimination:	When someone is treated unfairly because of their religion, nationality or other factor when compared to others.
ethnicities:	Groups of people who often identify with each other through a common language, culture, religion or ancestry.
racism:	When people are not given respect, rights, dignity or value because of their race.

Questions

1. What was the title of Malorie's first book? Tick one.

- ☐ 'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories'
- ☐ 'Pig Heart Boy'
- ☐ 'Hacker'
- ☐ 'Unheard Voices'

2. What does YALC stand for? Tick one.

- ☐ Young Adult Literacy Club
- ☐ Yesterday's Adults Literature Convention
- ☐ Young Adult Literature Convention
- ☐ Young Adult Literary Convention

3. Fill in the missing words.

Between 2013 and 2015, Malorie was the _____.

4. Look at the paragraph beginning **Malorie believes that books...**

Find and copy a group of words that mean the same as **perspective**.

5. In what year was 'Pig Heart Boy' published?

6. Explain why the author chose to name the third section **Tackling Important Issues**.

7. Summarise what you have learnt about Malorie Blackman using 20 words or fewer.

8. How do you think that Malorie Blackman felt when her first book was published? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. What was the title of Malorie's first book? Tick one.

- ☒ **'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories'**
- ☐ 'Pig Heart Boy'
- ☐ 'Hacker'
- ☐ 'Unheard Voices'

2. What does YALC stand for? Tick one.

- ☐ Young Adult Literacy Club
- ☐ Yesterday's Adults Literature Convention
- ☒ **Young Adult Literature Convention**
- ☐ Young Adult Literary Convention

3. Fill in the missing words.

Between 2013 and 2015, Malorie was the **Children's Laureate**.

4. Look at the paragraph beginning **Malorie believes that books...**

Find and copy a group of words that mean the same as **perspective**.
point of view

5. In what year was 'Pig Heart Boy' published?

'Pig Heart Boy' was published in 1997.

6. Explain why the author chose to name the third section **Tackling Important Issues**.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author chose to name this section 'Tackling Important Issues' because it talks about how Malorie believes that books can help to tackle important issues like racism and discrimination.

7. Summarise what you have learnt about Malorie Blackman using 20 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: She is an author who has written lots of books. She was Children's Laureate and writes about different issues.

8. How do you think that Malorie Blackman felt when her first book was published? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Malorie felt really excited, proud and relieved when her first book was published. This is because she had received 82 rejection letters before someone said that they would publish her book.

Malorie Blackman

Malorie Blackman is a popular author who has written multiple award-winning books, television scripts and even a stage play. Malorie is known for tackling a range of issues within her books.



Early Life

Malorie was born in London on 8th February 1962. As a young child, she enjoyed spending time in the library and read all sorts of books from classic stories to science fiction.

Malorie trained in computer science and later graduated from a school that specialised in film and television. She worked as a computer programmer before making the decision to leave computing to become a writer.



Writing Career

Thinking about the stories that she read as a child, Malorie noticed that none of the featured characters were Black people. Wanting to change this, she made the decision to start writing the books that she would have wanted to read when she was a child: sci-fi books, adventure tales and more, all of which featured Black characters.

Malorie spent over two years sending stories that she had written to different publishers. After 82 rejection letters, Malorie received her first 'yes'. In 1990, her first book 'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories' (a collection of short stories for young adults) was published.



Two years later, Malorie's first book for children was published. 'Hacker' follows the story of a girl who uses her incredible computer skills to attempt to break into a bank's computer files. She does this to try and prove her dad's innocence after he's accused of stealing one million pounds.

In 1997, Malorie's well-known book 'Pig Heart Boy' was published. This book was shortlisted for several awards and was made into a six-part television series where it won an award for best children's drama.



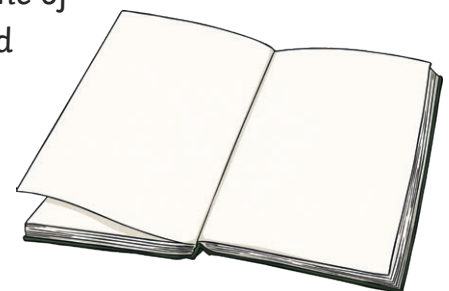
Since her first book was published, Malorie has written lots of novels for young children, older children and young adults.

Tackling Important Issues



Malorie believes that books can help people to view things from another person's point of view. She suggests that, by representing a range of cultures, beliefs and **ethnicities** within stories, we can start to combat **racism** and **discrimination** by giving people the opportunity to walk in other people's shoes. In an interview conducted in 2016, Malorie said, "Books should be mirrors as well as windows."

In 2007, Malorie collected short poems and stories on the theme of slavery for a book entitled 'Unheard Voices'. The book marked 200 years since slavery was outlawed in the British empire. At the start of the book, Malorie writes that she made the collection because 'More often than not, the only way to move forward is to first look back and learn from the lessons of the past.'



Children's Laureate

Between 2013 and 2015, Malorie won the title of Children's Laureate. The award (which is given every two years) celebrates the amazing achievements of writers and illustrators of children's books. Nominations are taken from a wide range of people before a panel of judges make the final decision.

Malorie said that, as Children's Laureate, she wanted to bring books and teenagers together. During her time in the role, she helped to set up the first YALC (Young Adult Literature Convention). This brought different worlds from television, film, books, video games and graphic novels together in one space.



During her two years as Children's Laureate, Malorie travelled across the UK and gave talks to children and young adults about reading for pleasure. Malorie often talks about how much she enjoyed meeting so many amazing and talented young people as she visited different parts of the country.



In her spare time, Malorie enjoys playing video games and writing music. She is still writing and continues to speak openly about issues that she believes strongly in.



Glossary

discrimination:

When someone is treated unfairly because of their religion, nationality or other factor when compared to others.

ethnicities:

Groups of people who often identify with each other through a common language, culture, religion or ancestry.

Questions

1. Before she became a writer, what did Malorie work as? Tick one.

- ☐ a television script writer
- ☐ a director
- ☐ a computer programmer
- ☐ a computer salesperson

2. Number the events from 1- 4 to show the order that they happened in.

- ☐ Malorie collected poems and short stories for 'Unheard Voices'.
- ☐ Malorie's first book for children was published.
- ☐ Malorie became the Children's Laureate.
- ☐ 'Not So Stupid!': Incredible Short Stories' was published.

3. Look at the first paragraph.

Find and copy **two** words or groups of words that mean the same as **lots**.

- _____
- _____

4. What did Malorie say that she wanted to do as Children's Laureate?

5. Fill in the missing words.

'Unheard Voices' marked 200 years since _____
was outlawed in the British _____.

6. Would you like to read 'Hacker'? Explain your answer.

7. Do you think that people will be inspired to become authors after reading about Malorie Blackman? Explain your answer.

8. Imagine that this text is from a book about Malorie Blackman.
Write a short blurb for the book.

9. Explain why you think that the author chose to include the last paragraph.

Answers

1. Before she became a writer, what did Malorie work as? Tick one.
 - ☐ a television script writer
 - ☐ a director
 - ☒ **a computer programmer**
 - ☐ a computer salesperson
2. Number the events from 1- 4 to show the order that they happened in.
 - 3** Malorie collected poems and short stories for 'Unheard Voices'.
 - 2** Malorie's first book for children was published.
 - 4** Malorie became the Children's Laureate.
 - 1** 'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories' was published.
3. Look at the first paragraph.
Find and copy **two** words or groups of words that mean the same as **lots**.
 - **multiple**
 - **a range**
4. What did Malorie say that she wanted to do as Children's Laureate?
Malorie said that, as Children's Laureate, she wanted to bring books and teenagers together.
5. Fill in the missing words.

'Unheard Voices' marked 200 years since **slavery**
was outlawed in the British **empire**.
6. Would you like to read 'Hacker'? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: I would like to read 'Hacker' because I love books about computers and this one sounds really exciting. I also want to know if the girl managed to prove that her dad is innocent.

7. Do you think that people will be inspired to become authors after reading about Malorie Blackman? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that people will be inspired to become authors after reading this. This is because people see that writing books can be a way to tackle important issues and they might want to help to stop racism and discrimination.

8. Imagine that this text is from a book about Malorie Blackman.
Write a short blurb for the book.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Have you ever wondered how many rejection letters famous author Malorie Blackman received before her first book was published? If you have, then this book is for you! Look inside to find out fascinating facts about the amazing person who held the position of Children's Laureate from 2013 to 2015.

9. Explain why you think that the author chose to include the last paragraph.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author chose to include the last paragraph as a conclusion. It gives a fun fact about Malorie before explaining that she is still writing. This might make people look forward to seeing what book she writes next.

Malorie Blackman

Malorie Blackman is a popular British author who has written a multitude of award-winning books for children of all ages. In addition, she has also written a number of television scripts and a stage play. Malorie is renowned for addressing a range of issues within her books.



Early Life

Malorie was born in Clapham, London on 8th February 1962. When she was younger, she enjoyed spending her Saturdays in the library devouring all sorts of books, ranging from myths and legends to classic stories and science fiction.

Malorie trained in computer science and later graduated from a school that specialised in film and television. After gaining these qualifications, she worked as a systems programmer before making the decision to turn writing into a full-time career.



Writing Career

When reflecting upon the stories that she read as a child, Malorie said that she realised that none of the featured characters were Black people. Wanting to address this imbalance, she made the decision to start writing the books that she would have wanted to read when she was a child: sci-fi books, adventure tales, horror stories and more, all of which featured Black characters.

Malorie spent over two years sending stories that she had written to various publishers. After receiving a total of 82 rejection letters, Malorie received her first 'yes'. In 1990, her first book 'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories' was published. Written for young adults, the book contained a collection of horror and sci-fi stories.

Just two years later, 'Hacker' was published – this was Malorie's first book for children. 'Hacker' follows the story of a girl who uses her incredible hacking skills to attempt to break into a bank's computer files in order to prove her dad's innocence after he's accused of stealing one million pounds.

In 1997, Malorie's well-known book 'Pig Heart Boy' was published. In addition to being shortlisted for several awards, 'Pig Heart Boy' was later adapted into a six-part television series where it received an award for best children's drama.

Since the publication of her first book, Malorie has written a significant number of novels for young children, older children and young adults.

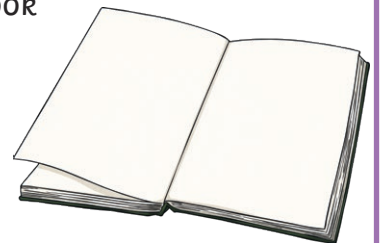


Tackling Important Issues



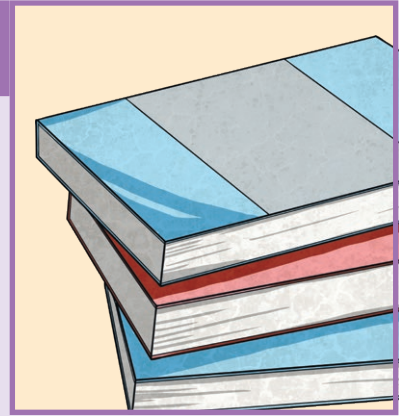
Malorie strongly believes that books can encourage empathy by allowing people to view things from another person's perspective. She suggests that by representing a range of cultures, beliefs and ethnicities within stories, we can start to combat racism and discrimination by allowing people to walk in other people's shoes. In an interview conducted in 2016, Malorie said, "Books should be mirrors as well as windows."

In 2007, Malorie collected a selection of short poems and stories on the theme of slavery for a book entitled 'Unheard Voices'. The book commemorated 200 years since the British Parliament had passed an act that led to the abolition of slavery. In the foreword, Malorie writes that she made the collection because 'more often than not, the only way to move forward is to first look back and learn from the lessons of the past.'



Children's Laureate

Between the years of 2013 and 2015, Malorie was awarded with the title of Children's Laureate. This award – given every two years – celebrates the incredible achievements of writers and illustrators of children's books. A panel of judges work together to consider nominations from a range of people – including librarians and children – before making their final decision.



Malorie speaks fondly about her tenure as Children's Laureate and says that she wanted to bring books and teenagers together. During her time, she aided with setting up the first YALC (Young Adult Literature Convention). This brought alternative worlds from television, film, books, video games and graphic novels together in one space.

During her two years as Children's Laureate, Malorie also travelled across the UK, giving talks to children and young adults about reading for pleasure. When reflecting on her time as Children's Laureate, Malorie talks about how grateful she is to have met so many amazing and talented young people as she visited different parts of the country.



In her spare time, Malorie enjoys playing the piano – although, she admits that she may not be the best pianist – and playing video games. She is still writing books and continues to speak openly about issues that she believes strongly in.



Questions

1. **When she was younger, she enjoyed spending her Saturdays in the library devouring all sorts of books...**

What does the word **devouring** mean in this sentence? Tick one.

- ☐ reading
☐ eating
☐ comparing
☐ collecting

2. Number the events from 1- 4 to show the order that they happened in.

- ☐ Malorie became the Children's Laureate.
☐ Malorie trained in computer science.
☐ Malorie's first book for children was published.
☐ Malorie's first book for young adults was published.

3. Look at the paragraph beginning **When reflecting upon...**

Write another word that could have been used instead of **imbalance**.

4. What did Malorie help to set up during her time as Children's Laureate?

5. What is '**Unheard Voices**'?

6. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what a Children's Laureate is.

7. Argue that Malorie was right to keep going after receiving her 50th rejection letter.

8. Imagine that you are Malorie when she receives her first 'yes'.
Write down what you are thinking.

9. What do you think that Malorie's next book will be about? Fully explain your answer.

10. **"Books should be mirrors as well as windows."**
Explain what you think this quote means.

Answers

1. **When she was younger, she enjoyed spending her Saturdays in the library devouring all sorts of books...**

What does the word **devouring** mean in this sentence? Tick one.

- ☒ **reading**
☐ eating
☐ comparing
☐ collecting

2. Number the events from 1- 4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 4** Malorie became the Children's Laureate.
1 Malorie trained in computer science.
3 Malorie's first book for children was published.
2 Malorie's first book for young adults was published.

3. Look at the paragraph beginning **When reflecting upon...**

Write another word that could have been used instead of **imbalance**.

Accept an appropriate synonym, such as: injustice; unfairness; disparity; disproportion.

4. What did Malorie help to set up during her time as Children's Laureate?

During her time as Children's Laureate, Malorie helped to set up the Young Adult Literature Convention.

5. What is 'Unheard Voices'?

'Unheard Voices' is a selection of short stories and poems on the theme of slavery.

6. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what a Children's Laureate is.

Pupils' own responses, such as: It is an award that is judged by a panel and given to children's writers or illustrators.

7. Argue that Malorie was right to keep going after receiving her 50th rejection letter.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Malorie was right to keep going after receiving her 50th rejection letter because she still got published. Even though it took 82 rejection letters in total, she is now a really successful author who is known by lots of people and she uses her books to help create positive change.

8. Imagine that you are Malorie when she receives her first 'yes'.

Write down what you are thinking.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I can't believe it! After 82 rejection letters, I'm going to have my first book published! I hope that people enjoy 'Not So Stupid!: Incredible Short Stories'.

9. What do you think that Malorie's next book will be about? Fully explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Malorie's next book will be about a child who takes part in a peaceful protest about something that they believe in. This is because Malorie writes about issues that are important. I also think that there will be something about computers in it because Malorie likes writing science fiction books.

10. "Books should be mirrors as well as windows."

Explain what you think this quote means.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that it means that everyone should be able to see themselves reflected as a character in a book regardless of their gender, beliefs or ethnicity. Alongside that, books should be like windows that give you a chance to look at different people's lives so that you can see things from their point of view.