This book is written as an open letter to Malala Yousafzai, who, at the age of 15, was shot by the Taliban in Pakistan in 2012 because of her public support of girls’ rights to receive an education.

Presented alongside remarkably beautiful and moving photographs, the book/letter is written from the viewpoint of girls from around the world and expresses their immense admiration, respect and gratitude to Malala for her bravery in standing up for something she – and they – believe is a fundamental human right. In a remarkably simple, direct style, readers learn about the key reasons why girls in developing nations are prevented from attending school – early marriage, poverty, discrimination and violence – and are encouraged to take up the call for education for all.

In a fitting reply to the voices of so many girls around the world, *Every Day is Malala Day* ends with Malala’s own words, as spoken to the United Nations' Youth Assembly on July 12, 2013.

**Curriculum Links:** English, History, Social Science, Visual Arts, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, Intercultural Understanding, Critical and Creative Thinking

**RECOMMENDED READING LEVEL:** Mid to Upper Primary
AUTHOR STYLE

The inspiring story of Malala Yousafzai is turned into an open letter from the girls of the world to Malala. With simple sentences (or at times short phrases) from this hypothetical letter, each linked to photographs of individuals or groups, the reader gets a rounded picture of the diversity of young females inspired by Malala's example.

‘To girls like me, you are a leader who encourages us,’ a trio of young Asian girls declare. But as the letter goes on the concerns grow beyond the individual to the varied pressures keeping women silent in so many communities and countries.

IN THE AUTHOR’S OWN WORDS

‘Many hands created this beautiful tribute to a remarkable young woman. The Plan International Communications team was inspired by the United Nations declaring July 12, 2013 Malala Day, when 500 young people “took over” the UN for the first time with the ready support of the UN Secretary General. They produced a short film depicting girls from all over the world writing to Malala to tell her how important a symbol she was for them in their lives. Jen Albaugh took this warm and powerful video and helped me turn it into this book, choosing the incredible photographs Plan has collected from all over the world to bring the girls’ words to life. Malala’s charm, courage, and conviction are an inspiration to all of them and to all of us. Heartfelt thanks to all of the Plan teams who helped me bring this story to life.’

Rosemary McCarney

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Rosemary McCarney leads the Plan International Canada team, where she helped create the very important ‘Because I am a Girl’ campaign and worked to have an International Day of the Girl declared by the United Nations to celebrate the lives of girls and draw attention to the particular challenges they face. A lawyer by training, she has put those skills to use in nearly 100 countries around the world.
Founded in 1937, Plan is one of the world’s oldest and largest international charities, working in partnership with millions of people around the world to end global poverty. Not for profit, independent and inclusive of all faiths and cultures, Plan has only one agenda: to improve the lives of children. ‘Because I am a Girl’ is Plan’s global initiative to end gender inequality, promote girls’ rights and lift millions of girls – and everyone around them – out of poverty. On the first International Day of the Girl on October 11, 2012, Plan launched a global campaign to ensure every girl in the world gets a minimum of nine years of quality education.

WHO IS MALALA YOUSAFZAI?

On October 9, 2012, a fifteen-year-old girl on her way to school in Pakistan was shot in the head by a member of the Taliban. Malala Yousafzai had been speaking out in public about the right of all girls to have an education – something the Taliban were against. They thought that shooting her would stop her campaign, but they didn’t know how strong Malala is. She was flown to England for life-saving treatment, and has recovered. Malala and two other girls who were wounded in the attack are attending school and living in England. Malala is more determined than ever to work for every child’s right to an education. For her bravery and effort on behalf of all children, she has received almost thirty awards and honors, including Pakistan’s National Youth Peace Prize, the Kids Rights International Children’s Peace Prize, President Clinton’s Global Citizen Award, the Ambassador of Conscience Award from Amnesty International, and the Freedom of Thought Prize from the European Parliament. In 2013, Malala Yousafzai became the youngest person ever nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

Themes include: education as a fundamental human right, the cultural and economic factors behind discrimination against females, the importance of standing up for your beliefs.

Suggestions for discussion and classroom activities:

- Useful links:
  - http://plan-international.org/
  - The United Nation’s broadcast of Malala’s speech on 12 July, 2013 is at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rNhZu3ttfU

- Research Project: Ask students to find out more about Malala and her cause. A question sheet might include the following:
  - Who is Malala Yousafzai?
  - Where was she born and what was her early life like?
  - What happened to Malala on October 9, 2012?
  - Who are the Taliban and what do they believe about girls receiving an education?
  - Where does Malala live now?
  - Do you think the Taliban were successful in keeping Malala quiet?
  - Name four reasons that stop so many young girls around the world from receiving an education.
  - Why do you think it is important that girls everywhere are educated?

- Look closely at the photo of the child bride in the book. Imagine you are that girl and how you would feel if you were being married at such a young age. How might it impact on your attitudes about family, friends, education and hobbies? Perform a scene in front of your class where the girl is discussing these issues with her best friend the night before her marriage.

- In your own words explain why the girls in the book see Malala as a leader and a friend.

- Write your own letter to Malala. In it you might like to explain what her experience has taught you, how important you think her cause is, and how you feel when you see girls around the world being prevented from receiving an education.

- In a whole class discussion ask students to expand on Malala’s statement that ‘books and pens are the most powerful weapons’.

- Malala Day was held on July 12, 2013. What do you think you and your class could do to celebrate the day in 2014?

- Watch the following cartoon describing the concept of human rights and how they relate to the Convention on the Rights of the Child ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1BFtBkco#t=1700](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1BFtBkco#t=1700)). Discuss with your class how they might enjoy these rights in this country and how some of the girls shown in *Every Day is Malala Day* may not be so lucky.

Teacher Note content supplied by Carolyn Walsh, Allen & Unwin