

Teen Fiction



READING

- 1** Read the short text about Malorie Blackman. Ignore the gaps for the moment. What role did she take over in 2013?

Malorie Blackman is a very

(0) ...adventurous... author of teen fiction. Her books are popular worldwide and there are (1) of her work in many different languages, from Spanish and French to Japanese and Welsh. She used to be a computer (2), but became increasingly attracted to storytelling. She says she didn't find it difficult to write her first novel, *Noughts and Crosses*, taking certain events (3) from her own childhood and teenage years.

In 2013, Malorie Blackman took over as the Children's Laureate, a (4) position that is awarded every two years in the UK to a writer or illustrator, 'to celebrate outstanding (5) in their field'. As Laureate, she made frequent public (6), giving talks and visiting schools. She is (7) about teen fiction and wants to encourage other writers to produce stories that are not (8), and will appeal to teenage readers.

ADVENTURE

TRANSLATE

PROGRAM

DIRECT

PROFESSION

ACHIEVE

APPEAR

PASSION

CHILD

- 2** Look at the example (0) in exercise 1. How is the word formed? Complete the text in exercise 1 using the endings in the box below to form new words from the words in capitals. You may need to make spelling changes, and you will need to make some words plural.

-al -ance -ate -er -ion -ish -ly -ment

A ☐

It's such an honour. The wonderful thing about this role is that each author or illustrator who is chosen can make it their own. My goal is to convince as many children and young adults as possible that reading is simply impossible to resist – an essential and fascinating part of their lives. And I'll be concentrating on spreading the reading word to teens, as I think I might be able to make a real difference there.

B ☐

I believe that we have to get them motivated by showing the many new opportunities they will be able to have through reading. And if a child tells me they don't like reading, I always say, 'You haven't found the right books for you yet!' First of all, children should be encouraged to read what they are interested in – comics, football stories, romances, whatever!

C ☐

I think it was mainly down to a love of stories and reading. I spent most Saturdays during my early years at the library, reading fairy stories, myths and legends, contemporary stories, fantasy, science fiction and anything else I could lay my hands on. I also wrote stories and poems for my own amusement, but it never, ever occurred to me as a child or teenager that I could become a published writer. But in my mid 20s, after a few years in computing, I decided that I would try really hard to do that, and eventually I managed to get published.

D ☐

Because as an audience they show good judgment and their minds haven't yet been closed down. And I like the way they are honest about what they like and don't like.

E ☐

When I first started writing, I attended a basic course in writing for children, and then I attended several more workshops run by the same brilliant individual. It was invaluable and very inspiring – a great, supportive atmosphere where you were able to present your own work and listen to the work of others. Also, it was a great place to try to improve my own critical skills. To cut a long story short, yes it did help!

F ☐

There wasn't any one thing. It grew out of a lifetime of experiences. Some of the events in the book were based on real events from my own childhood. And I also wanted to play with the idea that 'history is luck' to a certain extent. You put all that together and you have the beginnings of an idea which led to *Noughts and Crosses*.

G ☐

No! We must never underestimate teens. As a teen, that kind of attitude used to drive me mad – the belief that I couldn't understand certain 'grown-up' issues because I was just a teen. If we want mature, responsible teenagers making good decisions about the difficult issues that they face, then they have to be exposed to these subjects early enough to make a difference. We really need to get past this idea that teens can't think for themselves – they can.



3 Read an interview with Malorie Blackman. Match the questions (1–7) to the answers.

- 1 Why did you decide to become a writer?
- 2 Do you ever worry that young people might struggle with the complex questions your books raise?
- 3 What does it mean to be the Children's Laureate?
- 4 What inspired you to write your first novel?
- 5 How can teenagers be encouraged to keep reading?
- 6 Have you ever belonged to a writer's group – and if so, was it useful?
- 7 Why do you like writing for children and teens?

4 Read the text again. In which paragraph does Malorie Blackman ...

- 1 praise teenagers for being open to different ideas? ☐
- 2 express her pride and pleasure in taking on a challenge? ☐
- 3 argue that teenagers need to experience adult topics through reading? ☐
- 4 mention her desire to experiment in her writing? ☐
- 5 talk about a change in her attitude to being an author? ☐
- 6 explain her views on why some children aren't keen to read? ☐

Talking points

- 66 Why do you think Malorie Blackman's novels are popular with young people?
What do you think young people can learn from reading fiction?
How important is it for children to start reading at a young age?

99

EP Word profile story

I spent most Saturdays at the library, reading **fairy stories**, myths and legends, **contemporary stories** ...

To cut a **long story short**, yes it did help!

The **main story** tonight is the serious flooding in the south of the country.