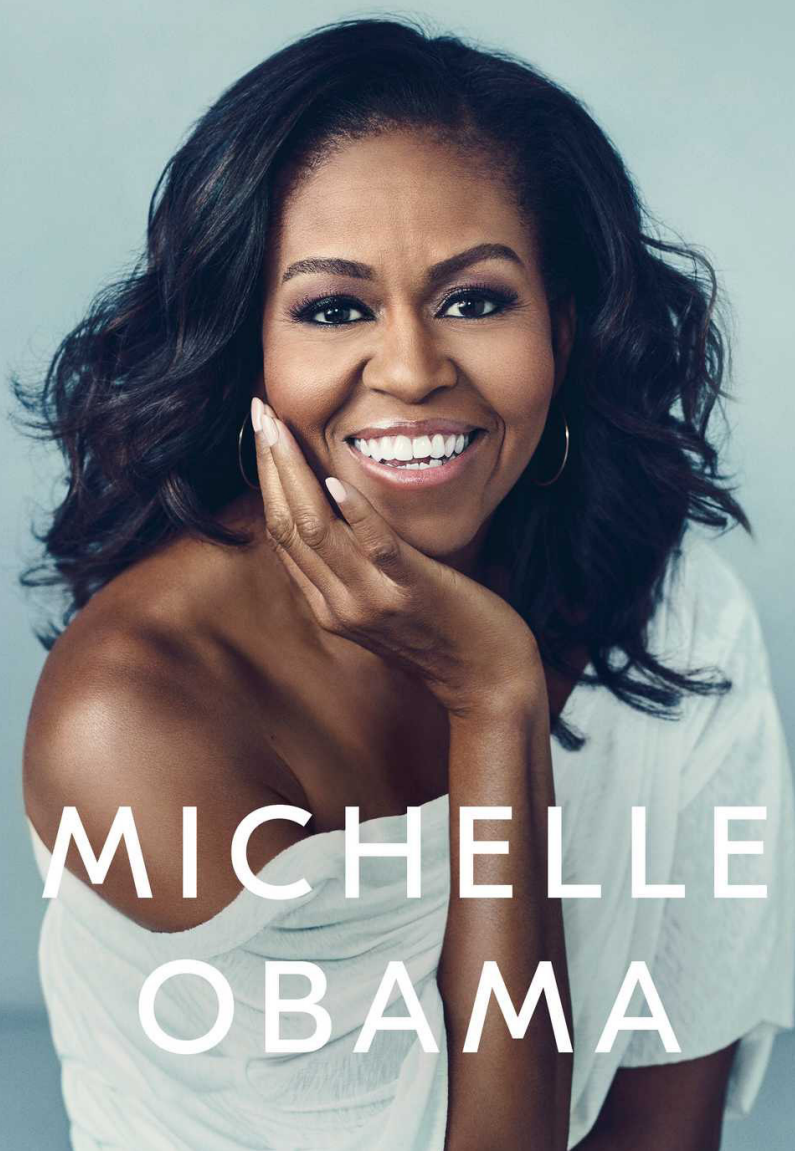


Teacher Resource Pack
KS3-5 Supporting literacy and PSHE Education

BECOMING



MICHELLE OBAMA



Changing life stories



Talks

About BECOMING by Michelle Obama

In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. As First Lady of the United States of America – the first African-American to serve in that role – she helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history, while also establishing herself as a powerful advocate for women and girls in the U.S. and around the world, dramatically changing the ways that families pursue healthier and more active lives, and standing with her husband as he led America through some of its most harrowing moments. Along the way, she showed us a few dance moves, crushed Carpool Karaoke, and raised two down-to-earth daughters under an unforgiving media glare.

In her memoir, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her - from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it - in her own words and on her own terms. Warm, wise, and revelatory, *Becoming* is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations - and whose story inspires us to do the same.

Michelle Robinson Obama served as First Lady of the United States from 2009 to 2017. A graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, Mrs. Obama started her career as an attorney at the Chicago law firm Sidley & Austin, where she met her future husband, Barack Obama. She later worked in the Chicago mayor's office, at the University of Chicago, and at the University of Chicago Medical Center. Mrs. Obama also founded the Chicago chapter of Public Allies, an organization that prepares young people for careers in public service. The Obamas currently live in Washington, DC, and have two daughters, Malia and Sasha.

For more information please visit
becomingmichelleobama.com

ABOUT PENGUIN TALKS

Penguin Talks is a new programme of free creative talks hosted by Penguin for young people across the UK, which give the audience the opportunity to both hear from and directly question a world-renowned thinker, writer or influential figure from our family of authors.

Our aim is to help equip young people for the future by introducing a new generation of readers to new ideas and perspectives, and broadening their understanding of issues which speakers feel to be particularly prevalent for this generation.



Welcome to the Key Stage 3-5 teacher resource pack for *Becoming* by Michelle Obama.

Please find a link here to Michelle Obama's Penguin Talks event at Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School on Monday 3rd December, 2018. We recommend using this pack in conjunction with showing your students [the film of the talk](#).

PURPOSE OF THE PACK

These activities are designed to give students in KS3-5 the opportunity to explore and develop their understanding of the concepts of self-esteem and resilience, to identify factors that can affect their self-belief, and to consider how they can make a positive difference for themselves and for their community in the future.

Activities can be run as individual short sessions or as a single 60-minute careers-focused lesson, depending on your lesson structure, and should complement your school or college's programme of integrated careers education and guidance.

Suggestions for differentiation of activities are included, to adapt for the appropriate key stage.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Penguin Random House has partnered with the National Literacy Trust to encourage students to use and develop their literacy skills. The activities in this pack will provide opportunities for students to practise reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity dedicated to raising literacy levels in the UK. The charity runs projects in the UK's poorest communities, campaigns to make literacy a priority for politicians, businesses and parents, and supports schools. Last year, the National Literacy Trust launched its Words for Work: Women in Leadership programme, which supports girls and young women to develop the literacy skills, leadership abilities and confidence they need to achieve their potential.

| Key Stage | Students should have the opportunity to learn... |
|-----------|--|
| KS3 | <p>L1. to recognise, clarify and if necessary challenge their own core values and how their values influence their choices</p> <p>L2. the knowledge and skills needed for setting realistic and challenging personal targets and goals</p> <p>L3. the similarities, differences and diversity among people of different race, culture, ability, disability, sex, gender identity, age and sexual orientation and the impact of stereotyping, prejudice, bigotry, bullying, and discrimination on individuals and communities</p> <p>L4. strategies for safely challenging stereotyping, prejudice, bigotry, bullying, and discrimination when they witness or experience it in their daily lives</p> |
| KS4 | <p>L1. to evaluate their own personal strengths and areas for development and to use this to inform goal setting</p> <p>L2. about the unacceptability of all forms of discrimination, and how to challenge it, prejudice and bigotry in the wider community including the workplace</p> <p>L3. to think critically about extremism and intolerance in whatever forms they take (including religious, racist and political extremism, the concept of 'shame' and 'honour based' violence)</p> <p>L4. to recognise the shared responsibility to protect the community from violent extremism and how to respond to anything that causes anxiety or concern</p> |
| KS5 | <p>L4. to be a 'critical consumer' of online information in all its forms; appreciate how social media can expand, limit or distort their view of the world; recognise the importance of critical questioning of information presented through all forms of media; understand how social media can be used to distribute propaganda, coerce and manipulate; understand why they should think critically before forwarding or sharing stories or images received via social media</p> <p>L8. to recognise and challenge prejudice and discrimination; understand their rights in relation to inclusion</p> <p>L25. to recognise and celebrate cultural diversity</p> |



Activity 1: Self-esteem

INTRODUCTION

Self-esteem is a person's sense of self-worth, and respect for themselves. We often hear about the importance of self-esteem, but how does having good self-esteem help us achieve our goals, and what obstacles stand in the way of that?

THE ACTIVITY

“CONFIDENCE – BEING ABLE TO SPEAK UP FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR VIEWS OR BELIEFS – IS A BUILDING BLOCK OF GOOD SELF-ESTEEM”.

In *Becoming*, Michelle Obama talks about the people who helped her build her own confidence, particularly as a girl, and how she wanted to do the same for her daughters Sasha and Malia:

The important parts of my story, I was realizing, lay less in the surface value of my accomplishments and more in what undergirded them— the many small ways I'd been buttressed over the years, and the people who'd helped build my confidence over time. I remembered them all, every person who'd ever waved me forward, doing his or her best to inoculate me against the slights and indignities I was certain to encounter in the places I was headed— all those environments built primarily for and by people who were neither black nor female.

I thought of my great- aunt Robbie and her exacting piano standards, how she'd taught me to lift my chin and play my heart out on a baby grand even if all I'd ever known was an upright with broken keys. I thought of my father, who showed me how to box and throw a football, same as Craig. There were Mr. Martinez and Mr. Bennett, my teachers at Bryn Mawr, who never dismissed my opinions. There was my mom, my staunchest support, whose vigilance had saved me from languishing in a dreary second-grade classroom. At Princeton, I'd had Czerny Brasuell, who encouraged me and fed my intellect in new ways. And as a young professional, I'd had, among others, Susan Sher and Valerie Jarrett— still

LITERACY OUTCOMES:

- To read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction that is high quality and challenging
- To listen and respond to a variety of contexts, both formal and informal
- To evaluate content, viewpoints and evidence
- To explore different aspects of presentations
- To adapt writing for a range of purposes, including to describe and respond to information
- To summarise and synthesise ideas and information

Activity 1: Self-esteem

good friends and colleagues many years later— who showed me what it looked like to be a working mother and consistently opened doors for me, certain I had something to offer.

These were people who mostly didn't know one another and would never have occasion to meet, many of whom I'd fallen out of touch with myself. But for me, they formed a meaningful constellation. These were my boosters, my believers, my own personal gospel choir, singing, Yes, kid, you got this! all the way through.

I'd never forgotten it. I'd tried, even as a junior lawyer, to pay it forward, encouraging curiosity when I saw it, drawing younger people into important conversations. If a paralegal asked me a question about her future, I'd open my office door and share my journey or offer some advice. If someone wanted guidance or help making a connection, I did what I could to give it. Later, during my time at Public Allies, I saw the benefits of more formal mentoring firsthand. I knew from my own life experience that when someone shows genuine interest in your learning and development, even if only for ten minutes in a busy day, it matters. It matters especially for women, for minorities, for anyone society is quick to overlook.

With this in mind, I'd started a leadership and mentoring program at the White House, inviting twenty sophomore and junior girls from high schools around Greater D.C. to join us for monthly get-togethers that included informal chats, field trips, and sessions on things like financial literacy and choosing a career. We kept the program largely behind closed doors, rather than thrusting these girls into the media fray.

We paired each teen with a female mentor who would foster a personal relationship with her, sharing her resources and her life story. Valerie was a mentor. Cris Comerford, the White House's first female executive chef, was a mentor. Jill Biden was, too, as were a number of senior women from both the East and the West Wing staffs. The students were nominated by their principals or guidance counselors and would stay with us until they graduated. We had girls from military families, girls from immigrant families, a teen mom, a girl who'd lived in a homeless shelter. They were smart, curious young women, all of them. No different from me. No different from my daughters. I watched over time as the girls formed friendships, finding a rapport with one another and with the adults around them. I spent hours talking with them in a big circle, munching popcorn and trading our thoughts about college applications, body image, and boys. No topic was off-limits. We ended up laughing a lot. More than anything, I hoped this was what they'd carry forward into the future— the ease, the sense of community, the encouragement to speak and be heard.

My wish for them was the same one I had for Sasha and Malia— that in learning to feel comfortable at the White House, they'd go on to feel comfortable and confident in any room, sitting at any table, raising their voices inside any group.

Extract from *BECOMING* by Michelle Obama (Viking, 2018). PP. 355 – 357.

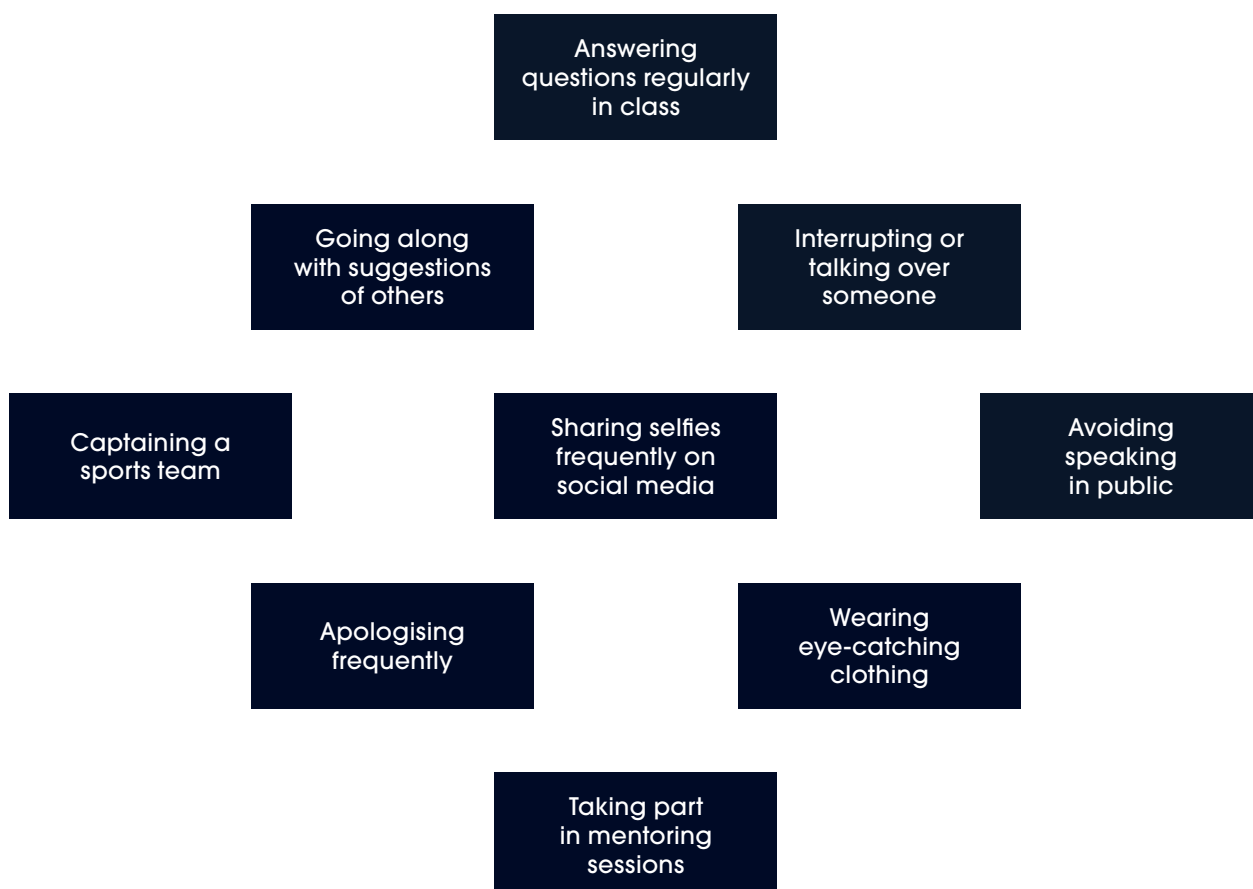
Activity 1: Self-esteem

Look at the behaviours below, and arrange them along a spectrum, with what you think appears least confident on the left, confident in the centre and over-confident on the right.

Be prepared to explain your reasoning. There are no right or wrong answers.

When deciding, bear in mind:

- Who or what might have influenced them to behave in this way? How might they be feeling when they do so? This could be a friend, a past experience, something on social media, previous feedback...
- Do you think the person is making an informed choice or an emotional one?
- Do you think the person is actually confident, or behaving in a confident manner?



SUMMING UP

General:

What order did you decide on and why?

Think about the behaviours you said were under- or over-confident.
Do you think that person has positive self-esteem? Why, or why not?

Have you carried out any of these behaviours yourself? Would you do the same again, and why? Do you think anything influenced you to behave in that way?

KS3: Ask students to write a description of/draw and label a person with strong self-esteem, including how they think that person would behave towards others, or cope with problems in a range of situations, and who supports their self-esteem.

KS4/5: Ask students to consider the factors they find have the biggest impact on their personal confidence and self-esteem e.g. social media, friends, family. If willing, ask students to share these, as well as how they might mitigate any negative impact in future.



Activity 2: Aiming to Succeed

INTRODUCTION

In January 2017, Michelle Obama gave her final speech as First Lady. She used the opportunity to address the young people of America. Based on her personal experiences, she gave advice on self-belief, ways in which anyone can succeed, no matter their background, and referenced some of the potential barriers that people may experience. She also mentioned the strength that people can draw from the cultural and religious values they hold.

Then, on 3 December 2018, Mrs Obama visited Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School in Islington, London, a secondary school she first visited in 2009, to speak to students about self-belief and to discuss some of her proudest moments.

THE ACTIVITY

First, [watch this concluding section](#) from Mrs Obama's speech in January 2017.

Then, read [this article from the Evening Standard](#) which reports on Mrs Obama's visit to EGA School:

LITERACY OUTCOMES:

- To select and identify information
- To identify techniques used to make a successful speech
- To use persuasive techniques

'There's no room for mean girls': Michelle Obama's empowering message to young women as she returns to school in London

[Susannah Butter, Patrick Grafton-Green](#): *Evening Standard*, 3 December 2018

Michelle Obama delivered an empowering message to young women and discussed her proudest moments as she returned to a London secondary school she first visited in 2009.

The former US first lady visited Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School (EGA) in [Islington](#) on Monday, telling gathered schoolgirls that her relationship with the school has become a huge source of pride.

She said she almost broke down in tears when she was shown framed letters that she and the school have exchanged over the years.

Joined by former EGA pupils Winnie Mac and Letrishka Anthony and Nusrath Hassan, an alumnus of Mulberry School in east London, she delivered an inspirational message of hope for the future.

"Meeting the girls here and the girls at Mulberry reminded me how much courage and talent and hope there is," she said.

Activity 2: Aiming to Succeed

Discussing her proudest moments, Mrs Obama said raising daughters who have “turned out sane” came to mind.

“Imagine being your age and having your father criticised in public,” she said.

“Imagine having your first boyfriend plastered all over the tabloids or going to prom with men with guns.

“At the very age where they needed to just blend in they couldn’t because he forced them into a light that made them stand out.

“I had to be mum to them first and foremost... make sure they had the attention of their mother while their mother was giving attention to the world.”

Mrs Obama championed the importance of “sisterhood” and helping one another, adding “there’s no room for mean girls”.

“My girlfriends, we rely on one another,” she said.

“I don’t think children were made to be raised in isolation, we need help. We need to learn to ask for that help.

“Sometimes we are socialised to think you have to do it alone. I’ve done none of it alone.

“I want you all to start practising that kind of sisterhood. We don’t have the luxury of tearing each other down. Our job as women is to do our best at lifting each other up.

“In our friendships and the way we treat other women. There’s no room for mean girls.

“Start now. Find somebody who is struggling and help them. If you see another girl alone and isolated you never know what they are going through.

“One thing we can do better as women is we can take better care of each other.

“I would encourage you to think about who you have influence over, I guarantee you there is someone who thinks you have power over the way the sun rises and sets.

“It’s those small gestures which matter. Change happens every single day with those little things that I would do, I would take them with me.

“Vocalise within your communities what this means to you.

“Try to change some hearts and minds so that the next little girls don’t come up against those same barriers that you did.”

Activity 2: Aiming to Succeed

Mrs Obama told pupils that the world is changing for women, and spoke of the inspiration she has felt meeting the young people who are bringing about that change across the world.

She said: "On a personal level I was moved and touched and inspired as I always am by the young people I meet around the world. It gives me a level of focus and determination when I get to see you all up close.

"And as I said then, you remind me of me and all the fears and all the challenges that you face. You give me a sense of comfort because being first lady wasn't the easiest job in the world but I got strength from you so thank you for giving me that

Later Mrs Obama will discuss her memoir *Becoming* in front of a live audience at the Southbank Centre.

The talk will cover: "Her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive, balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address."

She will speak alongside Nigerian novelist and moderator for the evening, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, whose work has examined post-colonialism and feminism.

Mrs Obama's autobiographical memoir sold two million copies within just a few weeks of its publication, with publishers Penguin Random House claiming it has become the biggest selling book of 2018 in the US and Canada.

The audience at the Royal Festival Hall will hear the stories and emotions behind the book on Monday evening.

Activity 2: Aiming to Succeed

In groups, prepare a short presentation based on Mrs Obama's speech and her visit to EGA School. Your presentation could be as a large poster, or on 1-3 slides, and should address these questions:

- What, in your view, were Mrs Obama's key messages in her speech, and in her visit to EGA?
- What challenges did she face as a mother to two girls growing up in the spotlight, and what barriers does she mention that could make it more difficult for people to grow in confidence and succeed?
- What does Mrs Obama believe makes us stronger? What does she suggest each person can do to help themselves, and to help others, to succeed?

When creating your presentation, make sure:

- You include evidence to back up your arguments
- It will not take longer than five minutes to present
- Everyone in the group contributes in some way

SUMMING UP

Listen to each group's presentation in turn.

Which group do you feel presented their ideas most clearly?

Are there any points on which you have learned something new, or changed your view point, and why?

What questions do you still need to answer?



Activity 3: Making A Difference

INTRODUCTION

As we've seen, in *Becoming*, Michelle Obama emphasises the positive impact of the people who supported and encouraged her as a girl, and her belief in the importance of reaching out and supporting those around us. This could be as a friend or family member, or as a member of a charity, organisation or action group, so as to make a positive change in your community.

THE ACTIVITY

Consider your school and local community. Is there a group of people who you think would benefit from additional support, a great resource not being used, or an issue you feel needs to be addressed, in order for everyone to be able to succeed?

Create an action plan to address and resolve this barrier to success, giving details of:

- What the issue is
- How it constitutes a barrier to success, to an individual, a group or people, or a whole community
- What steps you think need to be taken to resolve the issue
- When the issue is resolved, what the change will 'look like'

LITERACY OUTCOMES:

- To summarise and synthesise ideas and information
- To evaluate content and viewpoint

When planning steps to take, be sure to consider:

- Short, medium and long-term actions that might be needed
- Who will carry out the actions, and what support or resources this will require. As Mrs Obama pointed out, change is not something that comes from one person on their own
- Are your actions 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-related)

SUMMING UP

Swap your action plan with a partner. Check over their plan and consider:

- Have they identified a barrier to success that you recognise?
- Are their suggested actions to resolve the barrier 'SMART'?
- Have they considered what support will be needed to resolve the barrier?
- Is there anything else they could add that might help to achieve change?

EXTENSION DISCUSSION

When we consider barriers to success, they can seem hard or even impossible to tackle. With a clear plan, included where support will be needed, enacting positive change seems much more achievable.

How do you feel now about what you might be able to achieve? Has this changed, and why? What support can you draw on personally to achieve your goals, and what support can you offer to others?



Want to access more Penguin Talks content?

Our inaugural Penguin Talk featured Yuval Noah Harari, author of *Sapiens*, in conversation with comedian Russell Brand talking about some of the most urgent questions facing young people, including the future of education and the job market.

[Click here](#) to watch the Talk and download the associated curriculum-based resource.





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