

Challenge yourself

1 BRAINSTORMING

1. What is an award?
2. Which of the things below do you think a teenager might get an award for? Tick the things you think are possible. Can you add anything else to the list?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> good marks at school | <input type="checkbox"/> sports | <input type="checkbox"/> inventing something |
| <input type="checkbox"/> acting | <input type="checkbox"/> being brave | <input type="checkbox"/> cooking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> writing | <input type="checkbox"/> helping others | <input type="checkbox"/> fighting |

2 WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Write the words from the box into the gaps. The paragraph number will help you.

first aid	special needs	challenge	community	youth prison
rewarding	public speaking	hose	skills	proud
				confident

1. When you _____ yourself, you do something difficult to test yourself. (title)
2. _____ are particular things you can do (that not everybody else can do) that involve special training and experience. (para 1)
3. _____ is another word for society and people in general. (para 3)
4. A _____ is a very long tube for carrying water to a garden or a fire. (para 4)
5. _____ usually involves standing up and talking in front of other people. (para 5)
6. When you feel _____, you feel happy about the things you can do. (para 6)
7. Someone who is _____ believes in their own abilities and so does not feel nervous or frightened. (para 6)
8. The term _____ is used to describe people who have physical or mental disabilities. (para 7)
9. When something is _____, it gives you satisfaction, pleasure or profit. (para 9)
10. A _____ is a place where young people are kept as punishment for committing a crime. (para 10)
11. _____ is the basic medical treatment you give as soon as someone is injured or becomes ill. (para 12)

Challenge yourself

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

by Colm Flynn

1

Would you like a new challenge? Young people all over Britain and Ireland, and in many other countries, would. They've worked for bronze, silver or gold medals for helping others, learning new skills and challenging themselves.

2

Every year, thousands of 14 to 25-year-olds take part in **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE)** in Britain and **Gaisce – The President's Award, in Ireland**.

3

Both award programmes have similar rules. You must first have an adult who is trained by the award organization to help you. The awards have four parts: a physical skill, a personal skill, community service and an adventure.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

This award was started in 1956 by the Queen's husband – **Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh**. It's for girls and boys between 14 and 25. More than three million people have done the award.

4

Firefighting, fitness, fun

Michelle Burns, 15, from Buckinghamshire in England, did the silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award. For her community service, Michelle joined the fire brigade! "It was the most exciting time of my life! You should have seen me! On my last day, an emergency call came in – a car was on fire. I was allowed to use the hose. It was wonderful to help the community."

5

Michelle joined an athletics club for her physical skill. For her personal skill, Michelle needed some ideas from the DoE website. "There's a big list of things you can do – something for everyone!" She decided to try public speaking.

6

For her expedition, Michelle spent a weekend cycling in Lincolnshire. Now that Michelle has her silver medal, she says she's proud of all her hard work. "I feel much more confident, fitter and healthier from athletics, and proud about my work with the fire brigade. I love telling people about it! Doing the award has made me feel prouder, more confident and better about myself."

Gaisce – The President's Award

Gaisce was started in Ireland in 1985. The **President of Ireland, Mary McAleese**, thinks Gaisce is really important.

Going for gold

7

The highest level is the gold medal. It takes up to three years. Alan Foley, 19, from County Kerry in Ireland, got his gold Gaisce medal after a lot of hard work. One day a week, Alan worked at a special needs school. "It was a wonderful place to work. I did art with the kids, or helped them with reading and writing."

8

For his personal skill, Alan learned how to drive. And for 18 weeks, Alan played tennis – a sport he'd never tried before. "These awards make you try new things – whether it's meeting new people, doing new sports, learning new skills, visiting beautiful places you've never seen before or just having a great adventure."

9

For four days, Alan kayaked down the White Nile River, in Uganda, in eastern Africa. "I looked for the biggest adventure I could find. Working towards the medal really was the hardest thing I had ever done – but also the most rewarding!"

Four challenges

The DoE and Gaisce awards both have four parts. Although the names are a little different, both awards have the same parts.

Duke of Edinburgh	Gaisce	What you can do – just a few examples
Skill	Personal Skill	Learn a musical instrument, a new language, how to build a canoe or how to cook!
Service	Community Involvement	Work with the young, old or sick, or at organizations that help people. Do conservation work. Join the Red Cross.
Physical Recreation	Physical Recreation	Football, rugby, tennis, martial arts, gymnastics, polo, mountain biking, yoga.
Expedition	Adventure	A camping, bicycle or canoe trip from two (bronze) to four (gold) days.

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10

From prison to Potter

After Robert Dunnington, from West Yorkshire, in England, got out of youth prison, he didn't know what to do. Robert, 15, decided to try to get a bronze Duke of Edinburgh's medal. "The award has helped me to make friends and taught me how to help others," Robert told us.

11

For his personal skill, Robert chose reading. "I didn't go to school much," he says. "So I set a goal for myself to read all the *Harry Potter* books. I found it difficult sometimes. But the more I read, the easier it became." Reading has changed Robert. "I once thought I would never read a book," he says, "But within a year, I'd read the whole *Harry Potter* series!"

12

For other parts of the award, Robert started swimming and learnt first aid. And for his adventure, Robert went hill walking in Scotland with other DoE participants. "It was November, so it was wet, windy and cold," he says. "But that didn't stop us from

having fun. One day, we walked along a road. We didn't know where we were going and it was raining. Now, I think we were crazy! But the rain stopped and we came to a beautiful castle next to a river. It looked fantastic."

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"After doing this award, you feel like you've done something wonderful. It was a great experience!"



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3 FIND THE INFORMATION

Complete the chart with information from the article.

name	award	level	personal skill	community involvement / service	physical recreation	expedition / adventure
Michelle						
Alan						
Robert						

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4 TEEN TALK

You should have seen me! We use this phrase to say how good or bad we were at doing something or how exciting or terrible something that we did was.

1. Who uses the phrase *You should have seen me!* in the article, and why?

2. When could you use this phrase?

- a. When doing your homework.
- b. When telling a story or giving a report.
- c. When chatting online.

5 WEBQUEST

Click on *How do I get involved?* at the link below and then watch the two and a half minute slide show about the Duke of Edinburgh award.

<http://www.dofe.org/>

Now answer these questions.

1. What are the titles of the skills categories? _____
2. How is the gold award different? _____
3. What age do you have to be to do each award? _____
4. How long does each award take? _____
5. Can you remember what was on at least four slides from each skills category? _____
6. Complete the slogan: *What will you do?* _____

6 DISCUSSION

Imagine that you are going to do an award. Which level will you try and what will you do for the award? Complete the three sentences for yourself and discuss your choices and the reasons for them in small groups.

I would try to do the _____ award.

For my community service I would _____, and for physical recreation I would _____.

For the personal skill I think I would _____, and for the adventure / expedition I would really like to _____.

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KEY

1

1. A prize or other reward that is given to someone who has achieved something.
2. All of the answers are possible.

2

1. challenge
2. Skills
3. Community
4. hose
5. Public speaking
6. proud
7. confident
8. special needs
9. rewarding
10. youth prison
11. First aid

3

name	award	level	personal skill	community involvement / service	physical recreation	expedition / adventure
Michelle	DoE	silver	public speaking	fire brigade	athletics	cycling in Lincolnshire
Alan	Gaisce	gold	learnt to drive	special needs school	tennis	kayaking in Uganda
Robert	DoE	bronze	reading	first aid	swimming	walking in Scotland

4

1. Michelle – to explain how proud she was of her achievements with the fire brigade
2. b

5

1. volunteering, physical, skills, expedition, residential (gold only)
2. It has a fifth skills category and takes longer (you also have to be at least 16 years old).
3. bronze: 14+ years old, silver: 15+ years old, gold: 16+ years old
4. 6 months; 6–2 months; 12–18 months
5. (own answers)
6. *What will you do? It's up to you!*

Note: As with all internal links, this one may occasionally be broken or unavailable. Should this be the case, type *Duke of Edinburgh Award* into the search field of an online video sharing site such as YouTube where you will find around 200 videos on the topic.

<http://www.youtube.com>