

Challenge yourself

1 BRAINSTORMING

What kinds of things might a teenager get an award for?

2 WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Write the words from the box into the gaps and then find them in the article to check your answers.

first aid special needs toastmaster community good spirits
rewarding courage hose ashamed determination

- _____ is the ability to do something that you know is right or good, even though it is dangerous, frightening or very difficult.
- _____ is another word for society and people in general.
- _____ is what you have when you refuse to let anything prevent you from doing what you have decided to do.
- A _____ is a very long tube for carrying water to a garden or a fire.
- A _____ is someone who introduces the speakers at a formal meal and is in charge of drinking to someone's name in order to express their admiration or their good wishes.
- The term _____ is used to talk about the particular requirements of people who have physical or mental disabilities.
- When something is _____ it gives you satisfaction, pleasure or profit.
- When you feel _____, you feel guilty or embarrassed because you have done something wrong, or because you have not reached a standard that people expect.
- _____ is the basic medical treatment given as soon as someone is injured or becomes ill.
- When you are in _____, your attitude is positive and you are in a good mood.

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CHALLENGE YOURSELF

by Colm Flynn

1 Would you like a new challenge? Would you like to have exciting goals and be recognized when you reach them? Young people all over Britain and Ireland – and in many other countries – have done this. 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 their countries' award programmes. In Britain, this is called **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE)**. And in Ireland, it's **Gaisce – The President's Award** ('Gaisce' [gæskə] is the Irish word for 'courage').

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 completed the award.

3 Young people hear about these awards through schools and youth centres, from friends or on TV. Both programmes have similar rules. You must first have an adult who is trained by the award organization to help you. In Ireland, this person is called a PAL (President's Award Leader) and in Britain it is called a Leader.

4 The awards have four parts: a physical skill, a personal skill, community service and an adventure. To follow your work, you keep a logbook and talk often with your Leader. You get the award through hard work and determination.

5 Firefighting, fitness, fun

Michelle Burns, 15, from Buckinghamshire in England, did the silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award. From a friend, Michelle got the perfect idea for her community service – she joined the fire brigade! "It was the most exciting time of my life! You should have seen me! Every morning, I really wanted to get to the fire station. 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."

Gaisce – The President's Award

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

6 Michelle joined an athletics club for her physical skill. "The club went running early every Sunday morning. I was not really happy about how early it was but I enjoyed it." For her personal skill, Michelle needed some ideas from the DoE website. "There's a huge list of things you can do – something for everyone!" She decided to try public speaking. "I usually

felt nervous when I had to speak in front of the class at school. So I joined a toastmasters' club – they teach people how to speak well and confidently in public."

7 For her expedition, Michelle spent a weekend cycling in Lincolnshire. "It was great cycling around the hills and countryside. Lincolnshire is a beautiful area." 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."

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.

8 Going for gold

The highest level is the gold medal. It takes up to three years. Alan Foley, 19, from County Kerry in Ireland, earned 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 and it really opened my eyes. Young people are all the same. The ones I worked with had some special needs and

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disabilities. I did art with the kids, or helped them with reading and writing. Sometimes I had to be patient but it was worth it."

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For his personal skill, Alan decided to learn 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."

10

For four days, Alan paddled his kayak down the White Nile River, in Uganda, in eastern Africa. "I looked for the biggest adventure I could find. I'd had some experience in kayaking, but nothing could have prepared me for this adventure. Working towards the medal really was the hardest thing I had ever done – but also the most rewarding!"

11

From prison to Potter

After Robert Dunnington, from West Yorkshire, in England, got out of youth prison, he didn't know what to do. To rebuild his life, 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.

12

For his personal skill, Robert chose reading. "My education hadn't been great. I didn't go to school much," he says. "Sometimes I was ashamed of that. 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. And I realized I was enjoying the books. I couldn't stop!" Reading has changed

Robert. "I've got a lot more self confidence," he says. "I once thought I would never read a book. But within a year, I'd read the whole *Harry Potter* series!"

13

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. But we kept each other in good spirits with songs and jokes. When I look back now, I think we were crazy! But the rain stopped and we came to a beautiful castle next to a river. It looked fantastic."

14

"After doing this award, you feel like you've done something wonderful. I feel happy with myself because I went on this big adventure. I made friends who didn't care that I'd been to prison. They liked me for who I am now. It was a great experience!"



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3 FIND THE INFORMATION

1. Complete the chart with information from the article.

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

2. How do the teenagers feel now about the things they did? What positive effects did the awards have on them?

Michelle: _____

Alan: _____

Robert: _____

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4 TEEN TALK

You should have seen me! We use this phrase to emphasize 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 are you most likely to use this phrase?

- When doing your homework.
- When telling a story or giving a report.
- 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:

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

6 DISCUSSION

Imagine that you are going to take one of the awards. Which level will you attempt and what will you choose to do for the award?

Use the information in Task 5 and the link below to help you make your decision.

<http://www.intaward.org/about-the-award/>

Discuss your choices and the reasons for them in small groups.

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KEY

1

Some possible answers:

Awards for good marks at school, acting, writing, sports, bravery, physical achievement, helping others, inventing something, etc. ...

2

1. Courage
2. Community
3. Determination
4. hose
5. toastmaster
6. special needs
7. rewarding
8. ashamed
9. First aid
10. good spirits

3

1.

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

2. Michelle feels fitter and healthier, proud of her work with the fire brigade and generally prouder and more confident about herself.

Alan has tried new things, challenged himself and done some very rewarding things.

Robert feels happy with himself, has started to rebuild his life and has made new friends who didn't care that he'd been to prison and who like him for who he is.

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, 6–12 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, you can 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/>