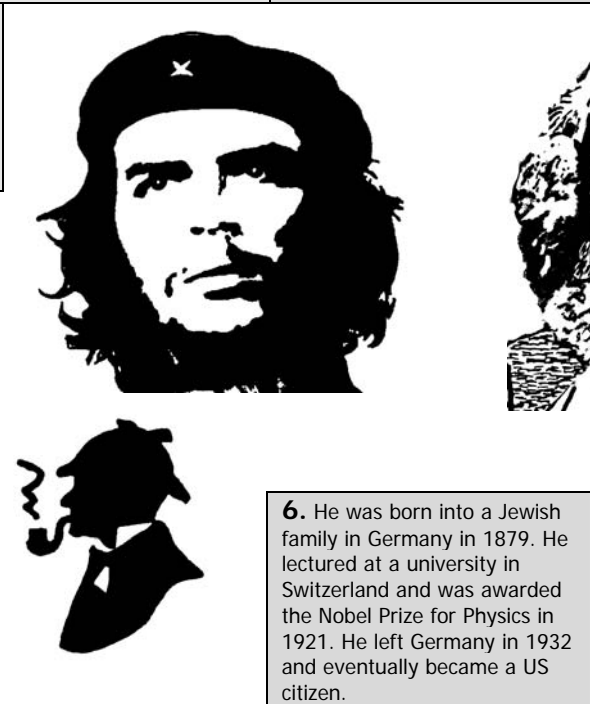





unit four

Public figures *Make a list of 10 famous people in your country, and write a brief explanation of why they are well-known.*

Public figure	Why are they well-known?

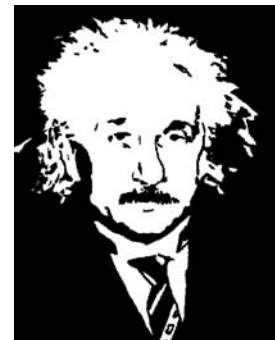
Famous people? *Read these short texts and guess which famous person is being described, but be careful - not all the texts have matching pictures.*

<p>1. This composer was born in Salzburg, Austria in 1756. He produced an incredible amount of work during his short lifetime, and wrote his first composition at the age of five.</p>	<p>2. A fictional detective created in 1887. He was a very good friend of Dr John Watson, and was well known for using his excellent deductive powers to solve crimes. He lived at 221B Baker Street in London.</p>	<p>3. He was a singer, born in Tupelo, Mississippi in 1935. He spent two years in the American Army and starred in many films. He died at his home <i>Graceland</i> in 1977 at the age of 42.</p>	<p>4. Born in 1955 in Seattle, USA, he excelled at school, particularly in maths and science. He co-founded the computer technology company <i>Microsoft</i> in 1975, and is now considered to be the richest man in the world.</p>
<p>5. Born in 1809 in England, he studied medicine and then biology. He was part of a scientific study in the South Pacific, and is best known for his book <i>On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection</i>.</p>			
		<p>6. He was born into a Jewish family in Germany in 1879. He lectured at a university in Switzerland and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. He left Germany in 1932 and eventually became a US citizen.</p>	<p>7. She was an American film star. She was born in 1926. She was also a singer, and she was famous for her blonde hair. She died in 1962, but we still don't know if it was suicide or murder.</p>
<p>8. She was born in Russia in 1987, but moved to Florida at the age of seven to attend a tennis academy. In 2004 she defeated Serena Williams to win Wimbledon, and at the end of 2006 she was the highest paid female athlete in the world.</p>	<p>9. He was born in Venice in 1254. He travelled to China, and wrote an account of his travels which was widely read, although some people have questioned his story as it does not mention several important features, such as the Great Wall.</p>	<p>10. He was born in Argentina in 1928, and completed his medical studies at the University of Buenos Aires. He helped Fidel Castro overthrow the Batista regime in Cuba, but was killed in Bolivia in 1966 while trying to incite the people to rebel against the government.</p>	<p>11. Born in Liverpool in 1940, he studied art and formed a group called The Quarrymen, which (after a name change) went on to become the most famous group in the world. He died after being shot outside his apartment block in 1980.</p>

The Vikings

Norse, the language of the Danes had the same Germanic roots as Old English, so the Danes and Saxons could understand each other more or less. The effect of these two cultures coming together was that the language of Old English became more simplified.

public figures & role models



Role models

The influence of role models on young people is generally accepted today. By 'role model' we mean a person who has an impact on another person either by exerting influence, or simply by being admirable. So a role model could be a parent, a teacher, a famous sportsperson, a pop star, an actor or even a fictional character from a TV programme. We often hear it said that boys growing up in single-parent families with

their mother lack a positive male role model, or that children from ethnic minorities don't see enough successful role models of their own ethnic background in the media. In the nineties the female pop supergroup the Spice Girls, with their slogan 'girl power', were regarded as excellent role models for young girls because they showed them what they could achieve in life. In Britain even the government thought it a

good idea to promote positive role models for young people, but problems can arise when the role models start doing things of which society disapproves. For example, it was feared that the number of teenage pregnancies would soar when members of the Spice Girls started having babies. Similar fears occur when sportsmen or pop stars are found to be taking drugs. So are young people likely to copy everything their heroes

do, or can we credit them with a little common sense as well? Perhaps the most paranoid view on the subject of role models came from the USA, when a conservative religious leader called Rev. Jerry Falwell suggested that Tinky Winky, one of the Teletubbies (a TV show aimed at pre-school children) was promoting a gay lifestyle because he is purple (apparently the gay pride colour) and sometimes carries a red handbag.

Think about people who you admire, and who have influenced you in some way. Write your top five below, together with your reasons for choosing them.

My role models

Name	Why I admire them

The Vikings

The influence the Vikings had on our language can still be seen today in place names ending in *-by*, which originally meant a farm, then a village, as in *Derby* and *Grimsby*. Words such as *get*, *hit*, *leg*, *low*, *skin*, *ill* and *want* are all of Viking origin.

Allegiances

As individuals in society we develop allegiances to various social groups, such as family, school, club, and religion, through processes of socialization. For example, if you wear the shirt of your local football team you are identifying with all the other supporters of that team; if you wear the shirt of your national team you are identifying with a much larger group of people.

Which of these groups do you feel part of?

People of the same age group

People of the same sex

People of the same educational background

People with the same political views

People of the same family

People of the same colour

People from the same school

People of the same religion

People from the same town

People of the same nationality

People from the same continent

People from the same province/region



What would you feel happy talking to them about?

What sort of opinions, prejudices or beliefs would you share? Give one example of each.

Which groups do you feel strongly that you are a member of? Name any not listed.

What are the positive and negative aspects of identifying with groups of people in this way?

Stereotypes *Read the text below and discuss the points raised.*

It is perfectly natural to form the allegiances described above, but there is always a danger that we begin to generalise about people outside these social groups and form negative opinions of them. For example, the supporters of a rival football team, members of another religion, or people of another nationality. National stereotyping is an extension of this, but is also affected by historical factors. For example, other nationalities will prob-

ably regard the British as one social group and attribute certain characteristics to us: very polite, badly dressed, eat a very poor diet, drink too much, etc. but within the British Isles (where there has been great political rivalry over the centuries) there exist even more regional stereotypes such as the arrogant Englishman, the mean Scotsman and the stupid Irishman. Of course, it is not just in Britain where these kinds of stereotypes exist; almost every

country has a near neighbour whose inhabitants have become the butt of many bad jokes. Thankfully we now realise that this kind of generalisation about national identities is at best simplistic and at worst offensive. Apparently innate national characteristics, the argument goes, are an illusion, a fairground mirror which shows observers nothing but distorted images of their own desires, fears and preconceptions. One joke which plays on national

stereotypes is this definition of Heaven and Hell: Heaven is where the police are British, the cooks are French, the mechanics are German, the lovers are Italian and it is all organised by the Swiss. Hell is where the police are German, the cooks are English, the mechanics are French, the lovers are Swiss, and it is all organised by the Italians. Few people would find this offensive because it highlights positive characteristics as well as negatives ones.

The Forbes Celebrity 100

Forbes is an American business magazine which every year produces a list of the top 100 most powerful celebrities. The list is compiled using a complex formula based on income, media attention, TV and radio mentions, magazine covers and popularity on the Net. Here is the top ten of the Forbes Celebrity 100 for 2006:

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Tom Cruise | 2. The Rolling Stones | 3. Oprah Winfrey | 4. U2 | 5. Tiger Woods |
| 6. Steven Spielberg | 7. Howard Stern | 8. 50 cent | 9. Cast of The Sopranos | 10. Dan Brown |

The 100

In 1978 Michael H. Hart published a book which was a list of the 100 people he considered to have most influenced human history. It was reprinted with some changes in 1992, and this is the top 15 from the 1992 version. *Do you agree with him? Do you know why these people are on the list?*

- | | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 Mohammed | 2 Isaac Newton | 3 Jesus Christ | 4 Buddha | 5 Confucius | 6 St Paul | 7 Ts'ai Lun |
| 8 Gutenberg | 9 Columbus | 10 Albert Einstein | 11 Louis Pasteur | 12 Galileo Galilei | 13 Aristotle | |

LANGUAGE LEARNING ADVICE

Try and do something which involves using English every day, even if it's just for an hour or even half an hour. This could be just listening to songs in English, but don't be passive - get the lyrics from the internet (just type the title of the song and the word 'lyrics' into a search engine and you should find them) and learn the words and sing along.

