

Before You Start

"In the future everyone will be world-famous for fifteen minutes."
Andy Warhol, American painter

"Fame is an illusive thing – here today, gone tomorrow."
Henry Miller, American author

Most people are known throughout their lives only by their families, their friends, their neighbors, the people they work with, and a few others. Other people appear in the media and in history books, and they are known by millions of people around the world. Is it good to be famous?



A Which of these quotations express a positive opinion of fame?

1. ___ "Being a sex symbol was rather like being a convict." (Raquel Welch)
2. ___ "Sometimes I wish I weren't famous." (Tammy Wynette)
3. ___ "Don't confuse fame with success. Madonna is one; Helen Keller is the other." (Erma Bombeck)
4. ___ "I want to be famous everywhere." (Luciano Pavarotti)
5. ___ "Heartthrobs are a dime a dozen." (Brad Pitt)
6. ___ "Fame is proof that the people are gullible." (Ralph Waldo Emerson)
7. ___ "It is better to be a has-been than a never-was." (Cecil Parkinson)
8. ___ "A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized." (Fred Allen)
9. ___ "Fame is the perfume of heroic deeds." (Socrates)

B Discuss the quotations with your partner.

What Do You Know?

A Choose three quotations from the list in *Before You Start*. Continue each quotation with one or two sentences that explain the author's point of view.

Example: "Being a sex symbol was rather like being a convict. *I couldn't leave my house without being surrounded by a hungry pack of photographers. I probably ate better than the average prisoner, but I didn't have much more freedom.*"

B In the 1990s, Madonna was a popular singer. Who was Helen Keller? According to Erma Bombeck, how does Helen Keller's fame differ from Madonna's?

C Brad Pitt was a popular actor in the late 90s. He was thought to be extremely handsome—a real "heartthrob." How can Brad Pitt's comment help keep famous movie stars from becoming overly pleased with their fame?

D Finish each of the following stories. Write an ending that agrees with the statements by Andy Warhol and Henry Miller in *Before You Start*.

1. Harry Brown was the sole winner of the \$3,000,000 lottery. Within a year,
_____.
2. Candy Cane was the hottest star in Hollywood after her first movie broke all box office records.
_____.
3. Up until election day, Franklin Lopez led in the polls, and every major newspaper and television network interviewed him daily.
_____.
4. Everyone at the beach was reading *Murder in Santiago*, last summer's best-selling novel that brought fame and fortune to its author, Carmen Torres. _____.

E With a partner, choose a famous person from the present or the past – for example, Albert Einstein, Agatha Christie, Mozart, or Picasso. Prepare a two-minute presentation to the class in which you talk about the famous person. One partner will talk about the positive aspects of the person's fame, and the other partner will talk about the negative aspects.

Planning tips:

- Begin by making a list of what the person might consider the advantages and disadvantages of being famous.
- Think of examples, real or imaginary, that illustrate the points on your list.
- Finally, think about how to organize your ideas and present them in a lively and interesting way to the class.

F Biographies

Choose a famous scientist, political leader, or author who is no longer alive. Look for information about the person in an encyclopedia or on the Internet. Then write five factual sentences about the person.

Words to help you:

born	family	moved	wrote
date of birth	childhood	fame	remember
place of birth	studied	success	history
name at birth	worked	tragedy	died
parents	got married	invented	
generation	children	created	