8th March is [International Women’s Day](https://www.internationalwomensday.com/) and one of the aims of the day is to

mark women’s achievements. That women’s achivements are recognised in

the same way as men’s is a step on the way to a gender equal world. The

reading lesson below, which you can use with your intermediate teens has

been written with this goal in mind. Feel free to adapt it or add to it in any

way you see fit.

1. Think of somebody you admire. Why do you admire them? Tell your partner.  
   Students’ own ideas
2. Look at these four women. Do you know who they are? Do you know what they do? If not, what do you think?  
   Katalin Kariko – scientist. Carolina Marin – badminton player  
   Malala Yousafzai – activitst. Sheryl Sandberg – business executive



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1. Read the four texts. Were you right in your predictions?

**Katalin Kariko**

Have you heard of Katalin Kariko? She’s a Hungarian scientist born in 1955 who has spent her life researching genetic code. Does that sound important? It certainly is.

Katalin Kariko has overcome many challenges. She began researching genetic code at university in Hungary but was sacked. She got a job at Temple University, Philadelphia in the the USA, but in Communist Hungary people were not allowed to take money out of the country, so she had to hide her money in a teddy bear when she left! At university in Philadeliphia she suffered sexism, with people asking who her supervisor was when she was actually in charge of the laboratory.

Ultimately, her life’s work on genetic code has been used to create both the Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna Coronavirus vaccines. These are being used around the world to stop the pandemic: Kariko’s work is helping to save millions of lives.

**Carolina Marin**

Carolina Marin is a Spanish badminton player. She is the Olympic, World and European Champion.

When she was young, Carolina had a passion for both Flamenco dancing and Badminton, but chose the latter. From Huelva in the south of Spain, she moved away from her family at 14 to go to the Center of High Performance in Madrid, the capital.

Apart from leaving her family, Carolina has overcome other challenges, such as having to dedicate most of her life to training and suffering serious injury. She tore her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), which required ten hours rehabilitation a day. But she never gives up. Her motto is ‘I can because I think I can’. She has also said ‘I believe talent is a small percentage and the rest is work, work, work.’ And she’s not afraid to be aggressive: ‘On the court I'm a killer!’ she says.

**Malala Yousafzai**

Malala Yousafzai was born in Pakistan and went to a girls’ school in her village in Swat Valley. From an early age she was an activist supporting women’s education. However, when the Taliban took control of her village, they ordered her school to be shut down as they believed girls should not receive an education. Malala kept going to school. One day, a Taliban gunman shot her in the head and she was rushed to hospital in a critical condition.

Thankfully, Malala survived the assassination attempt. She now lives in the UK and continues her activism. She has founded the ‘Malala fund’ – a non-profit organisation to give girls everywhere the future they deserve. She has also won a Nobel Peace Prize, the youngest person ever to win the award.

**Sheryl Sandberg**

Sheryl Sandberg is an American billionaire and philanthropist. She is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Facebook and has worked for Google and the US government. She is also the founder of leanin.org, an organisation that helps women achieve their ambitions.

When Sandberg talks about equality between men and women she uses statistics: there are fewer women than men leading governments or major companies. Women are much more likely to take responsibility for childcare or domestic work. But Sandberg is working to change this.

She encourages women not to underestimate themselves and she fights against bias in the workplace. She has two young children, one boy and one girl and she wants them to grow up in a world with equal opportunities.

1. Who
2. Plays sport to an elite level and has won multiple titles? Carolina Marin
3. Is a highly successful business executive? Sheryl Sandberg
4. Made scientific breakthroughs that are saving lives? Katalin Kariko
5. Survived attempted murder and continues to fight for equality? Malala Yousafzai
6. Find the word or short phrase in the texts:

**Katalin Kariko**  
investigating - researching  
removed from a job - sacked  
permitted – allowed  
boss/manager – supervisor  
responsible for – in charge of

**Carolina Marin**  
a strong liking for – a passion for  
has surmounted other difficulties – has overcome other challenges  
abandon something – give up  
natural ability - talent

**Malala Yousafzai**Someone who supports action for a cause – activist

close permanently – shut down  
taken quickly - rushed  
the prize – the award

**Sheryl Sandberg**Someone who donates money to good causes - philanthropist  
reach their goals – achieve their ambitions  
prejudice - bias  
looking after children - childcare  
housework – domestic work

1. What challenges have each of the four women overcome?  
   Suggested answers:   
   Katalin Kariko – sacked from her first job, it was difficult for her to leave move abroad, she suffered sexism in the workplace  
   Carolina Marin – leaving her family at a young age, spending lots of time training, suffering serious injury  
   Malala Yousafzai – going to school when the taliban tried to stop her, surviving an assassination attempt  
   Sheryl Sandberg – reaching the top of a male-dominated business world
2. What have each of the women achieved?  
   Suggested answers:

Katalin Kariko – done scientific research that has directly led to the creation of two successful Coronavirus vaccines, which are saving lives.  
Carolina Marin – champion badminton player: World, Olympic and European titles.

Malala Yousafzai – Working to keep girls in school around the world, winning Nobel Peace Prize.  
Sheryl Sandberg – Highly successful business executive, billionaire, founding an organisation to stop gender bias.

1. If you could follow in the footsteps of one of the four, who would it be? Why?  
   Students’ own answers
2. Presentation time! Prepare a one-minute presentation on a woman you admire: why do you admire them? What challenges have they overcome? What have they achieved?  
   Students’ own answers. You might like to talk to the students about or even model what a good presentation would involve- You could include content, such as covering the points outlined in the question. You might assess language, such as varied vocabulary, accuracy and the use of linking words for structure. You could include presenation, such as looking at your audience, using body language and facial gestures and sounding interested.