

YOU ARE AWESOME

TEACHER NOTES

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Before Reading

○ Share the front cover with your pupils – discuss and predict what the book might be about. Does the title give any clues?

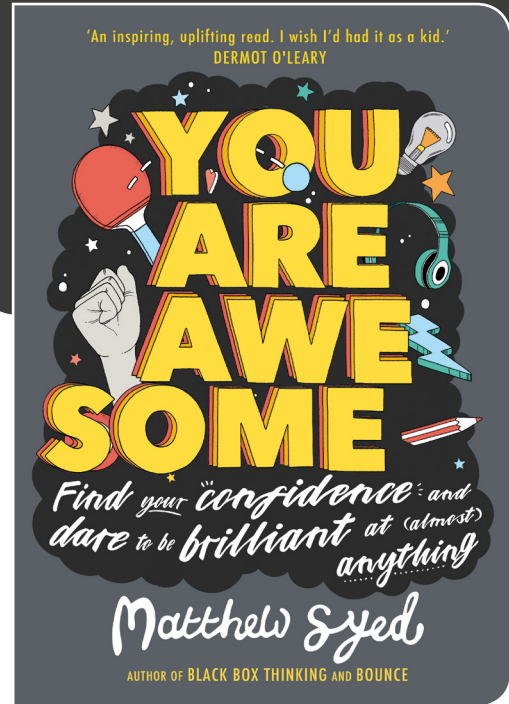
Now read the back cover blurb together. What is the book about?

How does the front and back cover inspire you to go ahead and read the book?

○ ‘Getting good at stuff is not as hard as you might think.’ (p.8)

Give pupils different scenarios – ask them to suggest strategies they could put in place to help improve each scenario.

○ Using pages 8–9, summarise what the book is about in no more than 200 words.



While Reading

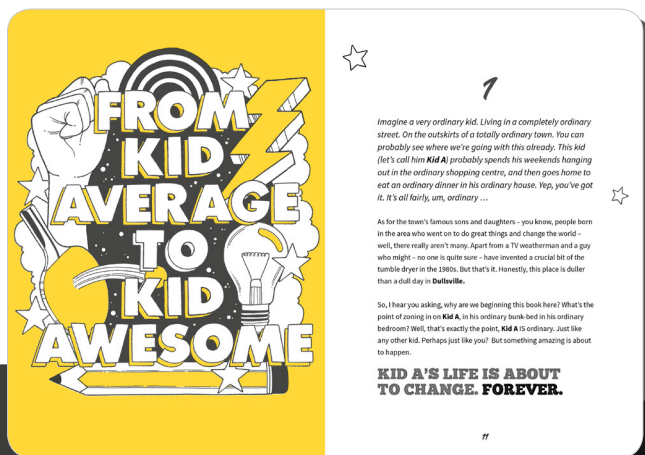
ONGOING ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

○ Keep a reading journal to record any thoughts, ideas, viewpoints and interesting strategies and ideas relevant to you.

○ Ask questions and explore answers through further reading, research and discussion.

○ Find examples of key vocabulary and phrases used by the author which support the need for a ‘Growth Mindset’ to achieve your dreams.

○ Collect and explore the meaning of unfamiliar words.



Read the chapters in order, and ask students to tackle the following questions

CHAPTER 1: FROM KID AVERAGE TO KID AWESOME

- Matthew Syed uses repetition to emphasise his point. Find examples of this within Chapter 1 and beyond. What effect does this have?
- Do you think all humans have 'superpowers'? Discuss. What would you class as your 'superpower'? If you had a 'superpower', what would it be and why?
- Explain the phrase 'Kid A has reached a big fork in his life.' (p.13)
- Why does Kid Average turn a 'fancy shade of beetroot.'? (p.15) How is he feeling at this moment in his life? Why? Describe a time when you have



CHAPTER 2: WHAT'S HOLDING ME BACK?

- How can you 'overcome' anxieties and worries to ensure you have the 'confidence to deal with all the changes and challenges that life can bring'? (p.33)
- Which anxieties and worries might make you give up? List these and discuss with a partner. Did you come up with similar/different things? Discuss why this might have happened.
- The author went to a debate club to become a confident public speaker. Pick a topic to debate in class. What makes a good speaker? Create some 'top tips' for anyone who wants to develop this skill.

felt humiliated. What was your response? What did you do? Would you respond differently if this happened to you again? Why?

- Kid Average shows he had a 'Fixed Mindset' by responding in such a way as 'I've had ENOUGH!', 'I'm no good at it' and 'He's bound to be better than me.' (p.16)

Think of a situation in which you might give up easily, or without trying. What could you do instead? What would you say differently if you had a positive 'Growth Mindset'? Make a list and discuss with your classmates.

How is Kid Average different to Kid Awesome? How are they similar? Collate your ideas into a Venn diagram.

- Is it good to learn from your mistakes? Discuss, and use quotes from the text to support your answer.
- Do you believe dreams can come true? Discuss. What are your dreams? How do you plan to achieve them? Do you agree that the right type of mindset can help you to achieve your potential and dreams?
- What was the author's secret to success? Discuss the role of adults in his story – which adults were positive role models and how did they help the author grow in confidence in order to achieve his long term goals?

- What does it mean to be 'happy in our own skin'? (p.48)

○ Who is Carol Dweck? What has she researched? Summarise what she has found out from her research in no more than 500 words.

- What are the 'Top Ten Fixed Mindset' thoughts?
- Look at pages 56–57, and check your mindset. Have you got a Fixed Mindset or a Growth Mindset? How do you know?

○ *Before reading p.59, give the pupils the statements about mindsets. Sort them in two categories – 'Fixed Mindset' and 'Growth Mindset'. Check your answers with the book. Do they match?*

- Over to You: The Worry Jar

Complete the activity given by the author on p.61.

CHAPTER 3: YOUR FANTASTIC, ELASTIC (& PLASTIC) BRAIN

○ Read the chapter, and create a 'Did You Know?' poster to share the interesting facts about the brain.

○ Write a glossary to provide definitions of the scientific vocabulary used to explain how the brain works.

○ What is neuroplasticity?

○ What is The Knowledge exam? Who has to take it? Why?

What does the research into the brains of taxi drivers and bus drivers tell us?

How does this prove that we can all develop a 'Growth Mindset'?

○ When do you create more neural connections? Explain why.

Do these connections ever disappear? What could be the impact of this be?

○ After reading this chapter, give a brief explanation of how the brain can be trained to 'grow its capacity for learning new things.' (p.64)

○ Over to You: Your Worst-Case Scenario

Try something new! (p.73)

CHAPTER 5: GENIUS OR WHAT?

○ What can become 'obstacles on the path to awesome'? (p.95) How could you overcome these?

○ Do you agree with the quote from Jay-Z that 'You learn more in failure than you ever do in success'? (p.99) Give reasons and evidence to support your judgement.

○ Before reading p.112, quickly write as many words and phrases that a successful individual or team would associate with their achievements as you can think of. Do they match the ones in the book?

○ Over To You: Getting Good at Stuff – Your Essential Toolkit

What key steps are needed to succeed? (p.114–115)

CHAPTER 4: PRACTICE MAKES AWESOME

○ What are people good at (without trying)? Why?

Can you think of anything else that people learn to do without trying?

○ Why is it important to challenge yourself? Discuss in groups.

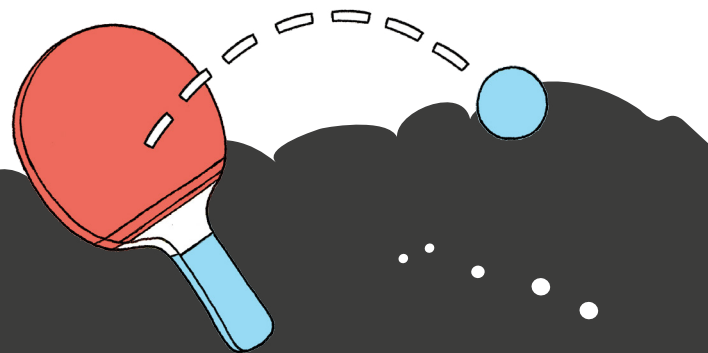
How will this help you in the future?

○ Is feedback on how to improve a positive or a negative thing? Discuss.

○ Why is it important 'to be honest in your view of how you're doing'? (p.91)

○ Over To You: Practise, Practise, Practise

Think of three ways you could practise something in a way that would challenge/stretch yourself. (p.91)



CHAPTER 6: SMALL STEPS AND GIANT LEAPS

○ What are Marginal Gains?

○ What are the benefits of a Marginal Gains approach?

○ What can we learn from the GB women's hockey team's Marginal Gains?

○ What is the key to a Marginal Gains approach?

○ Over To You: Getting Those Gains

Make a Marginal Gains plan to help you improve and achieve something you are working on. (p.133)





MISSION IMPOSSIBLE? NOPE!

CHAPTER 7: UNDER PRESSURE

- What does 'everything went pear-shaped' mean? (p.136)
- What is 'choking'?

What can trigger a choke?

How can you avoid it happening to you? What advice does the author give?

Summarise the concept of developing a 'Growth Mindset' for someone who is new to the idea.

Make a list of different recommended strategies.

- Over To You: Your Worst-Case Scenario

What would you do if something went wrong? (p.143)

CHAPTER 8: DON'T STOP ME NOW

- What does the author mean by the phrase 'sometimes life throws you a curve ball'? (p.148)
- Why is it important to 'take a risk, dare to fall and give it your all'? (p.150)
- Now you have read the book, discuss how the author has inspired you for the future.

In the Classroom

- Set up some challenges in the classroom to develop determination, perseverance and resilience.
- Create a display on 'Growth Mindset'.
- Give out certificates celebrating successes and improvement over time.
- Provide opportunities to embed learning through practice.

Just bring awesome!

KID AWESOME

How he's revised to the point where *Kid A's* story reached that fork in the path. He's facing his dad across the net, remember! *Kid A's* first attempt at hitting the ball goes seriously badly wrong. The second try is worse and the third attempt results in a bruise the size of the table-tennis ball on his elbow. Unlike *Kid Average*, however, he doesn't give up.

Instead he feels some kind of knot in his stomach. At first, he thinks it might be the two chocolate bars he had at afternoon break. But that's not it. It's something else. He realises that he wants to get up right, to get a bit better, and to show his dad that he can win at least one point off him.

OK, so he knows he's got some improving to do. Actually, that is the understatement of the millennium. He has got absolutely stacks of improving to do, but instead of putting down the bat and burying his head back into his laptop, he tells himself that, if he tries, in time he might just do a bit better. After all, what's the worst that could happen? And at the very least his mum might dial down the excitable frog moves. So, rather than quitting right there and right then, he picks up the ball and tries again.

*And again.
And again.
And again.
And again...*

[OK, so you get the point...]

An hour later, he's yet to score a point against his dad. But he's quite a bit better, there have been no further ping-pong-induced injuries and he's learning from the experience. Every now and then, he even

After Reading

THEME: FIXED MINDSET V GROWTH MINDSET

- What are the main differences between having a 'Fixed Mindset' and a 'Growth Mindset'? Discuss.
- Find quotes from the text describing a 'Fixed Mindset' and a 'Growth Mindset'.
- What emotions might you feel if you have a 'Fixed' or a 'Growth Mindset'?
- What have you learnt from the book about the benefits of developing a 'Growth Mindset'?
- Find quotes from the book which highlight the importance of developing a 'Growth Mindset'.
- How does the author show that your mindset can shape the world in which you live?
- Can you only fulfill your potential if you have a 'natural talent'? Discuss.
- Why do you think the author has chosen to write the book. What was the main purpose?
- Think about how *You are Awesome* is organised. Discussion points might include: use of chapters, layout, use of stories, font style, bold type, illustrations and captions, writing style, how the author addresses the reader to make them feel the book is relevant and important to them, techniques used by the author to ensure the reader keeps turning the page.
- Choose a passage and/or a chapter and rewrite it as if the book was written as a more formal information book. Compare the original with the newly written passage and/or chapter and discuss how this change of narrative style would impact the reader.
- Why does the author share 'Famous Failures' with the reader?
- How and why does the author add humour to the book? Can you find some in the text?

○ Can you relate to any of the personal stories shared in the book? Explain your story to your peers.

○ Create a 'true or false' quiz based on the information given in the book. Get one of your peers to read the book and take your quiz.

○ Look at the illustrations in the book. Do you like the style? How are they similar/different to illustrations you have come across when reading other books?

What colours are used? Discuss why these colours might have been chosen.

Create extra illustrations for the book in a similar style or choose one part of the book to illustrate using your own style. This could be in the form of a painting, drawing or even a photograph.

Further Reading

Read a recommended book on 'Growth Mindset'.

○ Look at the quotes from famous people mentioned in the book. Research their achievements and write a short biography about your chosen person.

Michael Jordan (basketball player)

Thomas Edison (inventor of the lightbulb)

Steve Jobs (boss of Apple)

Winston Churchill (Prime Minister)

Benjamin Franklin (one of the founders of America, politician, author and scientist)

J.K. Rowling (best-selling author of the Harry Potter books)

Jay-Z (multi-Grammy-award winning rapper)

Mozart (musician/composer)

Serena Williams (tennis player)

The Bronte sisters (authors)

David Beckham (footballer)

Find your confidence and
dare to be brilliant at (almost)
anything