



The secret of success



Think about one successful person.

1) How and why did these people become successful?

2) Do you think they have a special talent, or have they just been lucky?

3) What advice would you give to someone who wants to be as successful as these people?

Work in pairs and discuss the quotes about success

'I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.'

Thomas Edison

'Success doesn't come to you ... you go to it.'

Marva Collins

'The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes.'

Benjamin Disraeli

- "Develop success from failures." Dale Carnegie
- "Don't aim for success if you want it; just do what you love and believe in, and it will come naturally." David Frost
- "Failure is success if we learn from it." Malcolm Forbes
- "Formula for success: rise early, work hard, strike oil." J. Paul Getty
- "I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody." Bill Cosby
- "Action is the foundational key to all success." Pablo Picasso
- "I've failed over and over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed." Michael Jordan

3A Read the introduction to an article about success. What do you think the secret of success is?

What is the secret of success?

BBC Focus Magazine investigates

What makes the most successful people on the planet different from the rest of us? If we were more like Albert Einstein or John Lennon, surely we could enjoy the same level of success they did. In truth, however, we pay too much attention to what high achievers are like, and not enough to where they come from and the opportunities they had along the way. In his new book, Malcolm Gladwell reveals that there is one factor – so obvious that it's right under our noses – that all successful people share . . .

C Listen again and complete the summary.

In his new book, *The Outliers*, Gladwell argues that Beethoven, The Beatles and Bill Gates all have one thing in ¹_____. They ²_____ what they do, and they practised a lot. In fact, Gladwell discovered that in order to be truly ³_____ in anything, it is necessary to practise the ⁴_____ for more than ⁵_____ hours. These people have done that, which is why he believes they have been so ⁶_____.

3A Are the statements true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 If we want to learn from Bill Gates' achievements, we need to look at where he came from and the opportunities he had.
- 2 If you're going to be world-class at something, you need to have parents who are high achievers.
- 3 The Beatles played all-night concerts in Hamburg, and this helped them to master their craft.
- 4 To become a successful tennis player, you need a very talented teacher, and enough money to pay for your tuition.



- An influential author
- A hugely successful person
- To pay less attention to ...
- To practice/ a practise
- Do a gig – perform/ be on a stage
- To master a skill
- A prodigy
- To put the hours in

4 A Complete sentences 1–8 with the phrases in the box.

work hard (at something) be a high achiever
have a natural talent for ... focus on
have the opportunity (to do something)
believe in yourself master (a skill / a craft)
(be) world-class (at something)

- 1 You will never achieve anything, if you don't work hard at it.
- 2 I don't _____ languages. I find them difficult to learn.
- 3 If you _____ and your abilities, then you can achieve anything.
- 4 It's amazing what children can achieve if they _____ to try different skills.
- 5 If you want to _____ any skill, you have to practise it regularly.
- 6 I'm sure she will _____. She is determined to do well at everything.
- 7 When I really want something, I try to _____ my goal.
- 8 She'll beat all the women in the world this year. She's a _____ gymnast.

B Find phrases above to match meanings 1–6.

- 1 be sure about your ideas/abilities
- 2 only think about one objective
- 3 become very skilled at something
- 4 have the chance to do something
- 5 be ambitious and successful in your work or studies
- 6 to be one of the best in the world

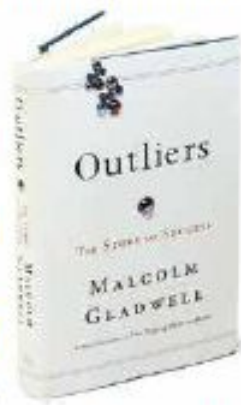
- Do you agree that if you practice something enough, you can be a world-class at it, or you need to have a natural talent for it?
- What's the key to success?



Why are some people **successful** and others aren't? What's the secret of success? Author Malcolm Gladwell thinks he knows.

Many of Gladwell's ideas appear in his **social psychology**

bestseller *Outliers*. The popular view is that some of us are born talented and others aren't. But Gladwell thinks that this is just an **excuse for not trying**... and if you really want to **be good at** something, you have to work at it. "Practice *isn't* the thing you do once you're good," Gladwell writes. "It's the thing you do that *makes* you good."



Central to the book is the "10,000-hour rule". It means that if you want **to be among the best** in the world, you need to practise something for 10,000 hours. That's **the equivalent of** three hours a day for 10 years. For example, The Beatles played live in Hamburg more than 1,200 times between 1960 and 1964, which is more than 10,000 hours of playing time. And when Microsoft chairman Bill Gates was 13, he was **given access to** a high school computer (one of the few available in the country), allowing him to practise computer programming for more than (yes, you **guessed** it!) 10,000 hours.



GLOSSARY

successful *adj*

if you are "successful", you have a lot of money or fame (or both)

social psychology *n*

the study of people and the relationships between them

a bestseller *n*

a very popular book which has sold lots of copies

the equivalent of *exp*

the same as

to give access to *exp*

if you are "given access to something", you have permission to use it

to guess *vb*

if you "guess" correctly, you give the correct answer

The interesting thing is that success has **nothing to do with** intelligence. Take the example of Christopher Langan, who's mentioned in the book. He's got an **IQ** of between 195 and 210 (Albert Einstein's IQ was estimated to have been between 160 and 180). As a boy at school, Langan was able to take an exam in a foreign language he'd never studied and pass it after just **skim-reading** a text book for three minutes. However, Langan never graduated from university, and worked in **labour-intensive** jobs his whole life. This proves that intelligence alone will not **lead to** success – you need hard work, **support**, finance and opportunities. Gladwell adds, "No one – not rock stars, not professional athletes, not software billionaires, and not even geniuses – ever makes it alone."

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nothing to do with *exp*

if A has "nothing to do with" B, there is no connection between A and B

However, it isn't just a question of time and support. Even after you've **put in** your 10,000 hours of practice, you still need one other key ingredient – luck. So, you could be the most amazing guitarist in the world, but unless you're lucky enough to play in front of a record company **executive** who sees a way of **exploiting** that talent, you aren't going to be seeing **your name in lights**. Of course, many people argue that you can create your own "luck" if you're **proactive** enough... but then again, someone who's willing to practise something for 10,000 hours is probably fairly pro-active anyway.

So, are you putting in the hours? **Carry on!** You could get lucky! 🍀

IQ *n*

an abbreviation of "intelligence quotient" – a measurement of intelligence

to skim-read *vb*

to read something very quickly to get the most important information

labour-intensive *adj*

if a job is "labour-intensive", it involves a lot of physical work

to lead to *phr vb*

if A "leads to" B, A will eventually allow / cause B to happen / exist

to put in *vb*

if you "put in" hours, you work for a certain amount of hours in the hope of achieving a result

your name in lights *exp*

if you have "your name in lights", your name appears in neon lights outside theatres / cinemas, etc. because you are famous

proactive *adj*

if you are "proactive", you make things happen rather than waiting for them to happen

Discuss the questions in groups

- Do you have a special skill or interest? How many hours do you think you have spent practising it? (10.000 hours is approximately ten hours per week for twenty years.)
- What things have you been successful at? What factors do you think contributed to that success?
- Are there any particular skills you wish you had? Do you think you could be successful at that skill if you worked hard at it?