

## 8.2 What makes a hero?

GOALS ■ Talk about personality and behaviour ■ Talk about unreal situations in the present and future

### Vocabulary & Reading personality and behaviour

1a Read the three short descriptions. Which of these people do you think are heroes? Why/Why not? Discuss with a partner or in small groups.



1

A firefighter who risks his/her life every day to save people from burning buildings.

2

A woman who risks her job by speaking out about something illegal happening at her place of work.

3

A boy who stops another child being attacked, even though he may get hurt himself.

b What other kinds of people or behaviour could be considered heroic?

2a Read the magazine article and compare your ideas with your partner.

### What makes a hero?

Kerry Clark was sitting in the backyard of his farm when he saw a small plane crash in the nearby woods. He rushed over there immediately and started to rescue people, even though the plane was on fire and might explode any minute.

'Somebody needed to help,' Clark said afterwards. 'You do it because you have to.'

But if you saw a crash, would you risk your life to help? Was Clark **crazy** or unusually **brave**? Researchers at Berkeley University have spent the last five years studying what exactly makes people act heroically.

They have made some fascinating discoveries...

- One in five people has done something **heroic**, such as helping another person in a dangerous situation, or being **honest** when they find out about something unfair, even if it risks their safety or job.
- The more **educated** you are, the more likely you are to be a hero.
- **Kind, generous** people are more likely to be heroes. One third of the heroes in the study had also volunteered up to 5–9 hours a week.
- Men reported heroism more than women. However, this may be because women can be a bit **embarrassed** about their heroic actions.
- Having been **lucky** enough to survive a disaster yourself makes you three times more likely to be a hero and a volunteer.

The researchers believe that we are all capable of becoming heroes. It's about learning to make the right choices in a particular situation, about doing the right thing even if we are **afraid**. Everyone needs to realize that they are **responsible** for making the world a better place. They have created an online course, the Heroic Imagination Project, to train **ordinary** people to become less **selfish** and more heroic. For example, to stay **calm** in a difficult situation, so that we don't just automatically do what everyone else is doing.

b Did anything discovered through this research surprise you? Why/Why not?

- 3a** Work with a partner as Student A and Student B. Find seven highlighted words in the article to match to your set of definitions.

**Student A**

- 1 thinking only about yourself and not of other people
- 2 not excited, worried or angry
- 3 having studied and learnt a lot
- 4 normal, not different from others
- 5 acting like a hero
- 6 caring about others
- 7 telling the truth

**Student B**

- 8 having good luck
- 9 happy to give more than is usually expected
- 10 ready to do things that are dangerous or difficult without showing fear
- 11 feeling fear
- 12 having the job of dealing with something
- 13 feeling uncomfortable because of something silly you have done
- 14 not sensible, not logical

- b** Test your partner on your set of words.

## Grammar & Speaking unreal conditionals

- 4a** Work with a partner. Look at the following sentence from the text and answer the questions.

*If you saw a crash, would you risk your life to help?*

- 1 What form is the verb after *if*? Is this talking about something that happened in the past, present or future? Is this situation real or imaginary?
- 2 Which word in the second clause tells us we are talking about an imaginary situation?

- b** Look at the following sentence and answer the questions.

*If I saw someone in trouble, I might/could/would help.*

- 1 Which two modal verbs express possibility?
- 2 Which modal verb means *would be able to*?

- c** Read the information in the Grammar focus box and check your answers to exercise 4.

### GRAMMAR FOCUS unreal conditionals

- We use *If* + past tense, *would* + infinitive without *to* to talk about a hypothetical/unreal situation in the present or future and its imaginary result.  
*If I saw someone in trouble, I would (I'd) go and help.*
- The clauses can be in any order, but we don't use a comma if the *would* clause comes first.
- After *if* we use *were* instead of *was*.
  - 1 in certain fixed phrases:  
*If I were you, I'd keep quiet.*
  - 2 in a more formal style:  
*If I were stronger, I would stop that bully!*
- When we are not sure about the result, we can use *might* or *could* instead of *would*.  
*If you tried to help, you could/might hurt yourself.*
- We can also use *could* to mean *would be able to*.  
*If someone had an accident, I could help him because I know first aid.*

→ Grammar Reference page 151

- 5a** Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verbs in brackets. Use modal verbs where possible to express uncertainty or ability.

- 1 If I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) braver, I \_\_\_\_\_ (be) a firefighter.
- 2 We \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer) more if we \_\_\_\_\_ (have) more time.
- 3 What \_\_\_\_\_ you \_\_\_\_\_ (do) if you \_\_\_\_\_ (see) someone being robbed?
- 4 If we \_\_\_\_\_ (win) the lottery, we \_\_\_\_\_ (give) some money to charity.
- 5 I \_\_\_\_\_ (not do) a job if it \_\_\_\_\_ (be) risky or dangerous.
- 6 He \_\_\_\_\_ (be) so embarrassed if he \_\_\_\_\_ (know) people were talking about his heroism.

- b** 8.3 ))) Listen and check your answers.

- c** Work with a partner. How does using *would*, *could* or *might* change the meaning of each sentence?

- 6** **TASK** Work in small groups. Go to page 129, discuss the scenarios and complete the other tasks.