



Look at the following word cloud.  
What or who do you think is it about?  
Is it a person or a place?  
Which words helped you guess better?



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You can watch the video below to find out some more information.  
An incredible conversation :  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFWjnkFypFA>

Remember that you can watch the video with subtitles if you click on this icon:

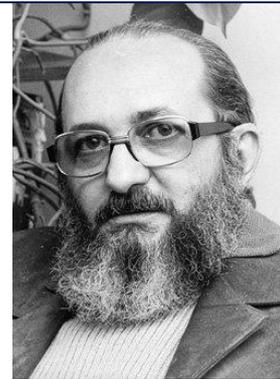


Read the text on the next page. As you read, with a pencil underline the parts in the text which you find interesting, surprising, or unexpected.

# Paulo Freire

*“The teacher is of course an artist, but being an artist does not mean that he or she can make the profile, can shape the students. What the educator does in teaching is to make it possible for the students to become themselves.”*

*Paulo Freire, We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*



Paulo Freire, a Brazilian theorist and practitioner of critical pedagogy, was born in 1921 to a middle class family in Recife. Freire became familiar with poverty and hunger during the 1929 Great Depression. In 1931, the family moved to the less expensive city of Jaboatão dos Guararapes. In school, he ended up four grades behind, while his social life revolved around playing football with kids in the neighbourhood, whose poverty left a mark on him. These experiences would shape his concerns for the underprivileged and would help to develop his particular educational viewpoint.

Freire stated that poverty and hunger severely affected his own ability to learn. This influenced his decision to dedicate his life to improving the lives of the poor: ‘I didn’t understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn’t dumb. It wasn’t lack of interest. My social condition didn’t allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge’.

Eventually, his family’s misfortunes turned around and their prospects improved, allowing Freire to enrol at Law School. He also studied philosophy and the psychology of language. Although he qualified as a lawyer, he never actually practised law but instead worked as a teacher in secondary schools, teaching Portuguese. In 1946, Freire was appointed Director of the Department

of Education and Culture in the State of Pernambuco. Working primarily among the illiterate poor, Freire began to develop his unique approach to teaching as liberation. In Brazil at that time, literacy was a requirement for voting in presidential elections and Freire aimed, through education, to create active citizens able to change the world they lived in.

In 1961, he was appointed director of the Department of Cultural Extension of Recife University. It was this position that gave him his biggest opportunity to really apply his theories, when 300 farm workers were taught literacy skills in just 45 days. In response to this experiment, the Brazilian government put Freire’s approach into practice by the creation of thousands of ‘cultural circles’ across the country.

In 1964, a military coup put an end to that effort and the dictators imprisoned Freire as a traitor. Unable to stay safely in his own country, Freire went to Chile as a political refugee, where he worked for five years. In 1968, he published his most famous book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in Portuguese. It wasn’t published in Brazil, until 1974. On the strength of the reception of his work, Freire was offered a visiting professorship at Harvard University in 1969. In 1980, he was able to return to Brazil where he was appointed Secretary of Education for São Paulo.



Now answer the following questions. Look back in the text and find the answers. Then underline or highlight them in the text. Also, write them in the spaces provided.

1. What is the aim of the text?

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2. Who probably reads Freire’s work?

.....

3. Why did Freire’s family leave Recife?

.....

4. Who or what influenced Freire’s ideas?

.....

5. Why didn’t Paolo do well at school?

.....

6. What was Freire’s main aim as a teacher? What did he want to teach?

.....

7. Why did the government create the ‘cultural circles’?

.....

8. Why did Freire go to Chile?

.....

9. If you could replace the quote under Freire’s name, what subheading would you write? .....

.....

10. Imagine that there is a page missing from the article. What would that page be about? .....

.....



Now do the following task. Compare the underlined answers to the three possible answers given below. Choose only one.

1. The main aim of this text is to
  - A. criticise Freire's ideas.
  - B. describe Freire's character.
  - C. sum up Freire's life.
2. Paulo Freire's work is probably read by
  - A. pupils.
  - B. educators.
  - C. parents.
3. Why did Freire's family leave Recife?
  - A. Because they were poor.
  - B. So Paulo could go to school.
  - C. In order to find work.
4. Freire's ideas were influenced by
  - A. Brazilian football.
  - B. the poor.
  - C. his teachers.
5. Paulo didn't do well at school because of
  - A. lack of motivation.
  - B. poor teaching.
  - C. social conditions.
6. Freire's main aim as a teacher was to teach
  - A. law.
  - B. political theory.
  - C. the illiterate poor.
7. The aim of the 'cultural circles' was to teach
  - A. reading and writing.
  - B. farming techniques.
  - C. Brazilian culture.
8. Why did Freire go to Chile?
  - A. To be free.
  - B. To publish his books.
  - C. To find work.
9. Another subtitle for this text could be:
  - A. Looking at the education history of Brazil.
  - B. Education as the practice of freedom.
  - C. The childhood of a great teacher.
10. Imagine that the text continues into the next page. Guess what it is probably about.
  - A. Brazilian education during the dictatorship.
  - B. The educational system in Chile.
  - C. How Freire changed education in Brazil.

## ANSWER KEY

- 1 C
- 2 B
- 3 A
- 4 B
- 5 C
- 6 C
- 7 A
- 8 A
- 9 B
- 10 C