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Unit 7

Heroes



Embarking on the journey

- 1** Work in pairs to discuss whether the following acts can be considered heroic deeds or not, and explain why.

A firefighter climbed from balcony to balcony up several floors of an apartment block to rescue a kitten on a window ledge (窗台).

A mother quickly lost weight in order to donate a healthy kidney to her son.

A young man risked his life trying to save a woman who attempted suicide by drowning.

A storm chaser followed storms in order to record the magnitude (巨大) of the force of nature.

Stop 1 Daily communication

Activity 1

- 1  Listen to the following conversation about superheroes. Underline the expressions for asking for and giving opinions.



John: Hi, Brad, have you watched the new *Green Lantern* film?

Brad: Not yet, but I plan to go this weekend. Have you watched it? Do you like the character?

John: Since you ask me, I prefer Spider Man. I mean, the Green Lantern is fine, but I like Spider Man more. He's more like a friendly neighborhood hero. Besides, the climbing scenes are awesome. I'd like to be able to do that! Speaking of heroes, who's your favorite superhero?

Brad: Me? Hancock, definitely! I'm always into that kind of funny stuff.

John: Hancock? Well, Hancock is only for fun.

Brad: But isn't that why we love him?

John: That is something. Hey, if you could be a superhero, what supernatural power would you like to have? You know, huge strength, ability to read minds, to fly, to travel through time?

Brad: It is hard to choose, but I tend to choose mind-reading. Just imagine if I could read the mind of my math teacher, math exams would be easy. I could spend less time studying.

John: Not a bad choice.

Brad: What about you? What supernatural power would you like to have?



John: I would choose to travel through time. Being a time traveler must be a lot of fun. Going back and forth in history, you can even change it. Wouldn't that be exciting?

Brad: It does sound tempting.

◆ Useful expressions ◆

Asking for opinions

- ◆ What's your view on ...?
- ◆ Do you agree ...?
- ◆ What do you think about ...?
- ◆ How would you comment on ...?
- ◆ Have you got anything to say on the subject?
- ◆ What are your feelings about ...?
- ◆ What would you say about ...?

Giving opinions

- ◆ As far as I'm concerned, ...
- ◆ If you ask me, ...
- ◆ Since you ask, I think ...
- ◆ The way I see it, ...
- ◆ It seems to me that ...
- ◆ I definitely think that ...
- ◆ I tend to think that ...
- ◆ I'm inclined to think that ...
- ◆ I feel ...
- ◆ In my opinion, ...
- ◆ To my mind, ...

2 Work in pairs to role-play the following situation. Try to use the useful expressions in the boxes.

Situation

- Student A** Ask Student B who his favorite superhero is.
- Student B** Reply by giving the name of the superhero.
- Student A** Ask why Student B likes this character.
- Student B** Give reasons and ask who Student A's favorite superhero is.
- Student A** Reply and ask Student B's favorite supernatural power.
- Student B** Reply by choosing one supernatural power and ask Student A's opinion.
- Student A** Respond to Student B.

Activity 2

- 1  Listen to the following stories of three contestants on the TV show *Hero of the Day*. Summarize each contestant's heroic deed.

Contestant 1 _____

Contestant 2 _____

Contestant 3 _____

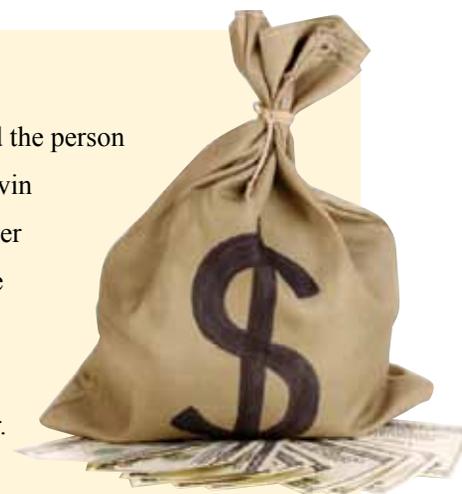
Contestant 1: A litter hero who picks up litter whenever he goes out

My name is Tim Barnes and I pick up litter. It started when I noticed how litter had been around one of my favorite walks in my hometown. Next time I did the walk I took a carrier bag with me and picked some of it up. After that, it was as if someone had given me litter spectacles (眼镜) – I started seeing it everywhere. It was almost impossible to find a mile of litter-free country lane. Now I go out with large trash bags and fill two or three at a time. I do it because I love the countryside and can't stand by as we turn it into a landfill (废弃物填埋场) site.



Contestant 2: A man who tracks down the rightful owner of \$7,000

A Texas doughnut shop owner lost a bag with thousands of dollars inside, and the person who found it made sure the owner got it back. Danny works for the city of Alvin cleaning the streets. When he found the bag, he said he was stunned to discover \$7,000 in it. Instead of keeping the money, he turned it over to the police. The police then turned it over to the doughnut shop owner, who had reported his loss to the local police. The doughnut shop owner was stunned that someone could be so honest. Danny said the money was not worth more than his honor.

**Contestant 3: A real-life “superhero” who walks the streets fighting crime**

Just about every night, a Seattle man strolls into a comic store, enters a hidden back room and emerges transformed. His name is Phoenix Jones. He and the other members of his Rain City Superhero Crime Fighting Movement walk the streets, look out for crime, and prepare to fight it. His superhero suit includes a bullet-proof vest and stab plates. He explains that he symbolizes that the average person doesn't have to walk around and see bad things but do nothing. Phoenix said that since he started his crime-fighting crusade (运动), he has been stabbed, and had a gun pulled on him a few times, but has received no serious injuries.

2 Work in groups of four to discuss who you think should be the Hero of the Day.

Stop 2 Culture bridge

Activity 1

- 1  Listen to the following passage about *Time* magazine's list of People of the Century. Work in pairs to discuss the following questions.

- 1) Do you agree with *Time*'s choice? Why or why not?
- 2) Do you agree with Bruce Handy concerning America's leading role in world popular culture in the second half of the 20th century? Why or why not?

Unit 7 Heroes



Who has had the greatest impact on the 20th century? In five special presentations, *Time* profiled 100 remarkable people who had changed the world during the 20th century, for better or worse. The project started with “Leaders & Revolutionaries”, followed by “Artists & Entertainers”, “Builders & Titans”, “Scientists & Thinkers” and “Heroes & Icons”. But the list has been criticized for being too U.S.-centric. The list of the top 20 artists and entertainers, in particular, was criticized for including Bart Simpson, a cartoon character while not including Elvis Presley. The list also received criticism for its inclusion of Lucky Luciano who was chosen in part because “he modernized the Mafia, shaping it into a smoothly run national crime syndicate (联合集团) focused on the bottom line”. *Time*’s representative Bruce Handy responded to the criticism this way: “Hey – it’s the American century. Clearly, the Europeans were the great innovators in terms of high modernism. But when it comes to popular culture this century has been all American. American popular culture is really the arts story of the century’s second half. The music the world listens to, the movies the world watches, the junk food the world eats are all American – or largely American influenced.”

- 2 The following table shows *Time*’s categories and choices of People of the Century. Work in groups of four to discuss who you would choose if you were to compile a list of People of the Century in China, and explain why.**

Categories	People of the Century	People of the Century in China
Leaders & Revolutionaries People who helped define the century's political and social fabric (结构)	◆ Winston Churchill ◆ Mohandas Gandhi ◆ ...	
Artists & Entertainers Pioneers of human expression who enlightened and enlivened us	◆ Steven Spielberg ◆ Pablo Picasso ◆ ...	
Builders & Titans Innovators who changed how the world works	◆ Henry Ford ◆ Bill Gates ◆ ...	
Scientists & Thinkers People who overthrew our inherited ideas about logic, language, learning, mathematics, economics, and even space and time	◆ Albert Einstein ◆ Tim Berners-Lee ◆ ...	
Heroes & Icons People who exemplify courage, selflessness, exuberance (生气勃勃), superhuman ability, and amazing grace	◆ Muhammad Ali ◆ Anne Frank ◆ ...	

Activity 2

1  Listen to the following mini-biography of Michael Jackson, and answer the following questions.

- 1) What is Michael Jackson's family background?
- 2) What charity efforts did he make?
- 3) What is the name of his ranch in California?
- 4) How did he explain the change of his skin color?
- 5) What was the relationship between him and the media?
- 6) What accusations were there against him?
- 7) What weird behavior did he display during his later life?

Unit 7 Heroes

Dubbed “The King of Pop”, singer-songwriter Michael Jackson was born in Gary, Indiana, in 1958, to an African-American working-class family. As a child, he was the lead singer of his family musical group, The Jackson 5. Michael Jackson went on to become one of the most internationally famous award-winning solo pop sensations to date.

In the early 1980s, Jackson became a dominant figure in popular music. The music videos for his songs were credited with transforming the medium into an art form as well as a promotional tool, and the popularity of his videos helped to bring fame to the relatively new television channel MTV. Jackson’s sound, style, and dance moves have inspired subsequent generations of pop, soul, R&B, and hip-hop artists. Five of his solo albums are among the top-sellers of all time and *Thriller* holds the distinction as the largest selling album worldwide in the history of the recording industry, with more than 70 million units sold.

He was also one of the world’s most prominent humanitarians and philanthropists (慈善家). Personally, and through his Heal the World Foundation, he donated more than 300 million dollars to charity, and held the Guinness World Record for a pop star supporting the greatest number of charities. Many of his lyrics reflect his hopes for and love of peace.

Off stage, Jackson was a shy and reclusive (遁世的) person. He was never truly comfortable with the media attention he received and rarely gave interviews. Most tabloid (通俗小报) headlines focused on his





changing skin color, his eccentricities (古怪行为), and the alleged accusation of child molestation (猥亵).

By the late 1980s, Jackson had created his own fantasy retreat (静居所) – a Californian ranch called “Neverland”. There he kept exotic pets and had his own amusement rides. Rumors swirled around him, including that he was lightening the color of his skin to appear whiter and slept in a special chamber to increase his lifespan. In one rare television interview with Oprah Winfrey, he explained that the change in his skin tone was the result of a disease known as vitiligo (白癜风).

In 1993, allegations of child molestation against Jackson emerged. He settled the case out of court with one boy’s family and maintained innocence of the other allegations. By the release of his album *Invincible* in 2002, Jackson was better known as an eccentric whose quirks (怪癖) were reported in the tabloids than as a performer. The album sold well, but stories of his odd behavior started to overshadow his talent. He often appeared in public wearing a surgical mask, and he hid his children’s faces under veils. He also received enormous criticism for dangling his son over a balcony while greeting fans in Berlin, Germany.

In 2009, just a few days before his concert tour *This Is It*, Jackson passed away. The entire world seemed to stop to moan his death.

2 Work in pairs to discuss whether you regard Michael Jackson as a hero or not.

Is he qualified to be a hero? Yes, because he was hugely misunderstood, and brutally attacked, but he survived. He has inspired many people, artists, and fans. I’m inspired and happy whenever I listen to his music, watch any of his performances, or just think of him.

Unit 7 Heroes

In terms of his music, he has to be up there with the likes of Presley, the Beatles, and Bob Dylan. Nevertheless, I cannot bring myself to call him a hero. Celebrity icon? Yes. Hero? No.

3 Work in pairs to discuss the following questions.

- 1) Would Michael Jackson still have so many followers worldwide if he had been a pop singer in China? Why or why not?
- 2) For people who are noble and admirable in one aspect of their lives, but contemptible (可鄙的) or immoral in other aspects, can they still be called heroes? Why or why not?
- 3) What role do the media play in the making of heroes?

Stop 3 Points of view

Activity 1

- 1  Listen to the following four people's remarks about what makes a hero. Work in pairs to discuss whether you agree with their points or not, and explain why.

Speaker 1: To me, a hero is a person who is brave enough to overcome all the bad things in their life. A hero is a person that generally goes above and beyond the call of duty, and they do things that are extraordinary.

Speaker 2: A hero is somebody who saves the day. They have all the courage and they take responsibility.

They are people who you look up to; they are people who will always catch you when you fall; they are people who you try to be like.

Speaker 3: As long as someone is willing to help others, they are a hero in my book. It doesn't have to be on a battlefield, and they can be anybody in everyday life, police officers, firefighters, doctors, anyone you may walk by on the streets.

Speaker 4: What makes a hero? Besides having courage, I believe a hero should not be afraid to sacrifice their own interests. When they face a dilemma, they will act on behalf of the majority rather than themselves.



2 Read the following quotes. Discuss with your partner whether you agree or not, and explain why.

- ◆ *I believe it is the nature of people to be heroes, given the chance.*
 – James A. Autry
- ◆ *True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others at whatever cost.*
 – Arthur Ashe
- ◆ *The history of the world is but the biography of great men.*
 – Thomas Carlyle
- ◆ *Real heroes are men who fall and fail and are flawed, but win out in the end because they've stayed true to their ideals and beliefs and commitments.*
 – Kevin Costner

Activity 2

- 1 Read the following news headlines, and work in pairs to discuss what might be the story in each news report.

Man Rescued from Subway Track by Stranger

No One Steps In to Stop Assault Against Pregnant Woman

Bystander Pulls Victim from Burning Car on National Highway

Homeless Man Bled to Death, No One Helped

- 2 Role-play the following situations with you partner.

Situation 1

Student A You saved a man who fell onto the track at a subway station. Student B is interviewing you.

Student B You are a journalist. You are interviewing Student A about why Student A chose to save the man.

Situation 2

Student A You are one of the people who witnessed an assault on a pregnant woman. You are telling your friend how sorry you are now and why you did not offer a helping hand then.

Student B You are a friend of Student A. You are giving your advice to Student A about how to act in this kind of situation.

Conversation tip**Expressing causal connections**

Building relationships between two things is an important communication skill in making your viewpoints convincing. When demonstrating connections between causes and effects, you may use the following expressions:

- ◆ Because ...
- ◆ Owing to the fact that ...
- ◆ ... arise from ...
- ◆ ... result from ...
- ◆ This is caused by ...
- ◆ So, ...
- ◆ Consequently, ...
- ◆ That is why ...
- ◆ ... bring about ...
- ◆ ... give rise to ...
- ◆ Because of ...
- ◆ Due to ...
- ◆ Thanks to ...
- ◆ As a result, ...
- ◆ Therefore, ...
- ◆ Thus, ...
- ◆ For this reason, ...
- ◆ ... lead to ...
- ◆ ... result in ...
- ◆ ... pave the way to ...

Destination**What have you learned in this unit?****Can you now**

- ◆ talk about different types of superheroes in Hollywood movies?
- ◆ ask for and give opinions in a discussion?
- ◆ give your opinions on everyday heroes?
- ◆ introduce remarkable individuals in different fields?
- ◆ better understand and have your own opinions about Michael Jackson?
- ◆ express causal connections in various ways?



Unit project

Plan a dinner party for The Great of the Year

- 1 Work in groups of four to select eight people in your university to be your university's The Great of the Year.**
- 2 Work out the procedure of a dinner party for The Great of the Year. You should include sections such as the awarding ceremony, the dinner, the party time, etc.**
- 3 Think about the details of each section of the dinner party. You may refer to the following examples.**
 - ◆ The awarding speech
 - ◆ The seating arrangement
 - ◆ Dishes for dinner
 - ◆ Each member's responsibility
- 4 Make a presentation about your plan to the class. It should include the following aspects.**
 - ◆ Your choice of The Great of the Year
 - ◆ The procedure of the dinner party
 - ◆ The detailed plan of each section