



HFL Education Herts Voices

Introducing "Talking Heads" – Inspiring Voices for Schools in 2025

As part of our *Herts Voices* initiative, we are excited to launch a new series of "**Talking Heads**" interviews designed specifically for schools. These 20-25 minute videos are perfect for assemblies, classroom lessons, or careers sessions, offering students a unique opportunity to hear from inspiring role models from racially diverse backgrounds. Each video delivers motivational, thought-provoking content aimed at broadening students' perspectives and encouraging them to dream big.

Meet Ruqsana Begum – Our Second "Talking Heads" Speaker

Our second interview features **Ruqsana Begum**, a Muay Thai world champion, author, and motivational speaker who grew up in East London and is of Bangladeshi heritage.


Ruqsana's journey exemplifies the power of determination, breaking barriers, and redefining success, making her an inspiring role model for children and young people.

Ruqsana began her journey in combat sports while balancing cultural expectations and personal challenges, including battling chronic fatigue syndrome. She overcame these obstacles to become the **captain of the British Muay Thai team** and later a **world champion**. Her success extends beyond the ring as she works to inspire others through her story of perseverance and strength.

In addition to her athletic achievements, Ruqsana authored the book ***Born Fighter***, sharing her life experiences and lessons learned along the way. She continues to advocate for mental health awareness, diversity in sports, and the empowerment of young people.

This resource invites students to reflect on Ruqsana Begum's extraordinary journey, encouraging them to think critically about resilience, ambition, and the pursuit of personal goals. Let her story inspire them to overcome challenges and strive for their dreams.





This "Talking Heads" video is an opportunity to introduce your students to a role model who not only excels in her field but also reflects the richness of diverse experiences. Whether you're sparking career aspirations, discussing culture and identity, or exploring the arts, Ruqsana Begum's story is sure to leave a lasting impression on young minds.


Bring Ruqsana's journey into your school – and inspire the next generation of thinkers, dreamers, and changemakers.

Year 5 and 6 Questions

1. What inspired Ruqsana Begum to start kickboxing?
2. How did Ruqsana balance her training with her cultural responsibilities?
3. What challenges did Ruqsana face in pursuing her dreams?
4. What values or qualities do you think Ruqsana needed to become a world champion?
5. Why is it important to believe in yourself when facing difficulties?
6. How did Ruqsana's family react to her success in kickboxing?
7. What role does discipline play in achieving goals, according to Ruqsana's story?
8. How did Ruqsana promote inclusion through her sports journey?
9. Can you think of a time when you were nervous but tried something new? How is that similar to Ruqsana's experiences?
10. Why do you think Ruqsana's story inspires people from different backgrounds?

Year 10 and 11 Questions

1. What societal and cultural barriers did Ruqsana face, and how did she overcome them?
2. How did Ruqsana's cultural background influence her journey as a sportsperson?
3. What does Ruqsana's story tell us about resilience in the face of adversity?
4. How did Ruqsana manage to maintain her identity while excelling in a male-dominated sport?
5. What role does mental health play in achieving success, based on Ruqsana's experiences?
6. Why do you think Ruqsana wanted to become a role model for young women?
7. How do Ruqsana's values of inclusion and diversity challenge stereotypes in sports?

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8. What lessons can athletes learn from Ruqsana's ability to adapt to different challenges?
 9. How does Ruqsana's story highlight the importance of family support in personal development?
 10. What do you think schools or communities can do to support individuals like Ruqsana in achieving their goals?
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A-Level Tasks for PE Students

1. **Case Study Analysis:** Write a report on Ruqsana Begum's career, focusing on the psychological and social factors that influenced her success in sports.
2. **Role of Cultural Identity:** Discuss the role of cultural identity in sports and how Ruqsana balanced her cultural heritage with her aspirations as a kickboxer.
3. **Barriers to Female Participation:** Research and present on the barriers faced by women in male-dominated sports, using Ruqsana's story as a key example.
4. **Sport and Mental Health:** Investigate the role of mental health in elite sports performance and reflect on how Ruqsana's personal challenges influenced her approach to mental well-being.
5. **Leadership and Inspiration:** Create a multimedia presentation on how Ruqsana's achievements can inspire leadership and social change in sports.