

A change is as good as a rest

1 **Joseph Conrad, Michael Marks (of Marks and Spencer's), Charlie Chaplin, Freddie Mercury. Four famous people but what is the connection between them? What they all have in common is a number of changes during their lives, which have meant that they had to constantly start their lives over again.**

5 Joseph Conrad probably had the most difficult changes to cope with. His parents were Polish but he was born and brought up under Russian occupation. The family were exiled to Russia after his father was arrested. They never returned to their homeland. Conrad left for France at the age of seventeen and, by this time his parents had both died. Four years later he arrived in England and spent the next twenty years
10 at sea but, in 1895, he changed his career to that of a writer and he was able to draw on his own experiences when he was a sailor. It took many years before his work became recognised but now his works are considered by many as literary masterpieces in terms of language, even though English was his third language.



Joseph Conrad

15 Charlie Chaplin also had to restart his life many times and overcome many problems. In 1912 he and a group of other unknown actors set sail for America for a tour. The others returned home to England but Chaplin remained in Hollywood after the tour looking for work. Between 1918 and 1928 he was considered to be the world's funniest comedian, playing the character of a tramp in a number of films. In
20 1929, films with sound started but Chaplin carried on making silent films until The Great Dictator in 1940. After the war, his political views caused problems in America and, when he visited England in 1952, the American government refused to allow him to return. He settled down in Europe and only returned to the USA in 1972 to collect an Oscar.



Charlie Chaplin

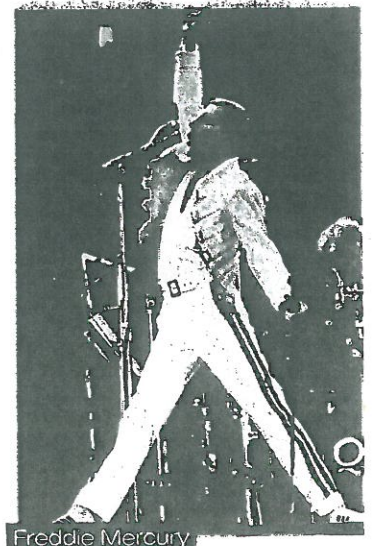
25 Michael Marks and Freddie Mercury had slightly easier lives than Chaplin and Conrad but still had to adapt to new cultures. Michael Marks was born in Russia in 1859. When he arrived in Britain, he heard about a company which employed Jewish refugees. He proved to be an expert salesman and he managed to save up enough money to start up his own market stall. In 1894 he was looking to expand his business and
30 he was introduced to a man called Tom Spencer. They were an overnight success, opening shops all over Britain. Tom Spencer retired a rich man in 1903 but Michael Marks carried on working until his death in 1907.



Michael Marks

35 Freddie Mercury was different to the other three in that the changes he went through were made with his family, not alone. His parents were from India where his father worked for the British government. They then had to move to another British colony, Zanzibar, in order for him to keep his job. Freddie grew up there although he was sent to a boarding school near Bombay in India. In 1964, a revolution broke out in Zanzibar and the family had to escape to Britain. Later in life Freddie became the leader of Queen – one of the biggest rock bands in history. In 1988, Freddie, after
40 fifteen years as a rock star, recorded an album with opera singer Montserrat Caballé. It was panned by the critics but it was still a commercial success.

Whether the changes these four experienced helped them at all is unclear. However, what is clear is that they were all born with an ability that took them to the top of their chosen professions despite all the problems they had to overcome.



Freddie Mercury

READING

1 Read the text. What is the main idea of the article?

- a Changes in life can help people become successful.
- b The four people, despite being very different in many ways, have important things in common.
- c It is clear, very early in someone's life, that they are going to be successful.

2 Match the people to the questions (1-6). Write JC - Joseph Conrad, CC - Charlie Chaplin, MM - Michael Marks, FM - Freddie Mercury.

Who

- 1 moved to a different country with his parents? _____
- 2 took a long time to become famous? _____
- 3 refused to change when others in the same profession had to? _____
- 4 returned to his home country after he had become successful? _____
- 5 became successful very quickly? _____
- 6 was said to be the best in the world at what he did? _____

3 Read the article again and choose the correct answers (a-d).

- 1 Joseph Conrad's parents
 - a were both arrested.
 - b died before he moved to France.
 - c died in Poland.
 - d died after Conrad had left them.
- 2 Charlie Chaplin
 - a was famous before he went to America.
 - b stayed in America because he had been offered work there.
 - c stayed in America with the other English actors.
 - d played the same character in more than one film.

4 Replace the underlined words and phrases with the underlined words and phrases from the text.

- 1 The show was criticised by everyone who saw it.

- 2 When the war started, it was a shock to people in both countries.

- 3 After years of travelling, the explorer lived quietly and permanently in a village by the sea.

- 4 A good artist is able to use things that have happened in their life for inspiration.

- 5 The ex-king was forced to move to a different country after the revolution.

- 6 After the film *Jaws*, Steven Spielberg became successful very quickly.

- 7 After many years of hard work, his aim was to be able to retire in five years' time.

- 3 Michael Marks
 - a emigrated because he had been offered a job in Britain.
 - b didn't know Tom Spencer before 1894.
 - c was given a job in a market.
 - d retired a rich man in 1903.
- 4 Freddie Mercury's father
 - a moved to Zanzibar because of a revolution.
 - b had to find work in Zanzibar.
 - c worked for the British government in Zanzibar.
 - d sent Freddie to a boarding school in Britain.

5. Write a summary of the text in about 50 - 60 words: