

Text : determination

David Blunkett is a member of a parliament in the United Kingdom. He was born blind, but has made a successful career for himself in politics by his determination.

When he was 12, his much-loved father was killed in a gas explosion at work. His mother had to struggle to bring him up with very little money. He had to start at secondary boarding school within two weeks of his father death. ‘I realised that I would have to fight back or go under,’ he said. ‘I fought back.’

His school was not encouraging. They didn’t believe examinations were necessary and only offered their blind pupils three career options : piano-tuning, lathe-turning or office work. David chose office work and learned typing and shorthand. ‘By my late teens I became determined not to be a typical blind person with dark glasses and a white stick.

He went to night school for six years to get the qualifications he needed to enter university. ‘Looking back, I don’t know how I managed. It was very hard work.’

At university he became involved in politics. ‘There are people in politics who feel that because I am a blind man, I cannot work on equal terms,’ he said. ‘The only way I can answer them is by doing a first-class job. And when I make a mistake, it is because I am a human like other people, and not because I am blind.’

I) Answer these questions

- 1) How old was David Blunkett when his father was killed in a gas explosion at work?
- 2) Had his mother much money to bring him up?
- 3) What did David Blunkett realise?
- 4) What did he choose?
- 5) How long did he go to night school?
- 6) What did David Bunkett get in night school?
- 7) Where did he become involved in politics?
- 8) Was David Blunkett work an easy one?
- 9) What are people in politics think about David Blunkett?
- 10) What does he say when he makes a mistake?

II) Translate into French the paragraph 5