



# ~~READING~~ 4



DAY 3.

# OBSTACLES

Let's start with the first set of slides



1. There are many different kinds of obstacles: Physical and economic are two examples. What are some other examples of the kinds of obstacles that people face?
2. What are some ways that people overcome their obstacles?
3. What obstacles have you faced in your life? How have you tried to overcome them?

**1** Read the passage about author Frank McCourt. Try to understand the boldfaced words from the context.

Frank McCourt was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1930. His parents, Angela and Malachy, had moved to New York from Ireland in search of a better life. Unfortunately, life was not easy in New York. His father could not earn enough money to support his family. The McCourts returned to Ireland hoping their life would improve. Again, it didn't. Life in Ireland was equally hard if not harder than in New York. Three of Frank's siblings died as babies. Eventually, his father's **abandonment** of the family forced his four sons and Angela to live a very **meager** existence.

Frank's childhood was filled with **misery**. There was never enough food. Their house was small, dirty, and very cold in the winter. When it rained, the floor would flood with water. Frank and his brothers **yearned for** a better life.

Frank did, however, have ways to escape from his **tormented** childhood. He loved to read, and because his **dilapidated** house had no electricity, he would read under the street lamp outside his home. He also had an excellent sense of humor. Humor was the McCourts' defense against their life of relentless **poverty** and **hopelessness**. Even in the worst of times, the McCourts could find something to laugh about.

In 1949, Frank returned to the United States. He was 19 years old and only had an eighth-grade education. He was full of **shame** about his past and often invented stories about his **sordid** childhood instead of telling the truth. However, Frank was never **defeated** by his obstacles; in fact, Frank eventually used his humor and his storytelling talents to overcome the challenges life had set before him.

**2** Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Frank had a hard life growing up. What were some of the obstacles or challenges he had to overcome?
2. What did Frank enjoy doing as a child?
3. Why did Frank reinvent his past when he came to America?

**3**

Find the boldfaced words in the reading passage. Write each word next to its synonym.

1. misery sadness
2. dilapidated poor, sparse
3. shame embarrassment
4. defeated beaten, overcome by
5. Yearned for strongly desired, wanted
6. meager painful
7. tormented immoral, dishonest
8. poverty having little money or few material things
9. abandonment leaving someone behind
10. hopelessness being without hope
11. meager falling apart, in terrible condition