THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S
INTERNATIONAL AWARD
MALTA
Discovering Strength Through the Unexpected
Adventure and Challenge
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#WORLD READY

Pushing Boundaries, Finding Strength

One of the most exciting and transformative parts of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (The Award) is the Adventurous Journey. Whether it's navigating rugged trails, pitching tents under starlit skies, or working with teammates in unfamiliar environments, this section pushes participants to challenge themselves in ways they never expected. It's not about being the fittest or fastest; it's about resilience, teamwork and self-discovery.

In a world where young people are often shielded from discomfort or risk, the Adventurous Journey provides a safe, supportive space to explore the unknown. It's an opportunity to break away from the familiar, develop independence, and learn what it really means to persevere.

The Power of Stepping into the Unknown

Adventure in the Award is more than physical activity; it's a mindset, a leap into the unknown, and a bold choice to see what you're truly made of. It's about trading comfort zones for compass points and turning fear into fuel. It's in those first uncertain steps, when you're not sure what lies ahead, that real growth begins.

In everyday life, young people are often given structured paths and safe routines; but the Adventurous Journey dares you to break the mould. It asks: What can you do when you're in charge? How do you respond when things don't go to plan? It gives you the chance to take the lead, shape your direction, and build belief in yourself with every mile you walk.

This experience isn't about risk for risk's sake; it's about finding your balance in the unpredictable, learning to stay calm in the chaos, and discovering courage when your legs are tired and the finish line feels far away. It's about trusting your team, adapting quickly, and keeping your spirit alive when the rain falls or the climb feels endless. Because in the end, confidence, resilience, and resourcefulness aren't just traits you're born with but they're earned, built, and owned, one determined step at a time.

Why it Matters

Adventure builds more than physical stamina. It challenges the way you think, feel, and respond to real-life situations. Through the highs and lows of the journey, participants build mental toughness by pushing through discomfort, uncertainty, and setbacks. Emotional flexibility grows as they learn to stay calm under pressure, adapt to changing conditions, and support their peers along the way. And most importantly, they begin to believe in themselves—not just because they completed a physical challenge, but because they grew stronger in the process. Participants:

Face Challenges Head-on

From unpredictable weather to aching legs and tough climbs, participants are pushed beyond what they thought they could handle—and in doing so, they learn how to stay calm, problem-solve, and persevere.

Work as a Team

Success on the journey isn't about individual strength, but shared effort. Whether navigating tricky terrain or setting up camp after a long day, it's teamwork that gets them through.

Build Lasting Confidence

Completing something they once doubted they could do helps participants redefine their limits. That sense of achievement stays with them long after the journey ends.

Reconnect with the Present

Without phones, screens, or constant distractions, the Adventurous Journey helps participants rediscover the beauty of nature and the power of simply being present. Many describe finding a sense of calm and clarity they hadn't experienced before.

Real Stories, Real Growth: Zoe's Journey to Confidence

Zoe had always doubted her physical abilities. She preferred quiet corners and storybooks to steep hills and muddy boots. When she first heard about the Adventurous Journey, she was hesitant. The idea of hiking for hours, carrying gear, and sleeping outdoors felt daunting. But deep down, Zoe knew she needed a challenge—something to help her step beyond the safe and familiar.

Her team's journey took them through the rugged yet breathtaking trails of northern Malta. On day one, Zoe struggled to keep pace. The sun was relentless, the terrain uneven, and her backpack seemed to grow heavier with every step. Blisters formed early, and by lunchtime, she found herself trailing behind, silently wondering if she belonged there at all.

But something shifted. Her teammates rallied around her—not with pity, but with encouragement and belief. They shared the weight, cheered her on, and reminded her that the journey wasn't about speed but about strength. By the second day, Zoe began to find her rhythm. She took on navigation duties, carried extra supplies when others were tired, and even cracked jokes to lift the team's morale.

"I thought I'd be the one slowing everyone down," she reflected. "But I ended up finding strength I didn't know I had—and it wasn't just physical. It was mental, emotional, and something I now carry into everything I do."

Zoe returned home changed. The shy, unsure girl who began the hike had transformed into someone who understood her own resilience. The trail hadn't just taken her through Malta's countryside—it had led her to self-belief.

How the Award Makes Adventure Meaningful

The Award doesn't just drop participants into the wilderness unprepared. It equips them with skills and planning tools in advance—map reading, route planning, first aid, and team dynamics—so they feel ready to face challenges. The journey becomes more than just a walk in nature; it's a metaphor for life. Participants also learn to:

PREPARE WITH PURPOSE

Planning the journey isn't just about maps and checklists—it's about thinking ahead, anticipating challenges, and learning to take responsibility for your own path. It helps participants develop a mindset that values readiness, strategy, and thoughtful action.

TRUST THE PROCESS

Not everything will go according to plan—and that's where real growth happens. When faced with unexpected obstacles, participants learn to adapt, problem-solve, and stay focused on the bigger picture, building resilience with every step.

SUPPORT OTHERS

Leadership on the trail isn't about taking charge all the time—it's about knowing when to step forward, when to step back, and how to lift others up. Participants discover the quiet strength of listening, encouraging, and being there for their team.

GROW THROUGH REFLECTION

Every experience, whether good or challenging, holds lessons. Reflecting on what went well, what didn't, and what was learned helps participants carry those insights into future adventures and life beyond the Award.

Tips for Making the Most of Your Service

Pack Smart, Travel Light Think ahead about what you truly need, and be prepared to carry your share. Owning your role and being dependable is as important as your backpack.

Encourage your Team Everyone has moments of doubt or fatigue. A few supportive words or a helping hand can make all the difference—and often, it lifts you too.

Embrace the Discomfort Rain, blisters, wrong turns—these aren't setbacks, they're the ingredients of growth. Discomfort is temporary, but the lessons last.

Reflect Often Use a journal or voice notes to capture what you're learning. The toughest moments often become the most meaningful in hindsight.

Share Your Story

Every Adventurous Journey is unique. Whether yours included wild weather, incredible views, or laughter around a campfire, it's a story worth sharing. Use the hashtag **#ChallengeWithDofE** to inspire others to push beyond their limits.

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Next in the Series: Commitment and Persistence

In our next blog, we'll explore how commitment over time; across all sections of the Award; builds character, resilience, and lasting self-belief. Stay tuned!

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