

SOUND FAMILIAR?

I am sorry to say I see no improvement. He was terribly slangy and loud. He teases the baby more than ever. (his mother, 1882)

I do not think he is willfully troublesome: but his forgetfulness, unpunctuality and irregularity in every way, have really been serious. (his teacher, 1888)

I would not believe that you could be such a young stupid. It is clear you are not to be trusted. (his father, 1894)

I used to think he was the naughtiest small boy in the world. (his dancing teacher)

Your work is an insult to your intelligence. (his mother)

He couldn't play team sports.

Never have I received a really good report of your conduct: always behind-hand, never advancing in class, incessant complaints of total want of application. (his father, 1893)

Does not understand the meaning of hard work. Spelling as bad as it could be. (school report, 1883)

There was no point in trying to go to university. He even failed military college exams - on the second try he still only got 53% for English composition. When not lost in thought he was in constant motion, jumping up and down, leaping from chair to chair, rushing about, and falling and hurting himself. He seemed to have no sense of personal safety. His love of martial poetry was obsessive. He had a speech defect and one miserable cold after another. His interest in politics, for a boy of his age, was decidedly precocious. (notes from a biography)

He has no ambition. (school report, 1884)

That exam failure demonstrates beyond refutation your slovenly happy-go-lucky harum scarum style of work. (his father 1893)

He is going today - I do not feel very sorry for he certainly is a handful - his use of bad language is bad for his brother (who is a good boy and not a bit of trouble). (his grandmother, 1888)

I do think it very serious that he should have acquired such phenomenal slovenliness. (his teacher, 1888)

His sense of timing was poor - he was always asking for money and treats at the wrong time and he would not take no for an answer.

What a harum scarum fellow you are! You really must give up being so childish. (his mother, 1894)

At school he tried to blow up a building with gunpowder in a ginger beer bottle and got his face scorched.

He kicked the headmaster's hat to pieces.

He jumped off a boat to swim in the middle of a lake, and escaped drowning by a hair's breadth.



He jumped off a bridge when he was 18 while playing tag with his brother and cousin. He ruptured a kidney and was unconscious for three days.

My teachers saw me as at once backward and precocious. Where my imagination or interest were not engaged, I would not or could not learn.

His general conduct is very bad - he is a constant trouble to everybody and is always in some scrape or other. He cannot be trusted to behave himself anywhere. (school report, 1884)

From the time he learned to talk his lips had been moving almost incessantly. (a biographer)

His handwriting scrawled, his spelling was hopeless and he never learned to do arithmetic.

He is so excitable. (his grandmother, 1888)

A most difficult child to manage. (his mother when he was 5)

He pushed schoolmates into the swimming pool.

He pulled a boy's ear so hard in a fight over a penknife that he got stabbed.

He got into trouble for breaking factory windows.

- He is late for school
- He loses his books
- He is so regular in his irregularity
- He ought to be at the top of his class, but he is at the bottom
- His energy is fitful
- When he gets to his work it is generally too late for him to do it well. (his teacher, 1888)

Don't interrupt me when I am interrupting! (to his son at dinner)

He never could wait his turn. (a biographer)

When the **no smoking** sign came on he lit his cigar.

He has a hundred-horsepower brain, he just doesn't know how to harness it. (another British prime minister)

I have to be perpetually active, or else I relapse into depression - dark moments of impatience and frustration.

He was so sensitive to touch that he always wore special silk underwear and slept naked between silk sheets.

He had few friends - he was too aggressive, egocentric, brash and offensive. His grasp of human psychology was negligible. He was insensitive to people and impervious to atmosphere. He 'lacked antennae'. (a psychiatrist)

It is impossible to imagine him being cosily relaxed. (a psychiatrist)

He worked by intuition and impulse - a zigzag streak of lightning in the brain. (his colleagues)

Winston's disregard of time, when there's anything he wants to do, is sublime - he firmly believes that it waits for him. (a colleague)

First impression: restless, almost intolerably so, without capacity for sustained and unexcited labour, egotistical, bumptious..... but with a certain personal magnetism, great pluck and some originality, not of intellect but character. Talked exclusively about himself....." (Beatrice Webb, diary entry 8th July, 1903)

WINSTON CHURCHILL (1874-1965):
ARMY OFFICER, JOURNALIST, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, CABINET MINISTER, PRIME MINISTER OF GREAT BRITAIN DURING WWII, ARTIST, AUTHOR OF 56 BOOKS, WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE FOR LITERATURE. A LIST OF ALL HIS PRIZES, HONOURS AND HONOURARY DEGREES WOULD FILL PAGES.

All these quotes are real, adapted, from Churchill's writings, family letters, etc. The psychiatrist was Anthony Storr, and the most helpful biographer was William Manchester. MARY JACKES, for TADA, August 1991.