

I AM A LEGEND: Marilyn Monroe

Level: B1/B2

KEY

Ex.3.a.

- a) Norma Jeane Mortenson; Norma Jeane Baker
- b) She never knew her father and her mother suffered from mental illness
- c) It took her 6 years of hard work to get famous
- d) She portrayed silly blondes
- e) She was a very intelligent, well-read person
- f) She suffered from depression and endometriosis
- g) She was considered difficult to work with because she got to work late and often intoxicated

Ex.3.b.

- a) T
- b) T
- c) F
- d) F
- e) T
- f) F
- g) T
- h) T

Ex.4.a.

- 1. D
- 2. G
- 3. H
- 4. J
- 5. E
- 6. C
- 7. I

8. B
9. H
10. A
11. F

Ex.4.b.

1. starlets
2. mental breakdown
3. foster care
4. fooled
5. top billings
6. dumb blonde
7. held her own

Extra Activity

Marilyn Monroe, original name Norma Jeane Mortenson, later called Norma Jeane Baker, Jeane sometimes spelled Jean, (born June 1, 1926, Los Angeles, California, U.S.—died August 5, 1962, Los Angeles), American actress who became a major sex symbol, starring in a number of commercially successful films during the 1950s, and who is considered a pop culture icon.

Norma Jeane Mortenson later took her mother's name, Baker. Her mother was frequently **confined** in an asylum, and Norma Jeane was **reared** by 12 successive sets of foster parents and, for a time, in **an orphanage**. In 1942 she married a fellow worker in an aircraft factory, but they divorced soon after World War II. She became a popular photographer's model and in 1946 signed a short-term contract with Twentieth Century-Fox, taking as her screen name Marilyn Monroe. After a few brief appearances in movies made by the Fox and Columbia studios, she was again unemployed, and she returned to modeling for photographers. Her nude photograph on a calendar brought her a role in the film *Scudda-Hoo! Scudda-Hay!* (1948), which was followed by other minor roles.

In 1950 Monroe played a small uncredited role in *The Asphalt Jungle* that reaped a mountain of fan mail. An appearance in *All About Eve* (1950) won her another contract from Fox and much recognition. In a succession of movies, including *Let's Make It Legal* (1951), *Love Nest* (1951), *Clash by Night* (1952), and *Niagara* (1953), she advanced to star billing on the strength of her studio-fostered image as a “love goddess.” With performances in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953), and *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954), her fame grew steadily and spread throughout the world, and she became the object of **unprecedented** popular **adulation**. In 1954 she married baseball star Joe DiMaggio, and the attendant publicity was enormous. With the end of their marriage less than a year later she began to grow discontented with her career.

Monroe studied with Lee Strasberg at the Actors' Studio in New York City, and in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) and *Bus Stop* (1956) she began **to emerge** as a talented comedian. In 1956 she married playwright Arthur Miller and briefly retired from moviemaking, although she costarred with Laurence Olivier in *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957). She won **critical acclaim** for the first time as a serious actress for *Some Like It Hot* (1959). Her last film, the drama *The Misfits* (1961), was written by Miller specifically for Monroe, though their marriage disintegrated during production; they divorced in 1961.

In 1962 Monroe began filming the comedy *Something's Got to Give*. However, she was frequently absent from the set because of illnesses, and in May she traveled to New York City to attend a gala where she famously sang “Happy Birthday” to Pres. John F. Kennedy, with whom she was allegedly having an affair. In June Monroe was fired from the film. Although she was later rehired, work never resumed. After several months as a virtual recluse, Monroe died from an overdose of sleeping pills (barbiturates) in her Los Angeles home. Her death was ruled a “probable suicide,” and this finding was supported by the actress's history of drug use and previous suicide attempts. However, some believed that she had been killed after threatening to reveal her relationship with the Kennedy brothers—she was also rumoured to have had an affair with U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy—or that she had information linking the two men to organized crime. Although there was insufficient evidence to support these claims, conspiracy theories persisted.

In their first runs, Monroe's 23 movies grossed a total of more than \$200 million, and her fame **surpassed** that of any other entertainer of her time. Her early image as a dumb and seductive blonde gave way in later years to the tragic figure of a sensitive and insecure woman unable to escape the pressures of Hollywood. Her vulnerability and sensuousness combined with her **needless death** eventually raised her to the status of an American cultural icon.