

Skate Champs

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photographs by Diana Dobson

Overview

This text recounts Luka's experiences at the Skateboarding Championships and includes an interview. Luka also features in the Magenta-level book *Off I Go!* The sporting themes and specialised vocabulary link well with *Tom's Tryathlon* (also at Purple). There is an audio version on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2007*.

Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of making connections, summarising, identifying main ideas, and analysing and synthesising (the writing style). It provides many opportunities for exploring vocabulary.

Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the themes of effort and fair play
- the family involvement and encouragement
- the focus on Luka
- the ways the writer has created a sense of action and excitement through the use of:
 - adjectives, such as “awesome”, “best”, “close”, “full”, “great”, “long”, “lucky”, “magnificent”, “nervous”, “perfect”
 - present-tense verbs, such as “arrive”, “blows”, “cheers”, “flies”, “knows”, “notices”, “practises”, “watches”, “wishes”, to create a sense of immediacy
 - questions to draw in the reader and create suspense
 - references to the age difference between Luka and his main rival
 - descriptions of and clues to Luka's thoughts and feelings
- the informal style:
 - the colloquial phrases “all set to go”, “give his very best”
 - the use of contractions
 - the use of a dash to link ideas
- the way the design supports the writing:
 - the use of bold print to emphasise the excitement
 - the action photographs, which reveal the concentration and determination of the skateboarders
 - the action sequences on pages 5, 10, and 12
 - the focus on Luka on page 11
 - the graphic elements, for example, the crayoned label pointing to Luka on page 2 and the photos' rough edges, which imitate the style of skate magazines

- the vocabulary of skateboarding and of competitions – “announcement”, “championships”, “champs”, “compete”, “competition”, “deck”, “finals”, “finalists”, “first”, “fun box”, “full-size”, “heats”, “helmet”, “hooter”, “leap”, “moves”, “padded”, “pads”, “ramp”, “second”, “skate”, “skateboarding”, “skaters”, “speakers”, “safety gear”, “third”, “tricks”, “under 13 section”, “winner”
- the footnotes on pages 4 and 15
- the double meaning of “Skate Champs”
- the sequence of events and the indicators of time – “Today”, “before”, “in the morning”, “then”, “At last”, “After lunch”, “goes first”, “When”, “For four minutes”.

Introducing the text

Tell the children you have a book for them to read about a skateboarding competition. Discuss the cover and find out what the children know about skateboarding. You could check the boys’ safety equipment with what the children learned from *Off I Go!* Children with a lot of skateboarding experience may like to describe some of their “moves”. Have a skateboard available for the children to try balancing on.

Record key words from the discussion on a chart. Draw out the two meanings of “champs” (competitions and champions) in the title. Use this initial discussion to guide you as to how much information you may need to feed in as the children read.

Alternatively, you could plan to have the children read *Tom’s Tryathlon* before reading this text so that they are familiar with the concept, and some of the vocabulary, of sporting competitions.

Let’s read to find out what happens in these skate champs.

During the reading

Read the names of the author and the photographer.

Title page – The children should be able to predict that these are some of the competitors.

Pages 2 and 3 – Have the children review these pages with a partner before reading, to get an idea of the content. Discuss their predictions and how they made them, for example: drawing on their experiences of entering competitions and their recollection of *Tom’s Tryathlon* or other similar texts; studying the photographs; or noting key words in the text. Briefly discuss any experiences of entering competitions or performing that the children have had and how they felt beforehand.

Ask the children to read the text silently, pausing at various points for discussion or to clarify any difficulties. Encourage them to use small sticky notes to mark any words that they are unsure of to return to later.

Check that the children understand that “champs” is the abbreviated form of “championships” and that “set to go” means “ready”. Briefly discuss any words that caused difficulty and add any new words to the chart. Clarify that an “under 13” competition means that the oldest competitors will be 12. The photograph on the title page suggests that most of the competitors will be older than Luka. *What does this suggest to you about Luka?*

Page 4 – *How has the writer tried to help the reader on this page?* Make links to the children’s mathematical knowledge of “flat surfaces” and “edges” to clarify the meaning of the “fun box” in the footnote.

Page 5 – You may need to tell the children Dylan’s name. Make connections to the children’s basic facts knowledge ($6 + 6 = 12$) to clarify the significance of Luka’s age. *I wonder what Luka will have to do to “give his very best”?*

Page 6 – Ask the children to summarise the events so far and to draw on their knowledge of competition formats (heats and finals) to predict what the next stage of the competition will be.

Page 7 – Encourage the children to make connections to their own experiences of competitions. *What do you need to do when you concentrate?*

Page 8 – Briefly explain the reason for the lower-case and upper-case initial letters for “koro/Koro” and, if necessary, explain who Koro is. Draw out the idea that Luka’s family are all there, supporting and encouraging him.

Page 9 – *How do we know that Luka has done his very best?* Encourage the children to infer, using: the photos, the text (“his legs are tired”), and what they know about the effort involved in sporting competitions. Clarify the purpose of the hooter. The children may recall this from *Tom’s Tryathlon*.

Pages 10 and 11 – *How’s Luka feeling? Who is going to win?*

Page 12 – If necessary, support the children with decoding “mag-nif-i-cent”. You may need to reassure the children about the homophones “For” and “four”. Explain that homophones sound alike but are spelled differently and have different meanings.

Page 13 – *What does this page tell you about Dylan and Luka? I wonder how Luka’s feeling.*

Page 14 – Draw out the idea that Luka isn’t too worried about coming second. Discuss the children’s experiences of not winning.

Pages 15 and 16 – Before the children read the interview, have them think, pair, and share some questions they think an interviewer might ask Luka. If necessary, explain what an interview is and who the interviewer is in this text. Alternatively, you could stop the lesson here and ask the children to think about some questions they would like to ask Luka before they read the interview in a subsequent lesson.

After the children have read the interview, summarise the new information they have about Luka. *Do you think he’ll enter another competition? I wonder if he’d do anything differently next time ...*

After the reading

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text with a partner, observing their fluency and expressiveness and how they manage the subject-specific vocabulary.

Discuss why Luka is such a good skateboarder. Encourage the children to refer to the text and photographs and support them in drawing out the main ideas of dedication and practice, family support, listening to advice, and enjoyment.

Locate the indicators of time in the text and talk about how these indicators help the reader to follow the sequence of events. Construct a timeline together of the day's events or have the children reread the text and then recount the events, in sequence, to a partner.

Refer to the vocabulary chart and discuss the strategies the children used (or could have used) to work out and cross-check some of the subject-specific words. Draw out the idea of the importance of rereading the phrase or sentence to cross-check the meaning. Examples of strategies could include:

- “Skateboarding Championships” – noticing words within words and making connections to the title and the pre-reading discussion;
- “practises”, “heats”, and “finals” – using visual (print) information and making connections to their knowledge of the vocabulary of competitions;
- “ramp”, “tricks”, “deck” – using visual information to sound these words out and using the photographs or context to check;
- “announcement” and “magnificent” – breaking the words into smaller, recognisable chunks;
- “fun box” and “deck” – using the footnotes to clarify the meanings.

Discuss the use of footnotes in this text to provide explanations. Make connections to other non-fiction texts and discuss other ways that texts may explain word meanings, for example, the use of definitions or explanations in *Inside the Maize Maze* and *Duckling Palace*; the use of text boxes in *Tom's Tryathlon*; the use of labels in *Bikes*; and the use of a glossary in *White Sunday in Sāmoa*.

Focus on the style of the writing. *What has the author done to make this text so exciting?* You could focus on just one or two features or look at how a number of features are combined on a selected page. For example, you could:

- discuss how the questions on pages 11 and 12 draw the reader in and create suspense;
- reread the sentences that include a dash (pages 5, 12, and 13) and draw out the idea that the pause signalled by the dash adds impact to the information that follows;
- identify some examples of effective use of adjectives, such as “awesome tricks” and “magnificent jump” on page 12, and reread the sentences with the adjectives removed to show the difference;
- select a page of text and, together, analyse the features that make it effective. For example, on page 5, the writer focuses on Luka's point of view. This narrows the focus of the championships down to two competitors, and this focus is backed up by the photographs of Dylan that dominate the page. The second sentence uses a dash and an exclamation mark for impact and also reinforces for the reader the big difference in age between Luka and Dylan. The last sentence gives an insight into Luka's thoughts and helps readers to imagine themselves in Luka's place.

Suggestions for further tasks

Listen to the audio version on the CD *Readalong 2007*.

Read *Tom's Tryathlon* (Purple) and compare the style of the writing.

Read about another lively sport in "Motocross", *Junior Journal 30* (Purple).

Display a chart of favourite adjectives or phrases from the text that the children can refer to when writing.

Attach thought bubbles to the photographs of Luka on pages 9, 11, 13, and 14.

Read the children another example of an interview, such as "Wheelchair Tennis" in *School Journal*, Part 2 Number 1, 2002.

Together, create a list of interview questions and have the children interview a classmate, older child, or visitor about a sport they play or a skill they have, for example, that of playing a musical instrument.