

Introduction

This support pack contains the following materials:

- a pre-reading activity;
- the story that you can listen to;
- a comprehension activity based on the story;
- a vocabulary activity.

Before reading the story

Exercise 1

The following 7 questions will help you understand the story. Choose the correct answer for each question:

1. Which of these is best for skiing?
 - a) Snow
 - b) Rain
 - c) Ice
2. Which type of clothes are best for skiing?
 - a) Warm clothes
 - b) Brightly-coloured clothes
 - c) Heavy clothes
3. What are goggles?
 - a) More than one internet search engine
 - b) A very big number
 - c) Things similar to glasses to protect the eyes
4. The Winter Olympics happen ...
 - a) every year
 - b) every four years
 - c) every five years
5. Which of these sports are NOT played at the Winter Olympics?
 - a) Skiing
 - b) Bobsleigh
 - c) Athletics
6. You win a gold medal when ...
 - a) you come first
 - b) you come second
 - c) you come third
7. The word "Athletics" usually means ...
 - a) running and jumping games
 - b) football and rugby
 - c) board games

Read the story.

The Skier

by Chris Rose

Afel was only a very small boy when he first saw snow. But it wasn't real snow that he saw. No, there was no real snow where he lived. He saw the snow in a picture book. The book had lots of pictures of children playing in big white fields. He asked his mother, "What are those white fields?" and his mother laughed and said "That's snow!" She tried to explain to him what snow was, but Afel didn't really understand. Sometimes there was rain where he lived, but not very much, so it was very difficult for him to understand what this cold, ice rain that his mother described was. It didn't matter. Even when he was only a very small boy, Afel was already in love with snow.

He dreamed about snow all the time, trying to imagine how it really was. He thought of big white fields. He thought of the big, heavy clothes the children playing in the snow wore. He thought about feeling cold. He dreamed of being able to fly across the white fields of snow.

Then, when Afel was twelve years old, the next thing happened. One day he was watching the TV at his uncle's house. His uncle had a big new TV, with all the satellite channels. Afel was watching one of the satellite channels, and a programme came on, and the programme was full of snow. Lots and lots of it. And not only snow – there were people flying across the snow. They looked like strange animals, like fantastic birds.

They had hats which covered all their heads and big goggles over their eyes. They wore brightly-coloured clothes. And on their feet, they had things that looked like strange shoes.

“What are those?” he asked his uncle excitedly. “Skis,” replied his uncle, “And those people are called skiers.” Afel was in love. Here was the snow, and here were people who were flying across the snow. It was just like one of his dreams. It was perfect. At that moment, he decided. He wanted to be a skier.

He asked his uncle what the programme was.

“The Winter Olympics,” said his uncle. “It’s like the normal Olympics, but for sports where you need snow –skiing, ice skating, bobsleigh, those sorts of things. They have it every four years.”

Afel found out that the next Winter Olympics was in Vancouver in Canada, in 2010.

“Perfect,” he thought. “Enough time for me to become a brilliant skier. Then I’ll go to the Winter Olympics, and win the gold medal for skiing.” “But there’s no snow here!” people told him. “Where are you going to ski?”

Afel didn’t care. He made himself a pair of skis from two pieces of wood. He tied them to his feet and practised skiing holding two sticks in his hands. At first he couldn’t move, but he practised and practised and practised until he could move quite quickly across the sand or the earth where he lived. He tried to fly down the hills like the people on tv, but he couldn’t. He could only move slowly.



“Never mind,” he thought. “It’s a start...”

“How will you go to the Olympics?” people asked him. “Our country doesn’t even have a team that goes to the Winter Olympics. Why don’t you do up athletics instead? You don’t need lots of expensive equipment to practice. Our country is very good at athletics. We have lots of runners. And every time we win lots of medals at the Olympics. But no skiing, no.”

Afel didn’t care. He found that Jamaica had sent a bobsleigh team to the Olympics a few years ago.

“If Jamaica have a bobsleigh team,” he thought, “then our country can have a skier.”

So every night, out in the middle of the desert, Afel now practises skiing down sand dunes. He dreams that the yellow sand and brown earth of the desert is the white white snow of the mountains he saw on the television. He dreams that the yellow sand and brown earth are as gold as the medal he will bring home with him, when he is the world champion.

After reading

Exercise 2

Decide if each of the 9 statements about the text is True or False.

- a) When Afel was a small boy he played in the snow.
- b) Afel's mother explained to him what snow is.
- c) Afel understands what snow is.
- d) Afel dreams of the desert.
- e) Afel sees skiers on the television.
- f) The skiers on the television are flying.
- g) The skiers wear unusual shoes.
- h) Afel wants to be a skier when he sees the programme.
- i) Afel buys some skis.
- j) Afel finds skiing quite difficult.
- k) People encourage Afel.
- l) Afel keeps his dreams.

Exercise 3

Use the words in the table at the top to complete the sentences below.

channel	equipment	field	Goggles	ice	medal	stick
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1. My uncle has a small farm with one big [.....] where he keeps cows and where we played when I was a small boy.
2. When water freezes it becomes [.....] – nice to have in a cool drink!
3. Which [.....] are you watching? Can you turn over? I don't like this programme.
4. [.....] are useful for swimming as well as skiing! I hate getting water in my eyes.
5. The first prize is a gold [.....] with your name written on it.
6. When you walk up hills, a [.....] can help!
7. You don't need much [.....] to play football – just a ball, really.

Answers

Exercise 1: 1. a); 2. a); 3. c); 4. b); 5. c); 6. a); 7. a)

Exercise 2: 1. False (F); 2. True (T); 3. F; 4. F; 5. T; 6. F; 7. F; 8. T; 9. F; 10. T; 11. F; 12. T

Exercise 3: 1. field; 2. ice; 3. channel; 4. Goggles; 5. medal; 6. stick; 7. equipment