COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

*Kid Athletes: True Tales of Childhood* from Sports Legends contains kid-friendly and relatable childhood stories of sixteen of the world’s most famous sports icons. This curriculum guide, with connections to the Common Core, includes an array of language arts activities, book discussions, vocabulary instruction, and more to accommodate the learning needs of most students in grades 4 through 7. Students are asked to be careful readers without jeopardizing the fun of reading.

Noted throughout the guide are correlations to the discussion questions and activities to specific Common Core Language Arts Standards. For more information on specific standards, visit the Common Core website at www.corestandards.org.
PRE-READING

★ Previewing the text helps students understand the informational purpose of the book. Key characteristics of the text include the title, table of contents, illustrations, chapter headings, bibliography, and index. Ask students to compare and contrast the format of *Kid Athletes* with that of a narrative book.

★ Have students choose an athlete featured in *Kid Athletes*, and then ask them to conduct research about the athlete’s famous achievements. Invite students to share their findings to the class via a multimedia presentation.

★ Ask your class the following questions. Have students brainstorm, then call on individual students to answer and write their answers on the board.

What does it take to become a professional athlete?
What makes an athlete great?
What characteristics and behaviors make some athletes better than others?
If you could be a professional athlete, what sport would you play? Why?
Does a person’s childhood influence whether or not he or she can be a good athlete?
What does it mean to be a good sport?
Do you have to show good sportsmanship to be a good athlete? Why or why not?
How do kids learn good sportsmanship?

PRE-READING COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS
The Discussion Points address the following Common Core State Standards.

WRITING:

Text Types and Purposes
Grade 4 – W.4.1-3e
Grade 5 – W.5.1-3e
Grade 6 – W.6.1-3.e
Grade 7 – W.7.1-1c, 2-2d, 3-3e

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
Grade 4 – W.4.7-9b
Grade 5 – W.5.7-9b
Grade 6 – W.6.7-9
Grade 7 – W.7.7-9a

SPEAKING AND LISTENING:

Comprehension and Collaboration
Grade 4 – SL.4.1-2
Grade 5 – SL.5.1-1d
Grade 6 – SL.6.1-2
Grade 7 – SL.7.1

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
Grade 4 – SL.4.4-6
Grade 5 – SL.5.4-5
Grade 6 – SL.6.4-5
Grade 7 – SL.7.4-5

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All-Star Discussion Questions

How did Babe Ruth, the “bad boy,” end up making good?
What choices did Jackie Robinson make that helped him become a hero both on and off the field?
What characteristics does Billie Jean King possess that make her a great role model?
Name at least three reasons why Peyton Manning could be considered a good sport. Use examples from the book to explain your reasons.
What was the biggest challenge Danica Patrick faced on her road to becoming a champion race car driver?
List at least three ways Bobby Orr was a dedicated person both on and off the ice.
Explain how Michael Jordan’s older brother and childhood friend helped him become one of the world’s greatest athletes.
Give at least three examples of how Tiger Woods became “the youngest golf champion ever.”
How did Yao Ming’s height both help and hinder him throughout his personal and professional life?
Why was Gabrielle Douglas bullied? How did she overcome the bullying? What made her such a good gymnast?
Why is Babe Didrikson Zaharias considered the greatest athlete of the twentieth century? What characteristics did Babe possess that contributed to her success?
How did Bruce Lee’s childhood contribute to him becoming the “world’s first bona fide kung fu superstar?”
How did Muhammad Ali’s personality mirror his boxing training and skills?
How did Jesse Kuhaulua turn an accident into an advantage?
Explain the bond between Julie Krone and Filly. How did they help each other?
Explain how Lionel Messi overcame adversity to become one of the greatest soccer players of his generation.
Compare and contrast two of the kid athletes’ childhoods. How did each athlete’s upbringing contribute to his or her success?
What do the athletes in each of the three parts of the book—Part One: It’s Not Easy Being a Kid, Part Two: Family Matters, and Part Three: Practice Makes Perfect—all have in common? Why did the author set up the book this way?
List all the athletes featured in Kid Athletes. Then write down an adjective that best describes each one.
Which athlete do you think overcame the most adversity to succeed in his or her sport? Why? Use examples from the book to back up your answers.

DISCUSSION POINTS COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

The Discussion Points address the following Common Core State Standards for Reading Informational Text:

Key Ideas and Details
Grade 4 – RI.4.1-3
Grade 5 – RI.5.1-3
Grade 6 – RI.6.1-3
Grade 7 – RI.7.1-3

Craft and Structure
Grade 4 – RI.4.4-6
Grade 5 – RI.5.4-6
Grade 6 – RI.6.4-6
Grade 7 – RI.7.6

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
Grade 4 – RI.4.7, 9
Grade 5 – RI.5.9
Grade 6 – RI.6.9
Grade 7 – RI.7.9

Range of Reading Level of Text Complexity
Grade 4 – RI.4.10
Grade 5 – RI.5.10

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Review this list of vocabulary words found throughout *Kid Athletes*. First ask students if they can guess each word’s meaning by rereading it in the context of the story. Then have them use dictionaries to check the answers and/or define the word. Also have them use each word in a sentence of their own. Since there are so many vocabulary words, you may choose to review these words over a few class periods and assign some for homework. You can also use them for your weekly list, daily word study, or spelling exercises.

**INTRODUCTION**

legendary
obstacles
threatened
unruly

**BABE RUTH, BAD BOY MAKES GOOD**

reigning
autobiography
boisterous
quarrelsome
teeming
reformatory
incorrigible
wayward
impenetrable
residents
strapping
prefect
imposing
burly
knack
plucking
compassion
lam
remorse
opponents
prowess
escorted
donations

**BILLIE JEAN KING, THE GIRL WHO RAN ON RACKET POWER**

pioneer
nylon
preferred
pose
expenses
chaperone
determination
sponsors

**PEYTON MANNING, LORD OF THE DANCE**

critical
passion
opposing
strategy
discarded
prone
mishap
requirement
consisted
raucous
spirited
posternity

**DANICA PATRICK, THE GIRL WITHOUT FEAR**

fearlessness
makeshift
barreling
riled
lagging
rivalry
deliberately
irresponsible
cited

**BOBBY ORR, LITTLE KID, BIG HEART**

rarely
saplings
promptly
stature
maneuver
asset

**MICHAEL JORDAN AND HIS TWO TOWERING RIVALS**

towering
prone
err
gasket
dubbed
epic
fend
spurts
hurling
intervened
scanned
adversity
stoked
setback

**TIGER WOODS, KID SUPERSTAR**
toddled
mesmerized
repetitive
executed
imitation
feat
appearance
perspective
impediment
prestigious

**YAO MING, BIG KID IN A SMALL WORLD**
downside
destined
surpassed
colossal
typical
mettle
retaliate
tormentor

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exhibition
accurately
assessment
provincial
expectations
burden

GABRIELLE DOUGLAS,
GRACE UNDER PRESSURE
clamber
consumed
resistance
rigorous
gritted
isolated
qualify
mediocrity
mentor
convince
endured
pursue
frigid
affectionately

BABE DIDRIKSON ZAHARIAS,
A GIRL FOR ALL SEASONS
native
torrential
prompting
astound
reputation
despite
retrieve
reared
decree
clenched
conquered

exhibition
tenacious

BRUCE LEE, THE
KUNG FU KID
effortless
bustling
menagerie
superstition
preoccupied
exasperated
altercation
urged
predicted

MUHAMMAD ALI AND
THE CASE OF THE
MISSING BICYCLE
pugnacious
bazaar
dedicated
trainee
fundamentals
haymakers
anticipate
amateur
brash
forged

JESSE KUHAULUA, DON’T
MESS WITH BIG DADDY
boundless
vowed
sprinting
darted
solution
transistor

JULIE KRONE AND
THE MARVELOUS
MISCHIEVOUS PONY
mischievous
thoroughbred
bristled
backfired
festooned
astride
hitching
ornery
disposition
undetected
misled
diabolical
inducted

LIONEL MESSI, BEWARE
OF THE FLEA
deficiency
generation
bowled
dedication
exhibition
inability
injections
sensation
eager
turbulence
overcome
scrimmage
undaunted

After your class is familiar with the vocabulary list, invite students to choose 15-20 words and use the terms to write their own short stories starring their favorite kid athletes.
SHOEBOX HISTORY
Have each student choose an athlete from *Kid Athletes*. Ask students to think about why the person they selected is famous. Instruct each child to fill a shoebox with images, words, and objects that represent the athlete’s childhood, life, and achievements. Then ask students to decorate their shoeboxes and share their contents with the class.

DEAR DIARY
Ask students to pick a person featured in *Kid Athletes*. Then have them write diary entries in the voice of the athlete they selected explaining what his or her daily childhood life was like. Have students write one entry per day while you are teaching the book. To help spark ideas, suggest topics such as sports practice, favorite foods, home life, celebrations, friendships, and trouble from teammates and rivals.

FUN FACTS
Divide students into groups and then assign each group an athlete. Ask groups to pick fun facts from the book about their respective athlete’s childhood and write each fact on an index card. When each group has at least ten fun facts, tell them to tape their cards to a wall. After all groups are finished, have students share the fun facts with one another.

REEL TIME
Ask students to pick an athlete from *Kid Athletes* whom they feel connected to. Have them find the words or an event in the book that inspired this connection. Tell students to write a movie scene depicting the athlete that describes what he or she means to them. Make sure students use scriptwriting conventions such as dialogue, setting and character descriptions, and action direction. Record students performing each scene and screen a movie premiere for the class.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST
Have students choose one person from two of the three parts of *Kid Athletes*. Ask them to skim both chapters to find similarities and differences in the two athletes’ lives. Then have the children compare and contrast the two figures by listing the things they have in common and the things about them that are different. Spark interest by suggesting they look at family life, the sports they play, childhood experiences, obstacles they overcame, and why they became celebrated athletes. Instruct students to use their lists to help them write a compare and contrast essay.

TROPHY TIME
Ask students to choose an athlete they admire from *Kid Athletes*. Instruct students to create a trophy honoring their athlete. Have them design the trophy with pictures, symbols, and words on a piece of poster board. Hold an awards ceremony where students present their trophies to the athletes and the rest of the class.

MVP MAGAZINE
Let students choose a figure from *Kid Athletes* whom they feel deserves to be named MVP (Most Valuable Person). Ask them to write and illustrate a magazine article that demonstrates why he or she deserves the title, using examples from the book as reasons as well as any lasting contributions he or she made that influence today’s world. Compile and publish all the articles into a classroom magazine.
IN MY OPINION

Have students pick a person from *Kid Athletes* and find examples of the athlete’s feelings, ideas, or actions in the book. Then have students write an op-ed newspaper article expressing their opinions on the athlete and explaining whether they agree or disagree with the person’s feelings, ideas, or actions. Encourage students to back up their views with examples and facts. Publish all the op-ed pieces in a classroom opinion newspaper.

TRADING CARDS

Instruct the class to make trading cards for each athlete featured in *Kid Athletes*. Using the book and the Internet, have students research the athletes and choose the pictures and information they deem most essential to include. The cards should portray the reasons these athletes are considered sports legends. Create cards measuring 2½ inches by 3½ inches, like traditional trading cards, with the person’s picture on one side and some of their statistics on the other.

LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

The Language Arts Activities address the following Common Core State Standards.

**WRITING:**

Text Types and Purposes
- Grade 4 – W.4.1-3e
- Grade 5 – W.5.1-3e
- Grade 6 – W.6.1-3.e
- Grade 7 – W.7.1-1c, 2-2d, 3-3e

Production and Distribution of Writing
- Grade 4 – W.4.4-6
- Grade 5 – W.5.4-6
- Grade 6 – W.6.4-5
- Grade 7 – W.7.4-6

Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Grade 4 – W.4.7-9b
- Grade 5 – W.5.7-9b
- Grade 6 – W.6.7-9
- Grade 7 – W.7.7-9a

**SPEAKING AND LISTENING:**

Comprehension and Collaboration
- Grade 4 – SL.4.1-2
- Grade 5 – SL.5.1-1d
- Grade 6 – SL.6.1-2
- Grade 7 – SL.7.1

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
- Grade 4 – SL.4.4-6
- Grade 5 – SL.5.4-5
- Grade 6 – SL.6.4-5
- Grade 7 – SL.7.4-5

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“Outstanding... inspiring and entertaining, *Kid Athletes* isn’t just for sports fans.”
—Booklist, starred review

Forget the gold medals, the championships, and the undefeated seasons. When all-star athletes were growing up, they had regular-kid problems just like you. Baseball legend Babe Ruth was such a troublemaker, his family sent him to reform school. Race car champion Danica Patrick fended off bullies who told her “girls can’t drive.” And football superstar Peyton Manning was forced to dance the tango in his school play. *Kid Athletes* tells all of their stories and more with full-color cartoon illustrations on every page. Other biographies include Billie Jean King, Jackie Robinson, Yao Ming, Gabrielle Douglas, Tiger Woods, Julie Krone, Bruce Lee, Muhammad Ali, Bobby Orr, Lionel Messi, Babe Didrikson Zaharias, and Jesse Kuhaulua.

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Ages 9 to 12 ★ Grades 4 to 7

Author David Stabler and illustrator Doogie Horner have created many books. Their first collaboration was *Kid Presidents* (Quirk, 2014). Both live in New York City.