



# KID ATHLETES

TRUE TALES OF CHILDHOOD FROM

## SPORTS LEGENDS

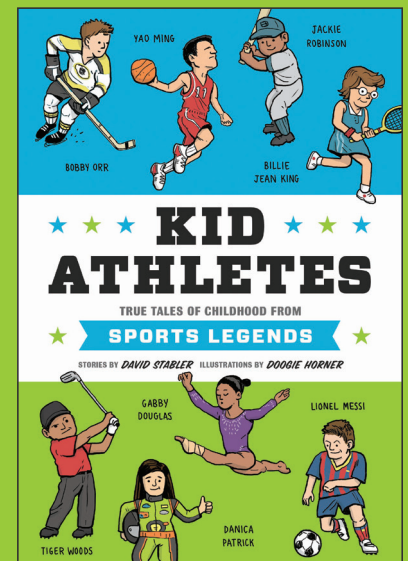
## CURRICULUM GUIDE

STORIES BY *DAVID STABLER* ILLUSTRATIONS BY *DOOGIE HORNER*

### 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](http://www.corestandards.org).



# ★ Pre-Reading Practice ★

## 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

# ★ 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

# ★ Varsity Vocabulary Boosters ★

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

## JACKIE ROBINSON, THE PRIDE OF PEPPER STREET

community  
discrimination  
petition  
nuisance  
lurk  
swindle  
wager  
proposed  
inspiration  
taunts

## 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  
posterity

## 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

escorting  
reluctant  
commute  
grueling  
outfox

## 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

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  
instinctively  
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.

## **VARSITY VOCABULARY BOOSTERS COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS**

The vocabulary activities address the following Common Core State Standards for **Language**:

### **Conventions of Standard English**

Grade 4 – L.4.1-2  
Grade 5 – L.5.1-2  
Grade 6 – L.6.1-2  
Grade 7 – L.7.1-2

### **Knowledge of Language**

Grade 4 – L.4.3  
Grade 5 – L.5.3  
Grade 6 – L.6.3  
Grade 7 – L.7.3

### **Vocabulary Acquisition and Use**

Grade 4 – L.4.4-6  
Grade 5 – L.5.4-6  
Grade 6 – L.6.4-6  
Grade 7 – L.7.4-6

# ★ *Legendary Language Arts Activities* ★

## **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  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  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

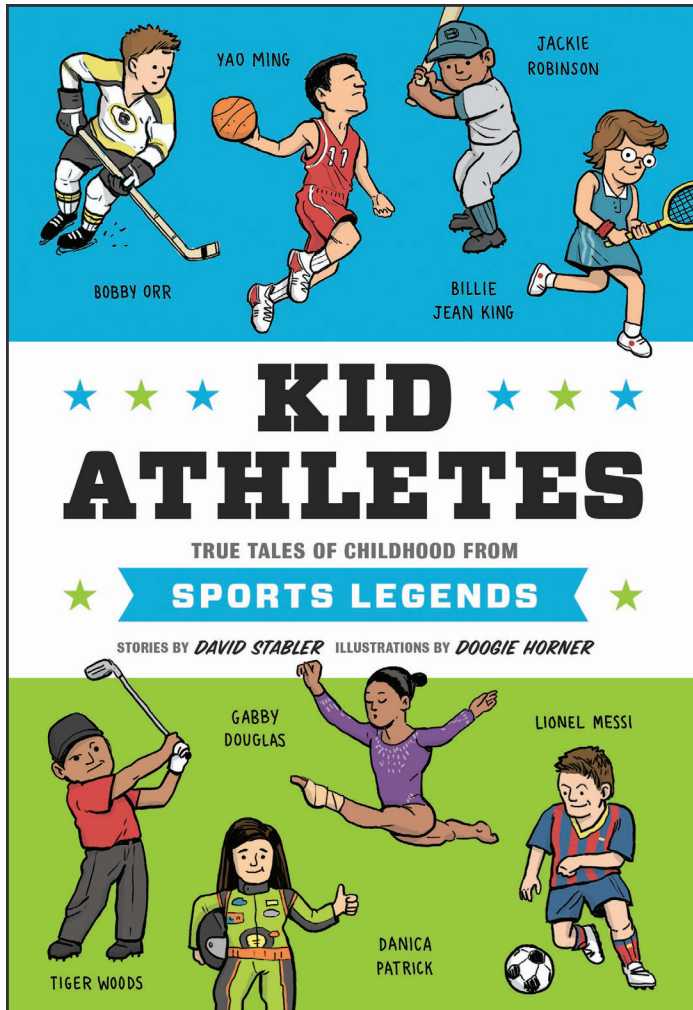
#### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

- Grade 4 – SL.4.4-6
- Grade 5 – SL.5.4-5
- Grade 6 – SL.6.4-5
- Grade 7 – SL.7.4-5

## ★ About the Book ★

★ “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

## ★ About the Author & Illustrator ★

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.