

A Dream Comes True

Why do ALL kids need a place to play?

Comprehension

Genre

A **Nonfiction Article** in a newspaper or magazine reports on real people, places, and events.



Monitor Comprehension

Persuasion

Persuasion is a method of convincing others that they should believe something or feel a certain way about a subject.

Most kids love recess, but for Hannah Kristan, it was her least favorite part of the school day. “I never got to do anything except sit there,” she recalls.

Hannah was born with a disease that kept the bones in her back from forming properly. She uses a **wheelchair**. Sadly, for kids like her, most playground equipment is off limits. In fact, Hannah is one of 5 million kids in the United States who cannot use traditional playground equipment because of some type of disability.

Paint panel



Talk tube





Hannah Kristan has a great time in this Boundless Playground high-back swing.

Then Hannah heard about Boundless Playgrounds—playgrounds without limits for children with disabilities. The wonderful group behind Boundless Playgrounds helps communities create special playgrounds for children of all abilities. There are swings and sandboxes specially designed for kids with physical disabilities. Kids with vision problems can enjoy the movement of swings and also use musical activities such as chime walls. Since her hometown in Connecticut had nothing like it, Hannah helped raise money for this new kind of playground.

A Boundless Playground is an exciting place for all kids.





Matt Cavedon

NEW EXPERIENCES

Matt Cavedon designed a swing especially for Boundless Playgrounds, but his commitment didn't stop there. In a speech he gave in 2004, Matt, then 15 years old, described an experience he had at the grand opening of a Boundless Playground in Rhode Island:

“A girl our age [15 years old] was swinging, laughing, and crying all at once. Her mom explained that it was the girl's first time on a swing! Is this a small thing? Not for her! Not for her mom! Not for the kids without disabilities who came up to her to say congratulations! I wonder how many of those kids had just talked to a person with a disability for the first time. I wonder how many will choose to **interact** with people who have different abilities because of that experience.”

The inspiration for Boundless Playgrounds was a playground created by Amy Jaffe Barzach. It is named Jonathan's Dream in honor of her son. Jonathan's Dream and many Boundless Playgrounds around the country have a glider swing that can be used by kids who use wheelchairs and their friends. The glider swing at Jonathan's Dream was designed by Matthew Cavedon, who wasn't even 10 years old at the time. Matthew was motivated because he uses a wheelchair himself and wanted to be able to have fun at playgrounds with other kids, regardless of their **physical** abilities or disabilities.

The **elementary** idea behind Boundless Playgrounds is that play is both part of the joy of childhood and an important way for children to learn about the world. Kids who are kept away from playgrounds are denied this enjoyment as well as the learning. Far from being a place of happy excitement, traditional playgrounds are often places of humiliation and isolation for those who can't join in the fun.



Amy Barzach and friends at Jonathan's Dream, the playground she designed and named for her son

Contrary to some **rigid** ideas about what a playground for children with special needs should be like, a Boundless Playground is every bit as colorful and challenging as a traditional playground. That's why it is inviting and fun for all children. And for Hannah, Matthew, and other kids like them, a playground like this is also a dream come true.

Think and Compare

1. What "dream" has come true for kids in this selection?
2. How does Matt Cavendon persuade his audience that Boundless Playgrounds are worthwhile?
3. According to this article, what do kids miss out on when they can't play at a playground?
4. Why do you think "The New Gym" was included in this section along with the other articles about health and fitness?



Test Strategy

Think and Search

Read on to find the answer.
Look for information in more than one place.



PROFILE *of a* PARALYMPIAN

Jennifer Howitt may use a wheelchair, but she isn't sitting out life. Since being paralyzed after breaking her back in a hiking accident at age nine, she has developed into one of the country's top young disabled athletes.

Howitt competed in the 1998 World Athletic Championships in track and field and went to the 2000 Sydney Paralympics as the youngest member of the 12-person U.S. women's wheelchair basketball team. Although the team finished in fifth place, "I was on an emotional high," says Howitt. "It was pretty inspirational. If the entire world can

come together to celebrate sport and disability, then it is really possible for us, as a planet, to work out all our problems."

Howitt is committed to changing the world in positive ways. She has coached young paraplegic athletes, traveled extensively, and attended Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., where she studied international politics. She hopes "to show young girls with disabilities that they can achieve whatever they want. A disability doesn't get in the way of anything. Maybe you'll have to adapt your goal, but you can always achieve it," Howitt says.

Directions: Answer the questions.

1. Which of the following best describes Jennifer's attitude?

- A committed to achieving goals
- B able to play basketball
- C sitting out life
- D paralyzed

2. What does Jennifer believe about disabilities?

- A People with disabilities live in Washington, D.C.
- B Disabilities should not keep a person from achieving his or her goals.
- C People always need wheelchairs.
- D You can help the entire world.

3. Jennifer believes that having a disability

- A is a handicap in many areas of life.
- B is not an obstacle to achieving one's goals.
- C can keep someone from traveling as much as they'd like.
- D prevents someone from becoming a good athlete.

4. Other than excelling as an athlete, what are some of Jennifer's other achievements?

5. How would you describe Jennifer's attitude toward her disability and her future? Use details from the article in your response.

Tip

Look for information
in more than one
place.

Write to a Prompt

“The New Gym” tells about a new approach to gym class. The goal is to help kids find an activity to keep them active into adulthood. Imagine your school is considering such a program. Write an editorial for the school paper designed to persuade school administrators to approve or reject this kind of program.

Working Out

I agree strongly with the proposal to introduce yoga and skateboarding as activities in gym class. I believe these activities would make gym class more exciting for many students.

The purpose of school is to give our brains AND our bodies a workout. Many students find the usual choice of team sports and track and field events boring and uninspiring. Instead of joining the rest of the class, they sit off on the sidelines. They are missing an opportunity to improve their health.

If we added these new types of activities as part of our gym program, more students would be motivated to “get up and GO!” They might start to take the idea of physical fitness more seriously. This could lead to healthful exercise habits that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

It just seems obvious. Let's expand what we offer in gym class. Everyone will benefit from the change!



I summed up my point in the last paragraph.

Writing Prompt

Your youth group has decided to take on a community service project, but you need community approval first. Write a persuasive editorial for your town's newspaper describing the project and making a strong argument for why it is a good project for the community.

Writer's Checklist

- Ask yourself, who is my audience?
- Think about your purpose for writing.
- Choose the correct form for your writing.
- Form an opinion about the topic.
- Use reasons to support your opinion.
- Be sure your ideas are logical and organized.
- Use your best spelling, grammar, and punctuation.