



Give It All You've Got

"You never fail until you stop trying."

—Florence Griffith Joyner



Give It All You've Got

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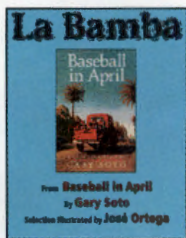
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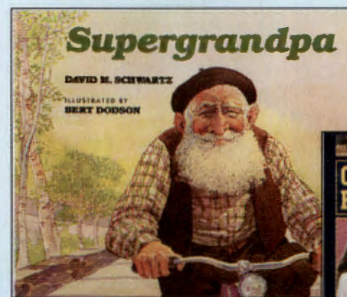
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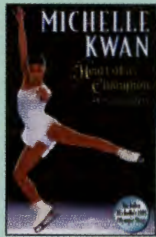
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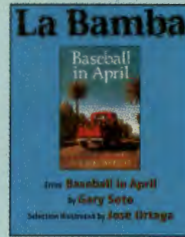
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If you like . . .



**Michelle Kwan:
Heart of a
Champion**
by Michelle Kwan

If you like . . .



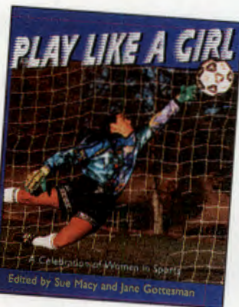
La Bamba
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Then try . . .

Play Like a Girl

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Women and girls
are playing and
breaking records in
almost every sport.



Then try . . .

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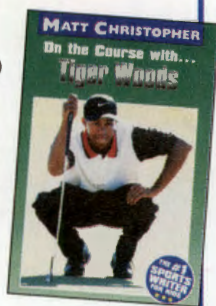
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Ernie thinks he must
have a new sleek bicycle
in order to enter the big
bike race.



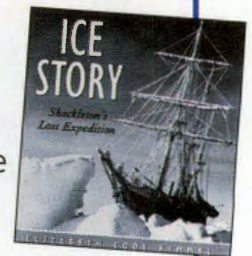
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Golf's newest sensation
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since age two.

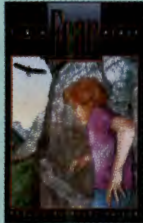


Ice Story: Shackleton's Lost Expedition

by Elizabeth Kimmel (Clarion)
When his ship *Endurance*
is crushed by ice in the
Antarctic, Shackleton
must do all he can to save
the lives of his men.



If you like . . .



The Fear Place

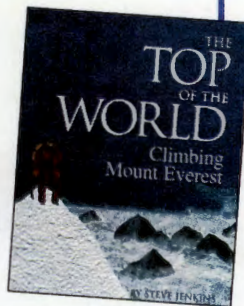
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Then try . . .

Top of the World: Climbing Mount Everest

by Steve Jenkins
(Houghton)

Experience what it is like to climb the summit of the highest point on earth.



White Water

by P. J. Petersen (Yearling)

When his father is bitten by a rattlesnake, Greg must overcome his fear of the rapids to save his father's life.



If you like . . .



Mae Jemison

by Gail Sakurai

Then try . . .

True Heart

by Marissa Moss (Harcourt)

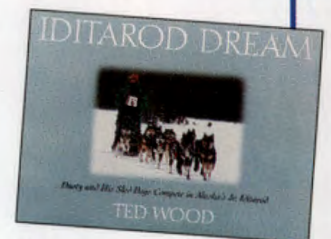
Bee, who has always loved the railroad, finally gets a chance to drive a train.



Iditarod Dream

by Ted Wood (Walker)

Fifteen-year-old Dusty prepares for the grueling 158-mile Junior Iditarod in Alaska.



Technology



Visit www.eduplace.com/kids **Education Place**[®]

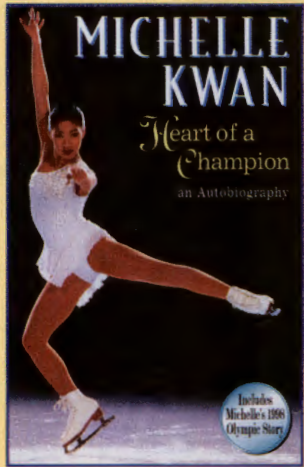
Read at school



Read at home www.bookadventure.org



Michelle Kwan



California
Standards

Standards to Achieve

Reading

- Use word origins (R1.2)
- Understand text features (R2.1)
- Facts, inferences, opinions (R2.5)

Figure Skating



In *Michelle Kwan: Heart of a Champion*, Michelle explains why figure skating isn't as simple as it looks. Senior ice skaters are under intense **pressure** to perform well, not only for themselves, but for the audience and the **judges**.

Skaters work long hours to practice their **presentations**. While skating, they need to balance both the **artistic** and **technical** sides of their performance. In other words, the feeling they bring to the music is as important as the number of spins they can turn in the air. ►

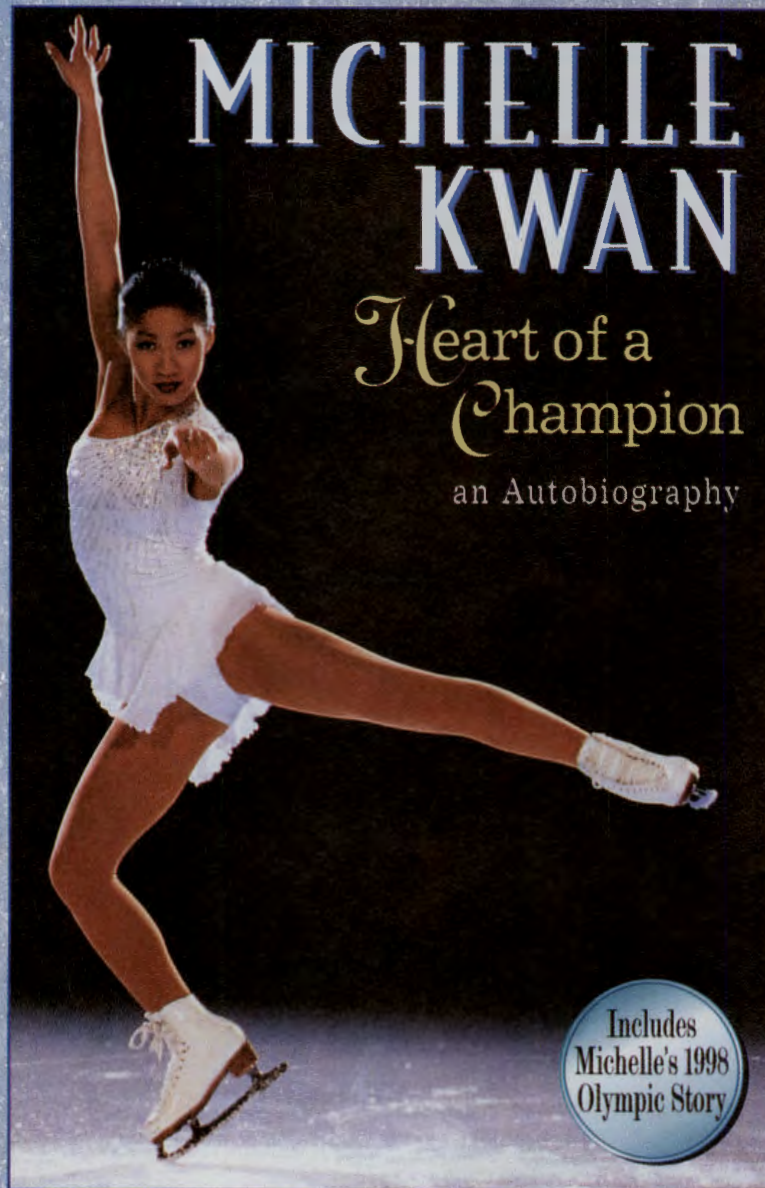


◀ Competitive skaters are expected to perform a **required** number of **elements**, or skills, in their **programs**. A panel of judges evaluates the skaters on their jumps, spins, and footwork.

After the judges fill out worksheets, they put their marks on scorecards and hand them to the referee. The scores are then put into a computer and flashed on the scoreboard. The highest score an **amateur** skater can receive is 6.0. ▼



Selection 1



Strategy Focus

This autobiographical selection is told by Michelle Kwan. As you read, **evaluate** how well you get to know her through her own words.



The year was 1992. Twelve-year-old Michelle Kwan was feeling confident about her ice skating. She and her sister, Karen, had been practicing at Ice Castles, a private skating rink, with their new coach, Frank Carroll. Michelle thought she was ready to compete at the Junior Nationals that year. Anticipating perfection, she skated disastrously. After the Nationals, Michelle was determined to prove to herself, her coach, and the rest of the world how much better she could skate.

O

kay, so I learned a lot from my experience in Junior Nationals. But even after bombing there, I still believed in myself. *I* knew I was a much better skater than that. Not just a better Junior skater — I thought I was ready to become a Senior skater, at the age of twelve.

As usual, I was impatiently thinking ahead. It was nice that Karen and I were skating at the same level, but if I didn't take the test now so that I could qualify my way into the 1993 Senior Nationals, I'd never make it to the 1994 Olympics. Karen was working hard as a Junior and didn't feel ready to move up to the highest level yet. But I really did feel ready — even if I had to move up without her.

I had this burning desire to compete in the big time. To be out there with Lu Chen and Surya Bonaly and Nancy Kerrigan. To compete with Tonya Harding, the only American woman who could do a triple Axel. I knew myself, and I knew my skating. I didn't see why I couldn't do it.

Others did. Frank, for one. He said the thing to do was to wait. If we worked hard all year, I'd have a good chance of winning the Junior Nationals in 1993. Frank said the judges like to get to know a skater before they give them high scores at Seniors competitions. They like to know you've paid your dues.

Frank went off to a coaches' conference in Canada for a week. And I did something that I don't usually do: I ignored the wisdom of someone who was older and wiser than me and I took the Senior test. This is a good example of what I mean when I say I'm impatient. I do have a mind of my own, and at that moment I felt like I knew me and my abilities better than anyone else.

Anyway, we went to Los Angeles to take the test. All I had to do was skate my program for a panel of judges. If I could do all the skills the USFSA required for Senior skaters in competitions, they move me on up. Easy as pie. I'd get my little pin, and go home as a *Lady* skater. After that, I couldn't skate at the lower levels anymore.

I passed, no problem, like I expected. But then came the hard part. I had to tell Frank.

Frank is one of the greatest coaches in the world. I already had a huge amount of respect for him. At the same time, I couldn't resist a challenge. When he came home, I explained to him that the challenge of becoming a top-level skater and maybe getting into the 1994 Olympics was irresistible to me. I hoped he'd understand.

All the same, he flipped his lid. He was furious. For a few days he wouldn't talk to me. He didn't think I was ready for the big leagues. He thought I'd skate onto the ice in my first Senior competition, and the judges would say, "Who is this *kid*?"

Michelle Kwan (right) at the Olympic Training Center and (below) performing at the 1992 Nationals.



Things were bad between us for a while. I apologized and apologized, and hoped he would calm down.

When he finally did, he sat me down and said, “Young lady, you have no idea what it means to be a Senior skater. You know next to nothing about the artistic side of skating. You need to understand how to *hear* the music. You are going to have to *transform* your skating.”

I took it all in. Frank was right, of course. I was a good jumper, but my skating wasn't elegant or beautiful. And I hadn't thought that much about really *listening* to the music. I just got out there and jumped around.

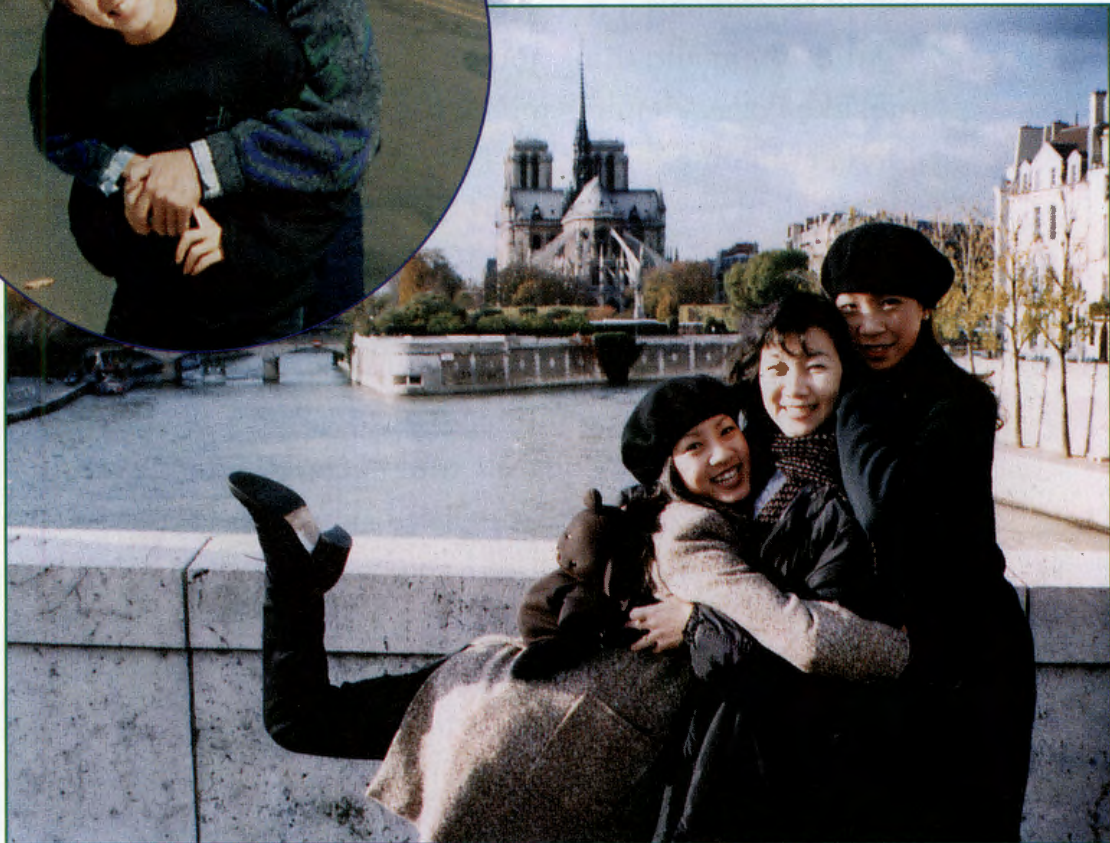
Frank said I would have to be a perfectionist in every aspect of my presentation. My costumes, my hair, my face. My spirals, my edges, my footwork. He asked if I had any idea of the work I had ahead of me. I told him that *now* I did, and that I would do whatever I had to do . . . whatever he told me to do.



Kwan spends hours on the ice practicing with her coach, Frank Carroll (above), and her choreographer, Lori Nichol (left).



Kwan's father (left), mother, and sister (below) help her balance hard work and fun.



My parents listened to what Frank said, too. My mom was worried that I wasn't ready for this next big step. My dad reminded me of the thin line between discipline and pressure. Although they both wanted me to have discipline, they were afraid I was too young for the kind of pressure I'd face.

But my parents said that if I wanted it with all my heart, and if I was ready for the hard work ahead, they'd back me up like they always had. And they'd keep an eye on me to make sure I was still having fun and being myself.

I did want it, and I did feel ready. The judges gave me a pin that said I was a Senior skater. But I wouldn't really be one until I could make myself one. So that's what I set out to do. Like I said, I *love* a challenge.

Now that I'd made the leap to the Senior level, it wasn't enough anymore to be a talented kid. All of a sudden I would be compared to the best skaters in the world. I had to study them and think about the ones who came before me, like Peggy Fleming and Dorothy Hamill, Janet Lynn and Linda Fratianne.

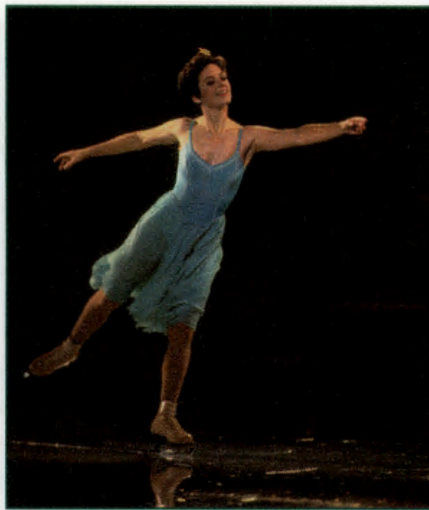
I would need to take parts from all of them. Peggy Fleming's grace and artistry. Brian Boitano's heart. Dorothy Hamill's elegance.

Every skater has qualities that make him or her special. When I was little, my jumping made me stand out. I had good "spring," which means I could get up high in the air without seeming to make much effort. At a very young age I was able to do the triple jumps that most skaters don't get till they're older.

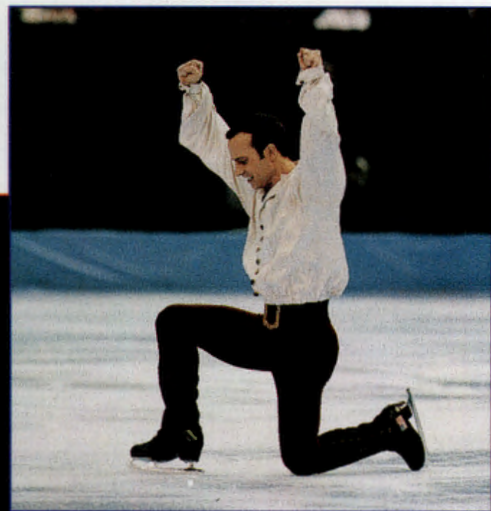
But my programs were simple. I was young and I looked it. I had a lot of work ahead of me to bring my programs up to the level of the elite skaters. In a great program, every movement should flow naturally into the next one. The music and skating should seem like they were meant for each other. The music should seem to *fill* the skater, just like it fills the arena.

Each skater has two programs for competitions. There's the "technical" or "short program," which is two minutes and thirty seconds long. And there's the "freeskate" or "long program," which is four minutes long for women (four and a half for men). The long program is by far the more important of the two. That's where "artistry" counts most.

The judges look for many required elements in a program. If the skater leaves any out, they deduct points from the score. You have to make sure the judges see those ele-



Dorothy Hamill (left), Brian Boitano (below, right), and Peggy Fleming (below, left), have all inspired Kwan.

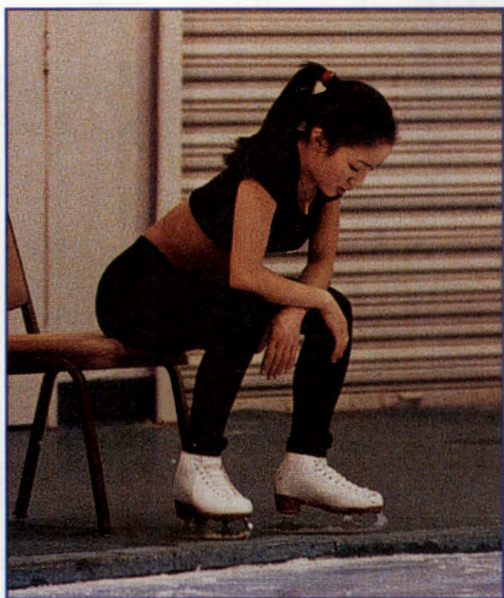


ments, but you can't interrupt the flow of the program to point at yourself and say, "Look at this!"

Spirals and spread eagles, which are harder to do well than you might think, show off edges, balance, flexibility, and speed. But they have to seem effortless and smooth.

Spins can be more tiring than jumps. You have to use all your muscles to hold your body tight in order to get the most revolution and speed that you can while staying centered on one spot. You have to be able to step out of a spin and into the next part of your program as if it's the easiest thing in the world.

Kwan needs to stay focused both before and during a competition.



As with spins, the most difficult and athletic jumps take great strength. You have to have speed going into your jump and speed coming out of it. You need power in your legs to push yourself high into the air.

But a skater's mind has to be strong, too, and focused. It shouldn't look to the judges like this triple Lutz is any more difficult than anything else you've done. With combination jumps, the second one has to follow the first one smoothly.

Look at three-time world champion Elvis Stojko. He does quadruple/triple combinations. That's *seven revolutions*, total! It's amazingly difficult, but he makes it look simple.

When I started as a Senior, my programs were bumpy. The jumps and the steps and the spins weren't connected. I didn't let the music help me flow from one move to another. I didn't understand about *interpreting* the music. I rarely even smiled when I skated back then. To get to the level of great artists like Peggy, Dorothy, and Brian, you have to be *both* an athlete and an artist.

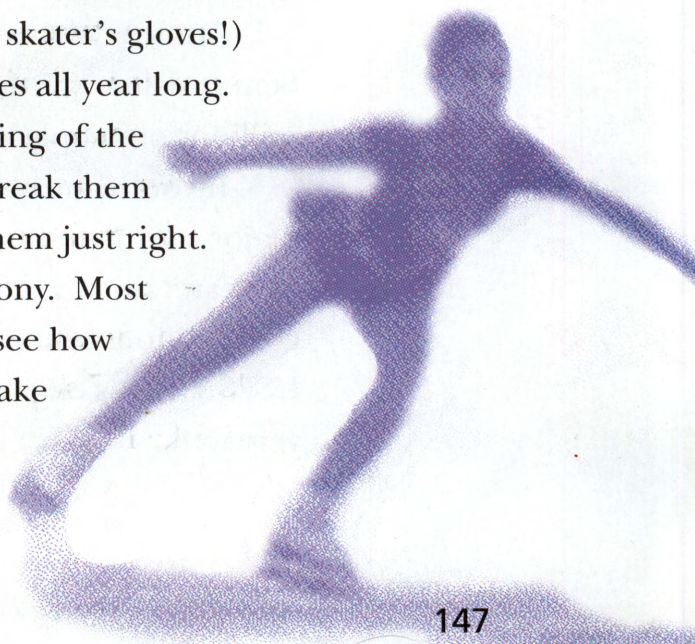
Most elite skaters have three forty-five-minute long practice sessions on the ice every day, usually with their coaches. They spend at least another hour in a gym making their muscles stronger and more flexible. On top of that, they work “on the floor” with their coaches, practicing jumps without the momentum and speed the ice gives them. They spend hours and hours with their choreographers developing new programs.

At the end of a day like this your body aches everywhere. Your back hurts from doing layback spins. Your bottom hurts from falling. Your shoulders, your legs — you just hurt all over. But there’s still more to do.

Every month there’s at least one major competition, plus exhibitions. The most important competitions come in the late winter and early spring. Nationals are in January or February and Worlds are in March. And in an Olympic year, the Olympics take place between Nationals and Worlds. So you can see, there’s hardly any time between the competitions to take a breath!

There are costumes to be fitted and fixed — costumes are my mother’s specialty (she works together with a designer on mine). But aside from practice clothes and gloves, the only piece of equipment a skater needs is her skates. (A warning about gloves: Skaters use them to wipe their noses, which run like crazy on an ice rink. Never borrow a skater’s gloves!)

Most skaters use just one pair of skates all year long. They usually get a new pair at the beginning of the season, and it takes weeks and weeks to break them in. Sometimes it takes all season to get them just right. When I first start using new skates, it’s agony. Most skaters have really ugly feet. You should see how swollen and gnarled my toes are when I take off my skates. On second thought, you don’t want to!



I'd always worn used skates and didn't get an actual brand-new pair of skates until 1995 (they're expensive!). A skater has to pick out the right boot and then put the blade on with screws.

My father is good with skates. For years he cut the heels of my boots lower for me so that my weight wouldn't go too far forward. And he always has to fiddle with the blade, making sure it's placed properly.

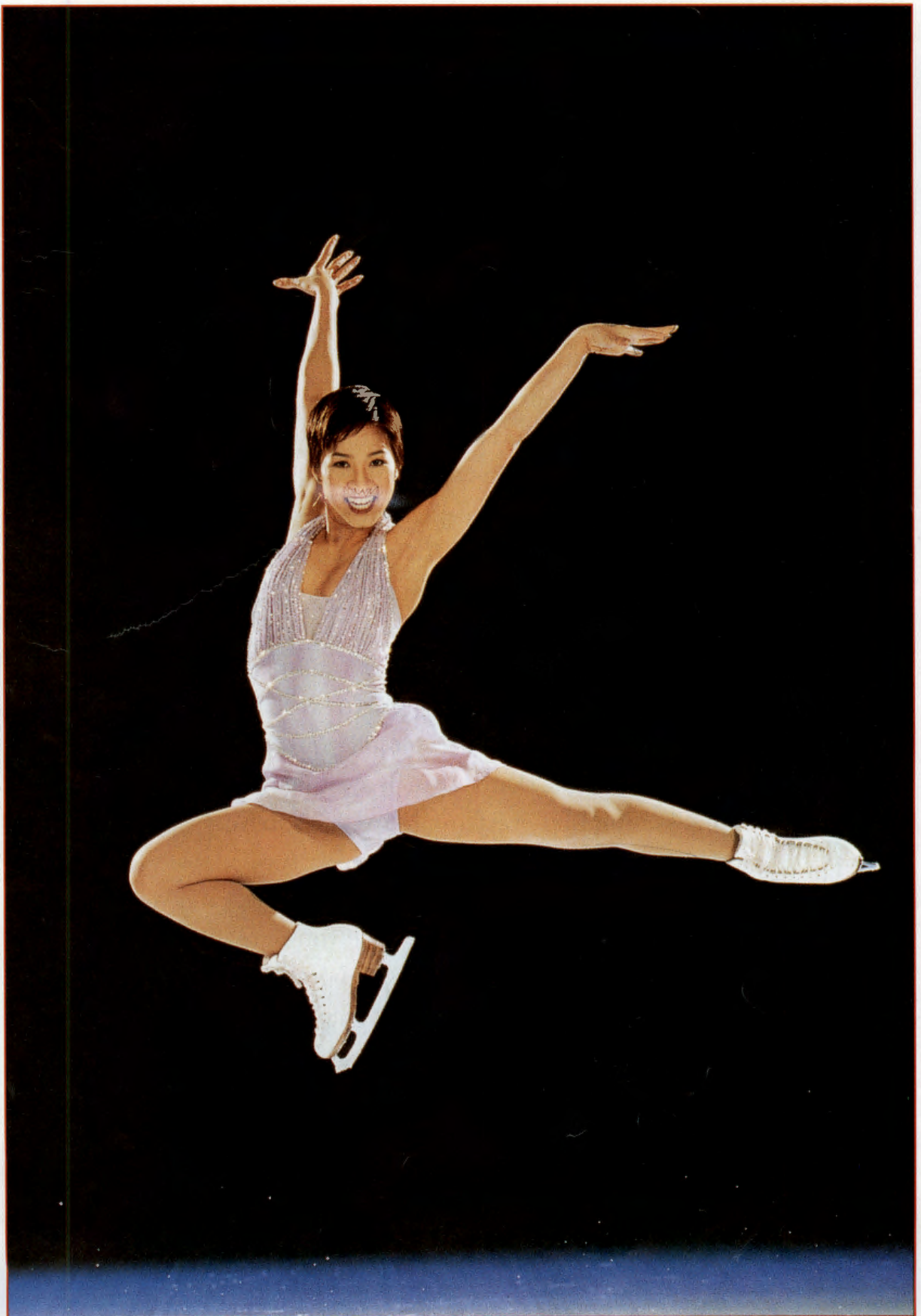
Sometimes everything feels different in new skates. Your weight is distributed differently. Your balance feels strange. A jump that was no problem at all last year is suddenly impossible — until you figure out how to adjust yourself to new skates.

Adjustment is something young skaters have to deal with just about every day. Our bodies are always changing. Not only do we get taller all the time, but as we get older we find a pound or two in places we never even noticed before. Luckily the changes don't usually happen overnight. When we're on the ice every day, we can adjust to them gradually.

I *love* moving across the ice. So I didn't mind when I started to get a little bigger and stronger because I could put some real weight into my edges and increase my speed. I was able to really *cover* the surface of the ice. That's when I feel most like I'm flying.

Another change that happened when I became a Senior skater was that I had the chance to be noticed by the millions of people who watch skating on TV.

If you're an amateur and eligible to compete in all the major competitions, like the Olympics, that doesn't mean you can't do *any* professional work. There are professional competitions and exhibitions throughout the year that the USFSA allows eligible skaters to do, and some of them pay very well.



Kwan's love of skating shows in this spectacular leap.

Money wasn't in the picture for *me* yet, though. If anything, the cost of training went up then — by a lot. The scholarships that Karen and I received paid for our living expenses and ice-time at Ice Castle. The USFSA gave us some support, too. But we had to pay Frank and buy skates. We also each had to have three costumes a year. Plus it was expensive to travel to the competitions — which, now that I was a Senior, were all over the world!

The life of a top-level skater is intense. A lot of skaters get so overwhelmed by it that they can't even think about their schoolwork. Many drop out of school. But I'd never want to do that, and my parents would never let me.

While all of this new activity was going on, I also had to study. I went to a regular school until the eighth grade when I became a Senior skater and my schedule got crazy. Since then I've had a tutor, who comes to my house. But that doesn't mean I have it easy. I still have to take tests and do homework (lots of it!), just like everybody else.

One of the most difficult and important challenges of being a full-time skater at such a young age is remembering that skating isn't everything. You have to work hard to remember that you're just at the very *beginning* of your life. People may call you a "Lady" or a "woman skater" or a "Senior," but you can't forget that you're really still a kid. And you can never forget how important school is.

That's why I've always tried to carry two images of myself in my mind. There's the picture of the skater I dream of being. But skating is only a sport, after all, and you should only do it if you really love it. The bigger picture I keep in mind is of the *person* I want to be and the life I want to live. That's the real challenge.

Meet the Author

MICHELLE KWAN



FACT FILE

Born: July 7, 1980

Birthplace: Torrance, California

Hometown: Lake Arrowhead, California

Family: Michelle Kwan is the youngest of three children. She has a brother, Ron, and a sister, Karen.

First skating experience: She first stepped onto the ice at age five, after watching her older brother play hockey.

Early success: Kwan won her first skating competition at the age of seven.

Continued success: She was named the 1996 Female Athlete of the Year by the United States Olympic Committee.

Records: Kwan is the only multiple winner of the Skater of the Year Award from the U.S. Figure Skating Association. At the U.S. Nationals she received fifteen 6.0s (out of eighteen) for artistry, more than any other U.S. skater in history.

Hobbies: When she's not skating, Kwan enjoys swimming, bowling, bicycling, and spending time with friends.

Skating philosophy: "Work hard, be yourself, and have fun."

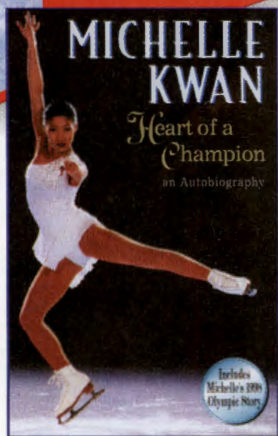
Second book: Kwan is also the author of *The Winning Attitude: What It Takes To Be a Champion*.

Internet



If you would like to learn more about Michelle Kwan, visit Education Place. www.eduplace.com/kids

Responding



Think About the Selection

1. Do you think Michelle's decision to become a Senior skater is a good one? Why or why not?
2. Would you rather be the best member of a less-skilled group, or, like Michelle, a newcomer in a very talented group? Explain.
3. How do Michelle's parents support her desire to become a great skater? Give examples from the selection to support your answer.
4. Would you enjoy the challenges and hard work of a skater's life? Why or why not?
5. How does Michelle's opinion of herself change during the time period of the selection? What events help cause this change?
6. Michelle says she has two images of herself: as a great skater and as a good person. Why do you think these two images are important to her?
7. **Connecting/Comparing** Compare Michelle Kwan's determination with Warren Faidley's in *Eye of the Storm*. How are they alike? How are they different?



Describing

Write About a Performance

Write a newspaper article that describes a skating performance. Tell whether the skater performed well or not and why. What qualities or skills made the skater stand out?

Tips

- Use active verbs and colorful, specific, descriptive words.
- Order the details in a way that makes sense. Consider chronological order or order of importance.

Math

Calculate Elapsed Time

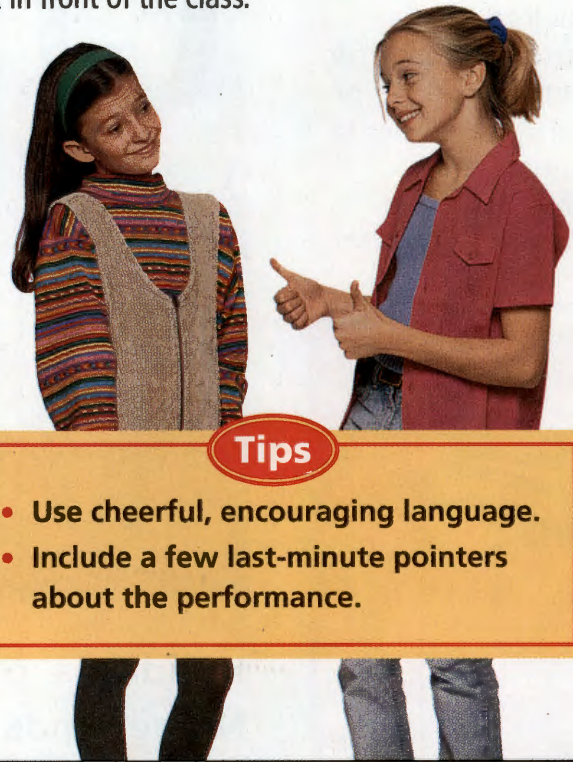
Six skaters, two women and four men, each present a "long program" (described on page 144). There is a ten-minute break between skaters. How long will the performance for all skaters last? How much of the total time will be skating time, and how much will be waiting time?

BONUS Make up your own math "riddle of the rink." Give it to a friend to answer.

Listening and Speaking

Give a Pep Talk

A skating coach might give a pep talk to encourage a skater before a performance. Draft a pep talk Frank might give to Michelle just before she goes onto the ice at a big competition. Then, with a partner playing the role of Michelle, give your pep talk in front of the class.



Tips

- Use cheerful, encouraging language.
- Include a few last-minute pointers about the performance.

Internet

Complete a Web Crossword Puzzle

You've learned a lot about ice skating and Michelle Kwan. Test what you know by completing a crossword puzzle that can be printed from Education Place.

www.eduplace.com/kids

**Skill: How to Read
a Map**

- 1 Use symbols on a map to identify cities, roads, rivers, and so on. Refer to the **map key** to see what the symbols stand for.
- 2 One inch on the map **scale** stands for a certain number of miles. Use a ruler to estimate the number of miles between two points.



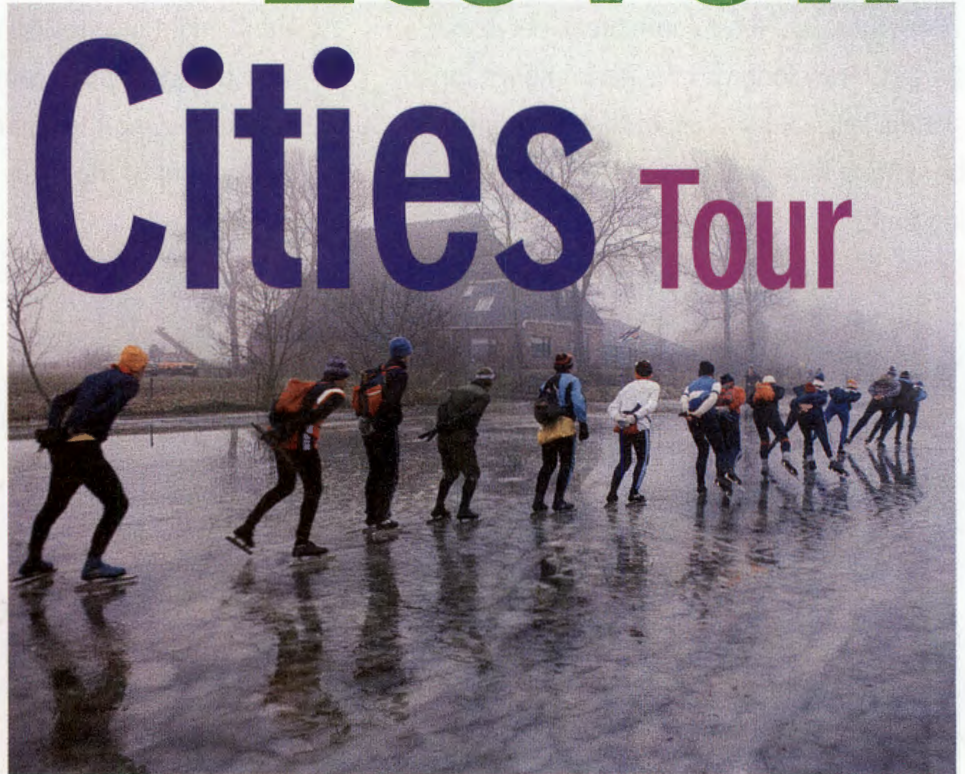
**Standards to
Achieve**

Reading

- **Understand text features (R2.1)**

The Eleven

Cities Tour



Hundreds of miles of canals criss-cross the Netherlands, a flat, low-lying country on the western edge of Europe. For much of the year, boats use these canals to travel between Dutch towns and cities. But when the weather gets cold enough, the traffic on the canals changes as Dutch skaters by the millions hit the ice. Those long, straight stretches of frozen canals allow the Dutch to give full rein to their national passion: speed skating.

▶ If figure skating is a little like dancing, speed skating is like running. And because the Netherlands is one of the few countries in the world where you can run from town to town on skates, the skating **tour** has become especially popular. In a tour, skaters follow a route that visits a certain number of cities. Tours may be skated as races, or just for the fun and challenge of completing them.

The Eleven Cities Tour, or *Elfstedentocht*, is probably the most famous of these tours. The idea behind it goes back to the 1700s, when individuals attempted to skate between all eleven towns of Friesland, a northern province of the Netherlands. Those who made it were considered to be very skilled skaters.



Netherlands



Elfsteden route

The 124-mile long Tour route winds through eleven towns in Friesland, one of the provinces of the Netherlands.

Key

- tour route
- towns
- roads

0 5 10 miles
Scale: 1 inch equals 7 miles



.....▶ The first official Eleven Cities Tour race took place in 1909, but it has been held only fourteen times since then. In order for the Tour to take place, the ice must be frozen at least six inches thick all along the race route. Winters in the Netherlands don't usually get that cold, so many years may go by between one race and the next. There was no Eleven Cities Tour between 1963 and 1985, a gap of twenty-two years!

The winter of 1997 was an especially cold one, though, and on January 2, the board in charge of the Tour made an announcement: the race — the first since 1986 — would be held in two days. Skaters scrambled to make it to Leeuwarden, the city where the race begins and ends. Finally, at 5:30 in the morning on January 4, the starting gun sounded and over 16,000 racers were off and skating.

Competitors had until midnight to complete the 124-mile race, but they were skating in tough conditions. Bumps and holes in the ice made the going very difficult. A strong wind slowed down the racers and made an already cold day even colder — the wind-chill factor was -4 degrees Fahrenheit.

Despite the cold, half a million spectators lined the canals to cheer on the competitors. Another nine million, three-fifths of the Netherlands' population, watched on television. (By comparison, only a little more than two-fifths of American households watched the 1997 Super Bowl.)



.....▶ The first racers crossed the finish line a little after noon. Other skaters continued to come in throughout the afternoon. By midnight, many were begging spectators to push them across the finish line so they could receive a medal for completing the race. Over 6,000 competitors weren't able to finish, dropping out because of exhaustion, frostbite, or other injuries.

Obstacles were nothing new for the Eleven Cities Tour. The winner of the 1929 race lost a toe to frostbite. And the 1963 race took place in a blizzard so severe that only 126 of the 9,862 participants were able to make it to the finish line.

Although there were several Olympic skaters in the field, the winner of the 1997 Tour was Henk Angenent, a Dutch Brussels-sprout farmer who completed the course in 6 hours, 49 minutes. The winner of the women's division, Klasina Seinstra, had a time of 7:49. Their prizes? No cash — just a medal and the honor of having their names placed on the winners' list of the Netherlands' greatest race. . . .



Klasina Seinstra and Henk Angenent join the list of Tour champions.



Student Writing Model

A Personal Essay

A personal essay explains the writer's opinion on a topic and gives reasons to support the opinion. Use this student's writing as a model when you write a personal essay of your own.



Becoming an Actor

My name is Johnny, and I am currently a fifth grader in California. There are many things I like to do such as drawing, swimming, or playing with my friends Colby, Matt, and Benji. When I grow up, I want to become an actor. My goal is to follow my dream and give it all I've got to become a professional stage and film actor.

I really think that if you want to be a well-rounded actor, it is important to learn how to be a great dancer. Right now I am taking a musical theater class in San Diego. Some people my age think that dancing is just for girls. In my opinion, jazz, ballet, and tap are fun to learn. Some of the greatest football players have learned ballet to help them with their form. I am taking dancing classes because I have always liked dancing, and I know in the long run it will help me with my acting.

A **beginning** often states a goal.

A personal essay states an **opinion** near the beginning.

Acting classes are getting me ready to become an actor. My dad drives me up to Los Angeles every Saturday for acting classes. I am learning how to read scripts, and I am also learning how to pull out emotions on the spot. It's not as easy as it looks to be on the stage or on television. I am learning that becoming an actor is a lot of hard work but a lot of fun at the same time.

My advice to anyone wanting to become an actor would be not to give up hope. There are so many people who want to become actors and so many good actors who work very hard, but many of them give up too fast and too soon. It is very easy to get discouraged if you are rejected at auditions.

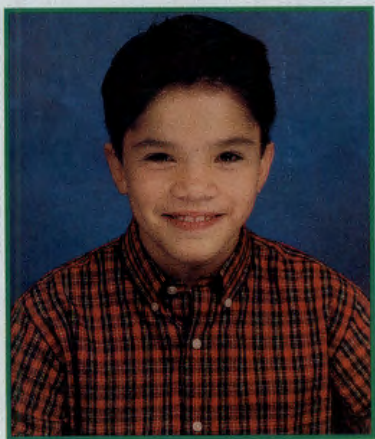
I feel lucky to be starting so young. I know that if I learn from the best and I am dedicated to becoming a well-rounded actor, I will someday reach my goal of acting on the stage, television, or film.

It's important to stay with the focus.

Using details makes an essay come alive.

A good ending ties the essay together.

Meet the Author



Johnny U.

Grade: five

State: California

Hobbies: acting, drawing, and swimming

What he wants to be when he grows up: an actor