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Blade Runner in Olympics 400m semi-final

5th August, 2012

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading / Listening	7
Student Survey	8
Discussion	9
Language Work	10
Writing	11
Homework	12
Answers	13

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

South African runner Oscar Pistorius has made history by becoming the first double-amputee to race in an Olympics athletics event. The 25-year-old four-time Paralympic champion finished second in his 400 meters heat in a time of 45.44 seconds. He slowed down towards the finish line, knowing his time was good enough to see him through to the semi-finals. Pistorius was cheered on by nearly 80,000 fans who packed into the Olympic stadium to witness a piece of sporting history. After his race he told BBC Sport: "I didn't know if I should cry or be happy. It was such a mix of emotions." He said: "I've got to thank my team, they trust me, I trust them." He added: "This crowd is amazing."

Pistorius has battled for years to be allowed to compete with able-bodied sprinters. There has been much debate about whether his J-shaped carbon fibre blades give him a competitive advantage over other runners. Some argue that because the blades are lighter than bone, he is able to rotate his legs quicker when running. They also say Pistorius gets extra bounce off the track. His legs were amputated above the knee when he was an 11-month-old baby. Despite this, he became a top athlete. His blades have earned him the nickname Blade Runner. He summed up his feelings, saying: "I've worked for six years to get my chance...I found myself smiling in the starting block. Which is very rare in the 400 meters."

WARM-UPS

1. ATHLETES: Walk around the class and talk to other students about athletes. Change partners often. Share your findings with your first partner.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

runners / making history / athletics events / the finish line / cheered / emotions / battled for years / debate / competitive advantage / bounce / nickname / rare

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. INSPIRATION: Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

From...	What's inspiring about them?	What can you learn from them?
Paralympians		
Nurses		
Presidents		
Teachers		
Artists		
Soldiers		

4. TWO YEARS: Students A **strongly** believe the Olympics should be every two years; Students B **strongly** believe every four years is enough. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. EVENTS: Which would you like to be Olympic champion of? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top.

- 400 metres
- 100 metres
- decathlon / heptathlon
- 100 metre freestyle swimming
- marathon
- cycling time trial
- judo
- badminton

6. ATHLETICS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'athletics'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. A South African sprinter became the first ever in Olympics athletics. T / F
- b. The sprinter, Oscar Pistorius, won his event to get to the semi-finals. T / F
- c. Pistorius told the BBC that he should cry after the race. T / F
- d. Pistorius said he and his team operated under mutual trust. T / F
- e. Some believe Pistorius' blades make him run faster than other runners. T / F
- f. The blades provide Pistorius with extra bounce for extra speed. T / F
- g. Pistorius lost his legs in a car accident when he was seven. T / F
- h. Pistorius said he had a rare smile when he was on the starting block. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. second | a. edge |
| 2. cheered | b. believe in |
| 3. witness | c. argument |
| 4. trust | d. fought |
| 5. amazing | e. turn |
| 6. battled | f. runner-up |
| 7. debate | g. incredible |
| 8. advantage | h. unusual |
| 9. rotate | i. applauded |
| 10. rare | j. see |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. the first double- | a. able-bodied sprinters |
| 2. The 25-year-old four- | b. of emotions |
| 3. his time was | c. advantage over other runners |
| 4. witness a piece | d. amputee to race in an Olympics |
| 5. It was such a mix | e. quicker when running |
| 6. be allowed to compete with | f. of sporting history |
| 7. a competitive | g. above the knee |
| 8. he is able to rotate his legs | h. time Paralympic champion |
| 9. His legs were amputated | i. up his feelings |
| 10. He summed | j. good enough to see him through |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

South African runner Oscar Pistorius has (1) _____ history by becoming the first double-(2) _____ to race in an Olympics athletics event. The 25-year-old four-(3) _____ Paralympic champion finished second in his 400 meters heat in a time of 45.44 seconds. He slowed down (4) _____ the finish line, knowing his time was good enough to see him through to the semi-finals. Pistorius was (5) _____ on by nearly 80,000 fans who packed into the Olympic stadium to (6) _____ a piece of sporting history. After his race he told BBC Sport: "I didn't know if I should cry or be happy. It was such a (7) _____ of emotions." He said: "I've got to thank my team, they trust me, I trust them." He added: "This (8) _____ is amazing."

witness
towards
amputee
mix
made
crowd
time
cheered

Pistorius has battled for years to be (9) _____ to compete with (10) _____ -bodied sprinters. There has been much debate about whether his J-shaped carbon fibre blades give him a competitive (11) _____ over other runners. Some argue that because the blades are lighter than bone, he is able to (12) _____ his legs quicker when running. They also say Pistorius gets extra (13) _____ off the track. His legs were amputated (14) _____ the knee when he was an 11-month-old baby. Despite this, he became a top athlete. His blades have earned him the (15) _____ Blade Runner. He summed up his feelings, saying: "I've worked for six years to get my chance....I found myself smiling in the starting block. Which is very (16) _____ in the 400 meters."

advantage
rare
able
bounce
nickname
allowed
rotate
above

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

South African runner Oscar Pistorius (1) _____ becoming the first (2) _____ in an Olympics athletics event. The 25-year-old four-time Paralympic champion finished second in his 400 meters (3) _____ .44 seconds. He slowed down towards the finish line, knowing his time was (4) _____ through to the semi-finals. Pistorius was cheered on by nearly 80,000 fans who packed into the Olympic stadium to (5) _____ history. After his race he told BBC Sport: "I didn't know if I should cry or be happy. It was (6) _____." He said: "I've got to thank my team, they trust me, I trust them." He added: "This crowd is amazing."

Pistorius has battled for years (7) _____ compete with able-bodied sprinters. There has been (8) _____ his J-shaped carbon fibre blades give him (9) _____ over other runners. Some argue that because the blades are lighter than bone, he is able to rotate his legs quicker when running. They also say Pistorius gets (10) _____ track. His legs were amputated above the knee when he was an 11-month-old baby. Despite this, he became a top athlete. His blades have (11) _____ Blade Runner. He summed up his feelings, saying: "I've worked for six years to get my chance....I found myself smiling in the starting block. Which (12) _____ 400 meters."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'semi' and 'final'.

semi	final
-------------	--------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• double• heat• enough• piece• cry• trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• able• debate• argue• quicker• knee• rare
--	---

OSCAR PISTORIUS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

Write five GOOD questions about Oscar Pistorius in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

OSCAR PISTORIUS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Paralympian'?
- c) What do you think of Oscar Pistorius' achievement?
- d) What has Pistorius added to the London Olympics?
- e) To what degree is his participation in the Olympics a piece of "sporting history"?
- f) How do you think he felt being cheered on by 80,000 people?
- g) Where does Pistorius rank among the world's top athletes?
- h) Has there been a more inspiring sight in the London Olympics than that of Pistorius in the 400 meters?
- i) When was the last time you experienced a mix of emotions?
- j) How much do you think a cheering crowd affects an athlete's performance?

Blade Runner in Olympics 400m semi-final – 5th August, 2012
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OSCAR PISTORIUS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think Oscar Pistorius should be allowed to race in the Olympics?
- c) What are the arguments for and against him running?
- d) Is it unfair on able-bodied runners if his blades give him a competitive advantage?
- e) Should more paralympians be encouraged to take part in the Olympics?
- f) How can sports scientists work out if Oscar Pistorius gets a competitive advantage?
- g) What lessons can we learn from Oscar Pistorius?
- h) What do you think of Oscar Pistorius' nickname?
- i) Why did he smile on the starting block?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Oscar Pistorius?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1208/120805-oscar_pistorius.html

South African runner Oscar Pistorius has (1) ____ history by becoming the first double-amputee to race in an Olympics athletics event. The 25-year-old four-(2) ____ Paralympic champion finished second in his 400 meters (3) ____ in a time of 45.44 seconds. He slowed down towards the finish line, knowing his time was good enough to (4) ____ him through to the semi-finals. Pistorius was cheered on by nearly 80,000 fans who packed into the Olympic stadium to (5) ____ a piece of sporting history. After his race he told BBC Sport: "I didn't know if I should cry or be happy. It was such a (6) ____ of emotions." He said: "I've got to thank my team, they trust me, I trust them." He added: "This crowd is amazing."

Pistorius has battled for years to be allowed to compete with (7) ____-bodied sprinters. There has been much debate about whether his J-shaped carbon fibre blades give him a competitive advantage (8) ____ other runners. Some argue that because the blades are lighter than bone, he is able to (9) ____ his legs quicker when running. They also say Pistorius gets extra bounce off the track. His legs were (10) ____ above the knee when he was an 11-month-old baby. Despite this, he became a top athlete. His blades have earned him the nickname Blade Runner. He summed (11) ____ his feelings, saying: "I've worked for six years to get my chance...I (12) ____ myself smiling in the starting block. Which is very rare in the 400 meters."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) given | (b) done | (c) been | (d) made |
| 2. | (a) times | (b) timed | (c) time | (d) timing |
| 3. | (a) cold | (b) heat | (c) cool | (d) warm |
| 4. | (a) see | (b) vision | (c) look | (d) eye |
| 5. | (a) look | (b) reflect | (c) witness | (d) spot |
| 6. | (a) stir | (b) whisk | (c) whip | (d) mix |
| 7. | (a) can | (b) able | (c) ability | (d) equal |
| 8. | (a) over | (b) under | (c) through | (d) along |
| 9. | (a) spin | (b) rotate | (c) twist | (d) spiral |
| 10. | (a) amputee | (b) amputation | (c) amputated | (d) amputates |
| 11. | (a) up | (b) all | (c) every | (d) down |
| 12. | (a) understood | (b) did | (c) gave | (d) found |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about Oscar Pistorius. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. OSCAR PISTORIUS: Make a poster about Oscar Pistorius. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. BLADE RUNNER: Write a magazine article about Oscar Pistorius. Include an imaginary interview with him.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Oscar Pistorius. Ask him three questions about his life and athletics. Give him three messages. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. F e. F f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1. second | a. runner-up |
| 2. cheered | b. applauded |
| 3. witness | c. see |
| 4. trust | d. believe in |
| 5. amazing | e. incredible |
| 6. battled | f. fought |
| 7. debate | g. argument |
| 8. advantage | h. edge |
| 9. rotate | i. turn |
| 10. rare | j. unusual |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. the first double- | a. amputee to race in an Olympics |
| 2. The 25-year-old four- | b. time Paralympic champion |
| 3. his time was | c. good enough to see him through |
| 4. witness a piece | d. of sporting history |
| 5. It was such a mix | e. of emotions |
| 6. be allowed to compete with | f. able-bodied sprinters |
| 7. a competitive | g. advantage over other runners |
| 8. he is able to rotate his legs | h. quicker when running |
| 9. His legs were amputated | i. above the knee |
| 10. He summed | j. up his feelings |

GAP FILL:

Blade Runner in Olympics 400m semi-final

South African runner Oscar Pistorius has (1) **made** history by becoming the first double-(2) **amputee** to race in an Olympics athletics event. The 25-year-old four-(3) **time** Paralympic champion finished second in his 400 meters heat in a time of 45.44 seconds. He slowed down (4) **towards** the finish line, knowing his time was good enough to see him through to the semi-finals. Pistorius was (5) **cheered** on by nearly 80,000 fans who packed into the Olympic stadium to (6) **witness** a piece of sporting history. After his race he told BBC Sport: "I didn't know if I should cry or be happy. It was such a (7) **mix** of emotions." He said: "I've got to thank my team, they trust me, I trust them." He added: "This (8) **crowd** is amazing."

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LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - c 11 - a 12 - d