



Summarizing

Level 2

A Collection of Readings

**Reading
Wings**<sup>4th
Edition</sup>

The **Savvy
Reader**

This project was developed at the Success for All Foundation under the direction of Robert E. Slavin and Nancy A. Madden to utilize the power of cooperative learning, frequent assessment and feedback, and schoolwide collaboration proven in decades of research to increase student learning.

The Savvy Reader—Summarizing, A Collection of Readings

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Table of Contents

◆ Why Anansi Lives in the Ceiling.....	1
◆ A Gift in the Storm.....	9
◆ The Natural.....	14
◆ The Memory Maker.....	16
◆ Serena’s Simple Shoes.....	19
◆ Run! Jump! Throw! The World of Track and Field.....	41

Why Anansi Lives in the Ceiling

Retold by Elizabeth McGraw-Austin



1. In the great continent of Africa there is a rainy season every year. It is called the monsoon season. When the monsoon season comes, it rains for days and days, and all the animals and people must stay inside.

One year brought the rainiest monsoon season ever. Even the oldest woman in the village had never seen one that was rainier.

It rained all day and it rained all night. It rained for a week, two weeks, and still another week. It rained so hard that it was dark during the day. The animals could not go outside to find food. Elephant, who would chew the new branches of the trees, could not chew the branches. Tortoise, who would march slowly across the ground to catch insects, could not catch insects. Hare, who would eat the grass of the meadows, could not eat in the meadow. And the lazy Spider, Anansi, who did not plant his farm or set his fish traps, did not have anything to eat at all. But the scariest thing that happened was that the spotted Leopard, who always hunts at night, was so hungry that he roamed the forest in search of food during the daytime.

2. And then one morning as the sun came up, the rain stopped.

Anansi was so hungry that he quickly jumped out of his bed and went out to get something to eat. He left his banana-leaf house and took the path that all

the animals use to go drink at the river. Leopard was out too, and he was hungrily walking on the river path. He padded along so quietly that Anansi didn't hear him, and he walked right into Anansi. Now, normally, Leopard likes to eat zebras or gazelles or even a monkey. Spider would be a tiny morsel to him. But today Spider looked like a very tasty snack to him, so he put on his friendly face and stopped to chat.



“Good morning, Mr. Spider,” purred Leopard. “How are you liking all this rain?”

Now, Anansi the Spider is lazy, and Anansi the Spider is tricky, but Anansi the Spider is not stupid. Anansi knew that, as a rule, Leopards hardly ever, ever purred at Spiders.

“I like it fine, Mr. Leopard,” he lied, “but I am in a bit of a hurry.” And with that Anansi quickly jumped behind a rock, where Leopard could not see him. Leopard’s eyes turned green with anger, and he roared loudly, slashing the air with his claws.

3. But after a few minutes Leopard came up with a plan. I know what I will do, he thought, I will find Spider's house. I will make myself very tiny and hide behind his front door. When he comes back I will gobble him up.

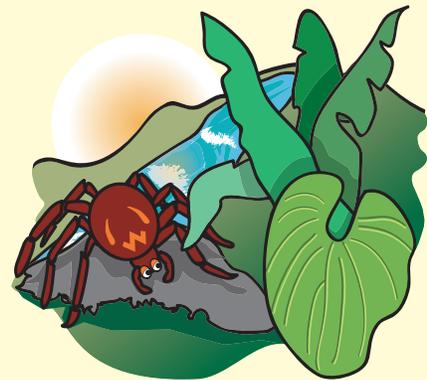
Leopard turned around and went back up the river path until he saw Anansi's house. He squeezed between the banana leaves and curled up until he was as small as he could possibly be. Then he settled his nose between his big Leopard paws and waited.

Did I mention before that Anansi the Spider is not stupid? He knew that Leopard would not give up so easily. So he spent the day thinking about what to do.

4. First he climbed out from behind the rock and went to the river, where he ate some fish that people had left in their traps. Then he went to a farm where the yams were ripe and ate his fill.

Then Anansi decided to call on his friends. He visited Elephant, who was out chewing the new branches of the trees. He visited Tortoise, who was marching slowly across the ground to catch insects. He visited Hare, who was eating the grass of the meadows. He stayed far away from his own house until it began to get dark.

As the sun began to sink behind the trees, Anansi knew he had to go home. So he walked slowly up the river path.



5. As Anansi drew near his little banana-leaf house, he perked up his ears to hear any sound that Leopard might be making. He looked at the path to see if Leopard had left any tracks. He heard nothing and he saw nothing. But he knew that Leopard was quiet and good at hiding, so he thought of something else.

He kept walking down the path, whistling as if he had nothing in his mind at all.

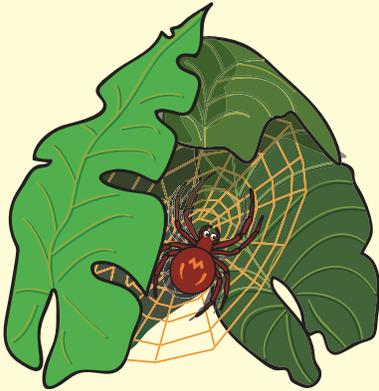
Casually, he called, “Yo! Banana-leaf house! I am home!”

There was no answer. There was not a sound. So Anansi kept walking toward the house. There was still no sound. Even the birds were quiet.

Then Anansi spoke loudly, “My, that’s strange. Banana-leaf house, you always answer me when I greet you. This evening you are quiet.”

So Anansi shouted more loudly, “Yo! Banana-leaf house. Is something wrong, my house?”

And in a moment a little squeaky voice came from inside the house. “Everything is fine, Spider. Walk right in.”



6. Anansi laughed so hard he nearly split his sides. “Oh, Mr. Leopard, how nice to know that you are there!” he said. “But you will not catch me.” With that Anansi jumped through the window of his banana-leaf house and into the highest, darkest corner of his ceiling. After many tries Leopard gave up trying to catch him and stalked away with his tail lashing.

Anansi was safe and warm and dry in the corner of the ceiling. So if you happen to meet a spider one day, chances are that his home is in a dark corner of the ceiling too.



A Gift in the Storm





The Griot's Challenge

1. Once upon a time, in the land of Anansi, baby Kenyatta was born. It was the rainy season. On the night she was born, the sky was black with clouds, the rain poured, the lightning struck, and the thunder clapped. Some say it was the Sky that gave Kenyatta her gift.



2. Kenyatta was the middle child of her mother Kanika and her father Kashka. She had an older brother and sister and a younger brother and sister. For Kenyatta, growing up in a family of five children made it hard for her to feel special.



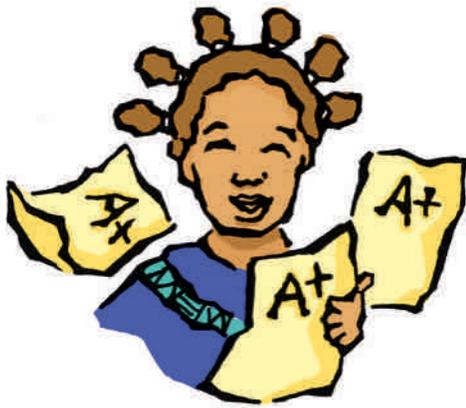
3. Kamili, the eldest daughter, could sing. Her song was sweeter than that of the boubou bird. On special days or just to make people feel happy, people asked Kamili to sing. Singing was Kamili's special gift.





The Griot's Challenge

4. Kantigi, the eldest son, could make things with his hands. He helped his father build their house. He could carve wood into animal shapes and sell them at the market. When the village elder needed a special chair, Kantigi was asked to carve it. Making things with his hands was Kantigi's special gift.



5. Kayla, who was two years younger than Kenyatta, was smart. All the teachers at school said so. She won first prize in the math test every year. She was always the first to finish her school work. Some say she was smarter than two children put together. Being smart was Kayla's special gift.

6. Keita, the youngest child, was an artist. He used color and lines to make beautiful drawings of elephants and leopards. Drawing was Keita's special gift.



7. Kenyatta thought she had no gift at all. She was sad when people said her brothers and sisters had special gifts. Nobody told Kenyatta that she had a gift.



The Griot's Challenge

8. It was the time of the rainy season. The rain came down and the rivers overflowed. Kanika and Kashka took their family to the home of Mother Griot who lived at the top of a very high hill. But the water rose and began to creep into the house. The sky was very black; lightening crackled and thunder rumbled. The house trembled and so did the children. Kamili tried to calm her brothers and sisters by singing. But she was frightened and her voice cracked. Kantigi tried to carve a puppet to entertain the children, but his hands shook with fright and he couldn't carve. Kayla put her mind to thinking, but the thunder was so loud, she couldn't hear her own thoughts. Keita tried to draw funny animals to make the children laugh, but his hand trembled so badly that his drawings looked like scribbles.

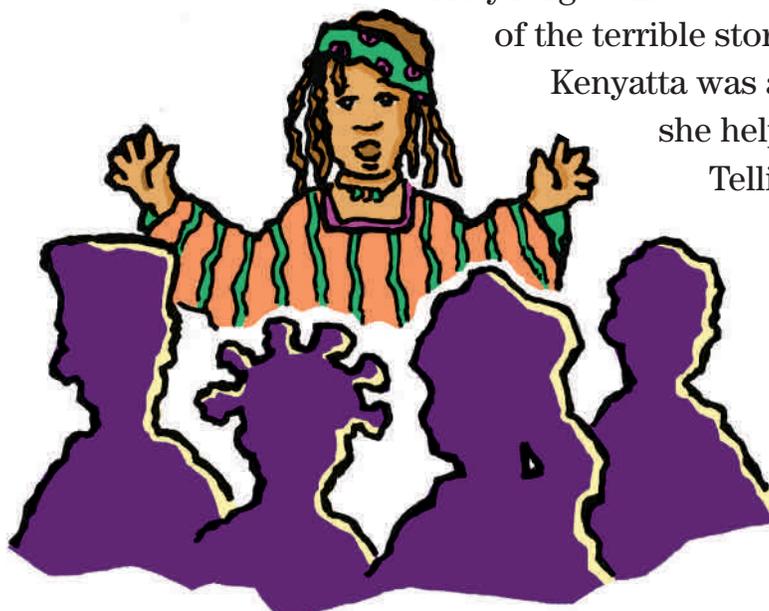


9. Then Kenyatta began telling the story of a funny spider who met a leopard during the rainy season. The children listened to Kenyatta. They relaxed and enjoyed the story.

They forgot all about the storm. Some say it was on the night of the terrible storm that Kenyatta found her gift—

Kenyatta was a wonderful storyteller! Even today she helps children learn how to tell stories.

Telling stories was Kenyatta's special gift.



The Natural

1. From the porch, Grandpa Joe sat and watched the children playing. Gracie and Zeke seesawed away. Ellie played in the sandbox. May picked wildflowers in the field. Jack sat quietly at Grandpa Joe's feet.

2. Jack was Grandpa Joe's youngest grandchild. Ellie and Gracie were his sisters. Zeke and May were his cousins. Jack was always the quietest of all the children. He liked to watch the others from far away.

3. Grandpa Joe nudged Jack with the tip of his boot. "Why don't you play in the yard like the others, Jack?" Jack was surprised by the question. "I like to watch them and then try to remember exactly how they looked doing these things," he answered.

4. "I know a way to help you remember," said Grandpa Joe. "Would you like to know how?" Jack looked at Grandpa Joe and nodded. "Fine then. Let's go for a walk," Grandpa Joe said as he rose from his chair and started off down the gravel driveway. Jack followed him into the small building at the end of the drive. Inside Jack saw hundreds of wooden figures. There were children. There were birds. There were bears. They were everywhere.

5. "Grandpa! What is this?" squealed Jack. "This is how I remember everything that I see," replied Grandpa Joe. "You sure have seen a lot of things!" said Jack. "I have. I have. Do you want to see my favorite?" asked Grandpa Joe. The look on Jack's face was answer enough. Grandpa Joe pulled out a small wooden figure from a nearby shelf and handed it to Jack.

6. The figure was a young boy sitting cross-legged next to an old rocking chair. "Is this...me?" Jack asked. "It sure is," answered Grandpa. "Why didn't you carve yourself to put in the chair," asked Jack. "Well, I can't see myself!" Grandpa Joe said as he laughed.

7. Grandpa started gathering some other things. He grabbed a small knife and a pair of gloves. Then he found a piece of wood. He sat on the floor next to Jack and started slicing the bark off the wood. Jack watched as the piece of wood became two legs, then an apron, then curly hair. It was Grandma Jane!

8. “Can I try Grandpa—please?” Jack asked. Grandpa handed him the knife, the gloves, and a new piece of wood. “The knife is a bit dull, but it’s safer that way. The gloves will help protect your hands too,” said Grandpa. “Have at it.” Soon enough, Jack had carved the dress his cousin May wore as she picked flowers. He carved away, with wood shavings falling to the floor. Jack gently whittled May’s face and the flowers in her hands. “Looks like we’ve got a natural,” Grandpa Joe said as he patted Joe’s head.

9. The next week, Jack sat in a swing in the yard. He had on his gloves, and he held the small knife and a new piece of wood in his hand. Grandpa Joe watched from his chair on the porch. Jack was on that swing all day. Grandpa Joe could see wood shavings softly hit the ground. In the late afternoon, Grandma Jane came to the front door and called the children in for supper. Jack stood up and brushed the dust from his pants. He ran to the porch and into Grandpa Joe’s lap. Jack handed Grandpa Joe the figure he had worked on all day. It was of an older man wearing overalls and sitting down. “Well, would you look at that?” said Grandpa Joe. “I’ll bet this will fit right into the rocking chair figure I carved. The one with you sitting at the bottom.” “That’s what I’m hoping, Grandpa!” said Jack. “That’s what I’m hoping!”

The Memory Maker

Comprehension Questions

Read *The Memory Maker*, and answer the following questions.

1. Donte was bored. Rain had poured down for three days straight. It was summer, but Donte couldn't even go outside. He thought and thought about what he could do. He knew he couldn't spend one more day on the couch.
2. He decided to call Tayshaun. Maybe T would have an idea of what they could do. But T's mom said that T was taking a nap. Donte didn't want to sleep. It was summer! He wanted to have fun. So he thought he'd ask his older brother, Darnell, what to do.
3. Darnell didn't have any ideas either. So Donte asked his mom if he could go down to the basement. "What do you want to do in the dirty old basement?" his mom asked. "It's better than watching television or taking a nap!" Donte told her. "I guess you're right. Go ahead," his mom agreed.
4. As he made his way downstairs, Donte got a little scared. The basement was cold and damp. But once he found the light, he felt better. With the light on, Donte could see lots of boxes. They were stacked to the ceiling in some corners. "Wow," Donte said to himself. "This can definitely keep me busy." He walked over to a short stack of boxes and opened up the first one. It was labeled "Dad's Things."
5. Donte couldn't believe what he saw in the box. There were hundreds of pictures! There were black-and-white pictures and pictures in color. But Donte could tell that they were from a long time ago. His mom was in some of the pictures. She looked younger, but he knew it was her. Why were all these pictures thrown in a box like this?

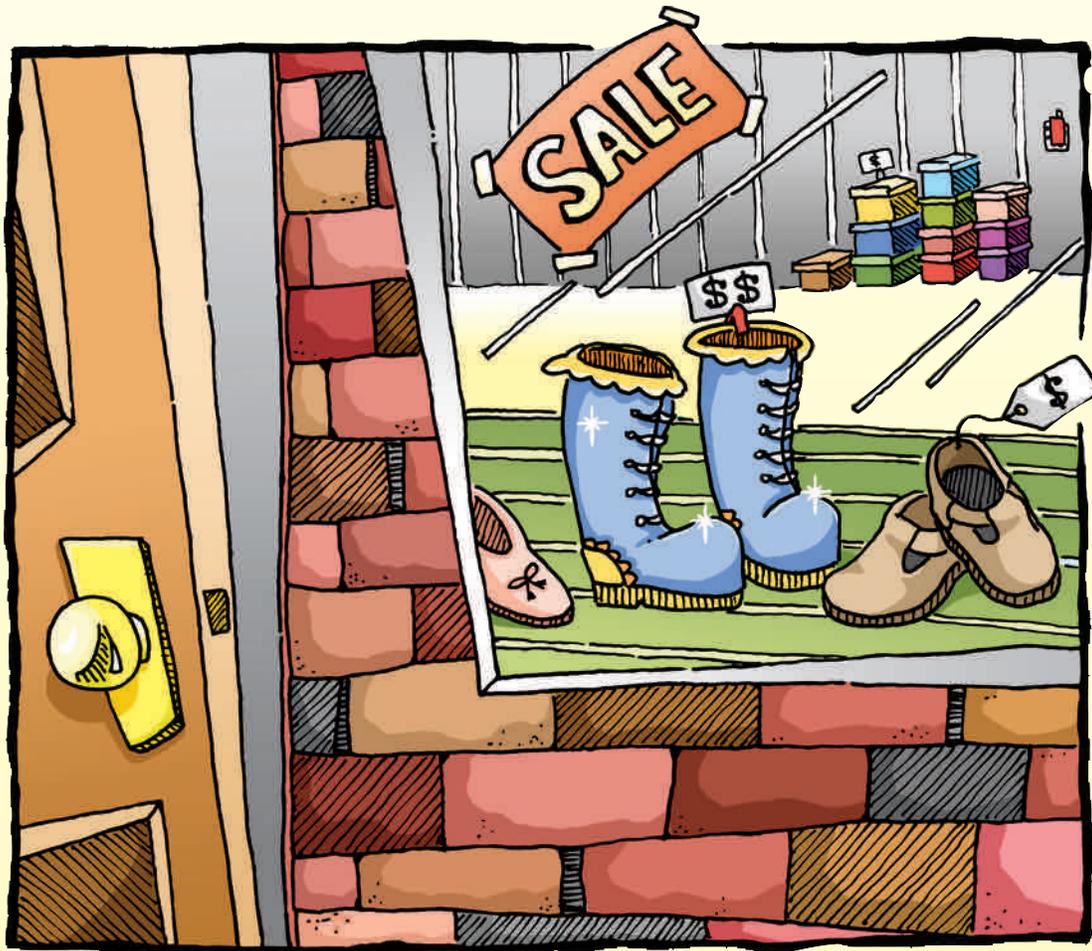
6. Just then, Donte’s mom came down to check on him. “So what did you find?” his mom asked. “Mom! Look at these pictures! Where did they come from?” Donte asked. His mom knelt down to the box. “Oh my,” she said. “These are my father’s pictures. We packed them up so quickly, and I forgot all about them. What a find!”

7. “Are all these boxes from Grandpa’s house?” Donte asked. “Well, this stack here is,” said his mom. “You can go through it if you want. Who knows what you’ll find.” Donte couldn’t think of a better activity for a rainy summer day. He couldn’t wait to open the next box. When he did, he realized that he was going to find a lot of memories in the boxes. Before long, he had a great idea.

8. He ran up to his room and got his art supply box. Construction paper, markers, scissors, glue, and tape were inside the box. He knew that he could do something special with the things he had found. He carried the box to the basement. He found his favorite pictures from Grandpa’s first box. Then he looked to see what else he could find.

9. At dinner that night, Donte gave his mom what he had made. She looked at the booklet of bright paper and then at Donte. She opened the book slowly. It said “Mom’s Memories” on the cover. Inside, she found crinkled pictures had been flattened out and taped to the paper. Each picture was from a different time in her life. Donte had written little notes next to each picture. He had also glued other things that he had found in the boxes into the book—a piece of Mom’s baby blanket, Grandmom’s kerchief that Mom had used on her wedding day, and Donte’s hospital bracelet from when he was born. As his mom looked through the book, tears sprang into her eyes. Donte knew he had found the best rainy-day project ever.

Serena's Simple Shoes



Story by Darnell Parker
Illustration by James Bravo



“**M**om, I need a new pair of shoes,” Serena said.

“Why’s that?” asked Mom.

Serena said, “The lace is broken, and the heel flaps.”
Serena showed her mother. She walked around the kitchen. The heel of the left shoe flapped.

FLAP. FLAP. FLAP. FLAP.

Serena danced around the kitchen.

FLAPPITY FLAPPITY FLAPPITY FLAP!

Serena sort of liked the sound her old shoes made.

But her mother did not. “That’s enough,” she said.
“We’ll go to the shoe store.”

“Hooray! The shoe store! There’s more in store—
much, much more—at the shoe store!” Serena sang.
Serena liked to say things that rhymed.

It was raining outside. Serena had to prepare to go out in the rain. She found her rain slicker. It was shiny and blue. She found her yellow rain hat. Then she found her galoshes. She put her galoshes over her old shoes.

"I'm ready to go, Mom," Serena called.

"Just a moment, Serena," said Mom. Mom looked for her umbrella. She looked in the closet. It wasn't there. She looked in the hall. It wasn't there.

Mom said, "I can't find my umbrella."

Serena knew where it was. "It's in the TV room," she said.

Mom found her umbrella. She put on her own raincoat. It was also blue.

"We're all set," Serena said. "Two blue ladies, going to the store. Let it rain. Let it pour!" she sang.

Mom smiled.



The rain was coming down hard. Serena splashed through puddles.

SLOT! SPLAT! SLOT!

“I’m glad I have my galoshes,” Serena said, “or my socks would get wet.”

Serena and her mother walked to the corner. They waited for the bus. They waited and waited. Then they waited some more. Mom looked at her watch. “The bus should be here any minute,” she said.

“The rain comes down all over town,” Serena sang. She held her mother’s hand. “I like the rain, Mom. Do you?”

Mom said, “I don’t mind it, especially with my umbrella.”

Then the bus came, and they got on.

The bus driver tipped his hat. "Hello ladies," he said. "It's a wet one out there."

Serena smiled. Mom smiled and closed her umbrella. She put in precise change for her fare. Serena didn't have to pay. Kids rode free on the bus.

Mom pointed at two seats. They were empty. Serena and her mother walked down the aisle. They plopped into the seats. Serena sat by the window. She took off her wet hat.

Serena looked out the window. She looked at people. Some drove in cars. Some walked on the sidewalk. Everyone on the sidewalk got wet. Serena saw a man get splashed by a car. The car drove through a puddle.

SPLASH!

Serena laughed and pointed. "Look, Mom! A man got wet! Now he's drenched. This I bet!" she sang. Serena watched through the window. She looked for more things to sing about.

Serena enjoyed riding the bus.

Serena looked across the aisle. There was a boy with his father. They both had green raincoats.

Serena leaned over Mom.

“Hello,” said Serena to the boy.

“Hello,” the boy said back.

“Where are you going?” Serena asked.

The boy said, “We’re going home. We just went to the shoe store. I needed new shoes.”

Serena clapped. “That’s where we’re going!” she said. “I need new shoes too!”

The boy said, “There are many shoes at the shoe store. Pick a good pair.”

“I certainly will!” Serena said. Then she sang, “Hooray! Hooray! It’s a shoe-shopping day!”

“That’s a good song,” the boy said.

“Thank you,” said Serena. “I like to sing.”

The time came to get off the bus. "This is our stop," said Mom. She rang the bell. The bus pulled over to let them off. Serena and her mother walked up the aisle. They walked down the steps. Off the bus they stepped.

It had stopped raining. "The rain is gone, so let's move on!" sang Serena.

"I think the shoe store is just around the corner," said Mom. "Hold my hand."

Serena and Mom strolled up the street. They turned the corner. They stopped. There it was.

Frank's Fancy Footwear, read the sign.

"The doors are open wide, so let us go inside!" sang Serena, tugging on Mom's arm.

"Okay, Serena," said Mom. They entered the store.

The store was brightly lit. There were shoes everywhere. High-heeled shoes. Moccasins. Pumps. Sneakers. Cowboy boots. Cowgirl boots.

Serena and Mom walked through the store. Serena loved the shoe store. She touched some of the shoes. She pointed at some of her favorite ones. "Mom, look at those!" she said. She pointed at a pair of knee-high galoshes.

Mom guided Serena through the store. "Come, Serena," she said. "The children's shoes are in the back of the store."

Serena sang, "Kids' shoes are in the back of the store, and that's just what I'm looking for!"

"That's right," said Mom. She smiled.



Mom and Serena strolled through the children's shoes. Very soon Serena found a pair she loved. They were blue and yellow boots. They were shiny and leather. They were very fancy.

"Mom, Mom, can't you see these pretty boots are right for me," she sang.

Mom looked at the boots. She said, "Serena, those shoes aren't very practical. You need an everyday shoe."

Serena frowned. Mom held up a pair of simple, brown leather shoes. "These are perfect," she said. "You can wear these everywhere."

Serena didn't like the brown shoes. But she knew not to argue with Mom. Serena put down the tall, shiny boots. She looked more closely at the brown shoes.

Serena said nothing. She took off her galoshes and her old shoes. She tried on the brown shoes. They did feel good. They fit her feet. Her toes weren't too snug. Her heel didn't hurt.

She walked around the store. She couldn't hear the FLAP FLAP FLAP of her old shoes. Instead, she heard a soft PLOP PLOP PLOP as she walked on the floor.

“Do they fit?” Mom asked.

Serena said, “They fit me well. That is true. I know the choice is up to you.”

“Good girl,” said Mom. Serena took the brown shoes off and put her old shoes back on. Mom boxed the brown shoes. She paid for them at the counter.

Serena took one more look at the shiny boots. Then she and Mom left the store.

The next day was a school day. Serena went to school in her new brown leather shoes. As she walked to school, she noticed that her heel didn't flap, flap, flap against the ground anymore.

She arrived at school. She saw her friend Monique. Monique said, "Look at my new shoes! I got them yesterday."

Serena looked down. Monique was wearing the yellow and blue fancy boots!

Serena said, "I almost bought those shoes too." Then she pointed at her own brown leather shoes.

Monique looked at Serena's new shoes. She said, "Those are nice, but I think mine are very fancy. Don't you?"

Serena said quietly, "They are fancy. Yes it's true, those colorful boots in yellow and blue."

All morning, Serena thought about her new, leather shoes. They were comfortable. They felt cozy. But they just weren't as fancy as could be. She wished she had Monique's boots.

At recess, Serena and Monique went out to play. Some kids were playing soccer. The ball rolled over to Serena. The kids called for the ball.

"Kick us the ball, Serena!" they yelled.

Serena sang, "I listen and I hear your call. Watch me as I kick this ball!" She kicked the ball as hard as she could. The ball flew through the air. It flew far, very far.

The other kids cheered. "Hooray, Serena!"

Serena wondered if Monique could kick the ball that far in her fancy new boots.

After school, Serena and Monique walked home together. Monique said, "I have a fancy dress that goes with my new boots. I will look pretty when I wear it."

"I'm sure you will," Serena said. She thought about her simple, brown leather shoes. More than ever, she wanted a pair of fancy boots. It didn't matter what color.

As they walked, Monique had an idea. "Let's race each other home!" she said.

Serena thought this was a good idea. Serena knew she could run very fast. She said, "Watch me run! I'll run real fast. I'll come in first. You'll come in last!"

Monique said, "Ready! Set! Go!"

Off they went!

Serena ran as fast as lightning. She ran down one street. She ran up another street. She leapt over puddles. Her shoes felt great.

She noticed that Monique was far, far behind her. Serena sang to herself, "Running fast is my thing. I can outrun anything."

Before she knew it, she was at the corner of her street. She waited for Monique to catch up.

At last Monique arrived. She was carrying her shoes. She said, "As I ran, my boots hurt my feet. I had to stop and take them off."

Serena smiled to herself. She said, "That's too bad. But I still won!"

Monique said, "Good job." The two girls went to their own homes.

Serena whistled while she walked toward her house. For the first time, she felt good about her new shoes. They helped her kick a ball far. They helped her run fast. Maybe they were better than the fancy boots. Serena thought so, anyway.

Serena was too busy thinking. She wasn't watching where she walked.

SLOTCH!

She stepped into a mud puddle from yesterday's rain. She pulled out her foot. Her shoe was covered in mud and dirt. She almost cried.

Serena said to herself, "Oh dear, this is bad luck. My new shoes are covered with mud and muck."

She didn't know what to do.



Serena took off her shoes at the door to her house. Then she went inside. She went to the laundry room. She made an old towel damp with water. Then she wiped off the muddy shoe. Back and forth, back and forth, she wiped.

Before she knew it, the shoe was as clean as could be. The mud washed off very easily.

Serena was surprised. She had feared her shoe might be ruined by the mud.

She whistled as she cleaned. Then she started to sing. "I scrubbed it once. I scrubbed it twice. And now my shoe looks new and nice!" That's what Serena sang.

She couldn't wait to tell Mom about her shoes.

Mom was in the kitchen when Serena walked in. She was cutting carrots. "Would you help me cook?" she asked.

"Sure," said Serena. Serena helped with the salad.

As they worked, Serena told Mom about her shoes. She told her about kicking the ball far. She told her about running home fast. She also told her about washing the mud off her shoe.

Mom listened. Then she said, "That's why simple shoes are better, Serena."

Serena nodded. She sang, "Some think fancy shoes are oh so grand, but simple shoes are best. I understand."

Serena went to school the next day. She looked for Monique. She couldn't see her. But soon she heard Monique's voice.

"Hey, Serena," called Monique.

Serena spun around.

Monique said, "Look at my new shoes." Serena looked down. Monique was wearing the same simple leather shoes! They were exactly like Serena's.

"What happened?" asked Serena.

Monique said, "The boots weren't very useful. My mom and I exchanged them."

Serena smiled. She sang, "We both thought fancy boots were neat. But simple shoes just can't be beat."

Then Monique said, "Let's race home after school again."

"Okay," said Serena. "That's a plan."

“Ready! Set! Go!” shouted Monique later that day. The girls ran. They ran fast. Sometimes Serena was in the lead. Sometimes Monique was in front. They kept up with each other. They smiled as they ran.

When they reached their street, it was too close to call. Monique said, “I think we were even!”

Serena said, “I think you’re right! Let’s call it a tie!” They shook hands.

Monique said, “I learned an important lesson yesterday. Thank you, Serena.”

Serena said, "Of course!" Then she sang. "It's not how you look or how you're dressed. It's what you do that is the best!"

Monique sang too. She sang, "Our shoes may be simple, leather, and brown. But they're the best shoes in all our town!"

The girls walked the rest of the way home, singing a song about their simple shoes.

Run! Jump! Throw!

The World of Track and Field



By Tanya Jackson
Illustration by James Bravo

[INTRODUCTION]

Run! Jump! Throw!

People who play sports have a name. They're called athletes. There are all kinds of athletes. Baseball players are athletes. Football players are athletes. So are hockey players and tennis players.

But there is another group of athletes who take part in a sport called track and field. Track and field is made up of many events. Some are running events. Some are jumping events. Others are throwing events. The sport has this name because the events take place on a track or on a field. Let's learn all about this sport.



[PART 1: RUNNING]

Speed Wins

Sprinting is running fast. It's a big part of track and field. **Sprints** are very simple. The runners line up at the start. When it's time to start, they run a race down the track. They run as fast as they can. They are very speedy. The fastest runner wins!

Sprints are not all the same length. They are measured in meters. One meter is about three feet. Some sprints are very short. The shortest sprint is 100 meters. That's just about 300 feet. The longest is 800 meters. About how many feet is that?



Fast Fact!

The current world record for the 100 meter race is 9.58 seconds! Can you run down a football field that fast?

Go the Distance

Distance running is like sprinting in some ways. But it's also different. To sprint, you need to be able to run very fast for a short distance. Long-distance runners need something else. It's called stamina. It's the ability to keep doing something for a long time. It helps long-distance runners to be able to run a long time. Long



distance runners run on a track, like sprinters. But they run around and around the track many times. They might only run 1 or 2 miles. Some may even run more than 6 miles. Those are some long distances!

Team Work

In track and field, running can also be a team sport. Sometimes runners in a team take turns. One person runs. Then the next person runs. Then another runs and another. This is called a **relay**. There are usually four people on a relay team.

Relay runners carry a stick. This stick is called a baton (buh-TON). The first runner starts running with it. Before she stops, she hands it off to the next runner. More runners hand it off, one



after another. The last runner crosses the finish line with it. The fastest team of relay runners wins.

Fast Fact!

Don't drop the baton! Relay runners try to give each other the baton as quickly and smoothly as possible. They don't want to slow down!

Jump Over It

We'll learn about one more running event.

This one is called the **hurdles**. Have you ever heard



of hurdles? Hurdles in life are what you have to get over to complete something.

In track and field, some runners have to jump over hurdles as they race down a track. The hurdles are about three feet tall. Usually, runners sprint between the hurdles. Races with hurdles aren't long-distance events. There are usually between five and ten hurdles in a race. If a runner knocks over a hurdle, it really slows him down.

Jump this!

The highest hurdles may be 42 inches tall. That's 3.5 feet! Can you jump that high?

[PART 2: JUMPING]

How far can you go?

Track and field isn't all about running. Jumping is also part of it. There are four different jumping events.

The first we'll learn about is the **long jump**.

It's very simple. The athlete sprints down a narrow



track. At the end of the track is a sandbox, called the pit. Just before the pit there is a

line, called the board. The jumper takes off from this line. His foot must not cross the front of the line, or his jump will not count. He lands feet first in the sandbox. Then the official measures from the point where the athlete jumped to where his feet first landed. That's how far he jumped. The person whose jump is the longest of all wins!

Don't fall!

The official measures the mark in the sand closest to the board. That means if you fall backward after your jump, he measures from where you sat down!

Hop...Step...Jump

Another jumping event that lands you in the sand is the **triple jump**. It usually takes place on the same track as the long jump, but it uses different lines. The triple jump lines seem like they are in the middle of the track, more than 20 feet away from the pit! How can you jump that far? You do three jumps in one!

When the jumper reaches the line, he jumps into the air with one foot. Let's say he jumps with his left foot. Since the first part of the triple jump is a hop, he must then land with his left foot. Then he quickly jumps into the air again with his left foot. This time he's taking a step, so he lands with his right foot. The final part is just like the long jump. He launches himself forward into the air with his right foot. He lands in the sand pit the long jumpers use. The jump is measured from the first hop to the end of the jump. The jumper who goes the farthest wins the event.

3

How high?

Jumping high is important too. There is an event in track and field called the **high jump**. Here's



how it works. There is a large area of track. A high bar is on one end of the area. There is a soft mat behind it. Instead of running straight for the bar, the jumper runs in a curved path. When he is near the bar, he jumps and begins to twist in the air. He throws himself up over the bar. He lands on his back on the soft mat.

If he hits the bar and knocks it over, that's okay. He gets two more attempts to clear it. When he clears the bar, it is raised. Each time he clears the bar, it is raised. He gets three attempts. Whoever clears the highest bar wins!

Righty or lefty?

Just like you are either right-handed or left-handed, you might like using one leg for jumping more than the other. The high jump area is large so people can run up to the bar from the right or left side.

The Highest of Them All



We'll learn about one more jump. This one is the neatest of them all. In this event, the jumpers go the highest. This one is called the pole vault.

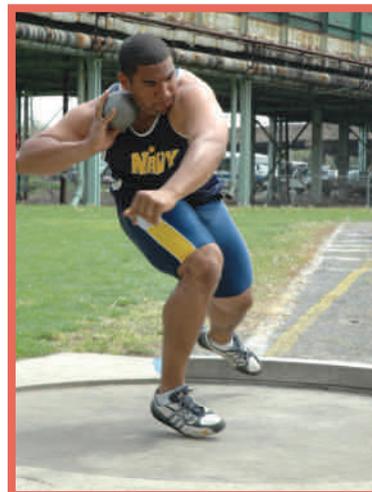
This is how the pole vault works. There is yet another narrow track. At the end is a high bar. There is a soft mat behind it. It seems like the high jump, right? But it's not quite like that. Here's how it differs. The runner has a long pole in her hands. She runs down the track. At the end, she shoves her pole into a hole in the track. But she's been running fast, so the pole then launches her into the air. She holds the pole and soars into the air. She tries to clear the bar. If she clears it, they raise the bar. She gets three attempts at each height. Pole-vault jumpers can go as high as 20 feet into the air! That's really high!

[PART 3: THROWING]

Heavy Stones

Running is important in track and field. So is jumping. The last important part is throwing. There are several throwing events. One of them is called the **shot put**.

The shot is a very heavy iron ball. It may weigh as little as 8 pounds and as much as 16 pounds! Throwers hold the ball in their hands, close to their shoulders. They spin or take a small jump, and push the shot as far as they can. You might not think a heavy iron ball can go very far, but it can! The current world record throw is 75 feet, 10.2 inches. It takes a lot of strength and practice to throw that far!



Watch out!

Another throwing event is the **javelin** (JA-vuh-lin).

The javelin is a long metal spear. It has a very sharp end. Throwers first run a few steps.

Then they throw the javelin as far as they can.

Unlike the shot, the javelin is very lightweight. It soars through the air. It soars and soars and soars. Finally, it comes back

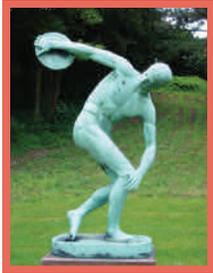
to earth. Its pointed end sticks in the ground. The officials measure to where it sticks in the ground. How do you think someone wins the javelin event? That's right! Whoever throws it the farthest wins!



Weapons in Sports

Javelins were used in wars before the ancient Greeks used them for games. They made javelins lighter so they would fly further in competition.

Discus Throw



Another event is the **discus throw**.

That's pronounced DIS-kuss.

The discus event is thousands of years old. The discus is an

iron plate. Throwers first spin

themselves as fast as they can holding the discus.

This builds up speed and energy.

Then, in the middle of a spin, they let go of the discus. It sails through the air. It doesn't go as far as the javelin. But it goes farther than the shot. The person who throws the farthest wins.

The discus is heavy and flies fast! Discus throwers have to follow certain safety rules. The place from which they throw is surrounded by a net on three sides. That way, if they lose the discus while they spin, it won't fly into the people watching. They also have to make sure the people out in the field are watching them. No one wants to get hurt by a flying discus.

One More Throw

There is one more throwing event. It's called the **hammer throw**. When you think of a hammer, what do you think of? Do you think of a tool that pounds nails? This is a different kind of hammer.

The track and field hammer is like the shot. It's also a heavy iron ball. But it has a wire attached to it. The thrower holds this wire. She spins around. Then she lets go of the wire. Then the hammer soars through the air. It lands with a THUD in the grass. Who do you think wins the hammer toss? The person who throws the farthest wins.

What's in a name?

A ball on a wire looks nothing like a hammer! In ancient Ireland, the first hammer throwers attached heavy rocks to the end of wooden handles to throw. These looked like sledgehammers and the name stuck.

[PART 4: COMPETING]

Run, Jump, Throw, and Learn!

There are a number of different levels of track-and-field competition. Many high schools have track-and-field teams. Most colleges and universities have teams. Even some middle schools have them. Do schools in your area have track-and-field teams?

Track-and-field competitions are called **meets**. During meets teams from different schools compete against one another. Often many schools come together for one meet. Bigger teams have one athlete for each event. Smaller teams have a few



athletes for many events. Usually the team with the most individual victories wins.

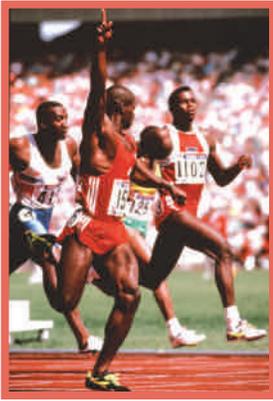
Best in the Country

Countrywide track meets also occur. Athletes come from many states. Some states send many athletes. Others send just a few. Some may send just one. Others might not send any at all.

The athletes race one another. They try to out-jump one another. They try to out-throw one another. In each event, one athlete wins. These winners earn medals. The medals show that these winners are the best in the country. They are **national champions**. Together, these athletes are called Team USA. They will race people from other countries.



Best in the World!



Track meets for several countries are called world championships. Countries from all over the world send teams. These meets are huge events. People come from all over the world to watch. People fill the stands. Athletes run, jump, and throw for their countries and for themselves.

These world championships are held once a year. They're held in a different country every year. The USA might host one year. Then Canada might host the next. Then maybe France will host. People love competing and love watching to see who will be the **world champions!**

Track and Field: Every Four Years!

But the world track meets aren't even the biggest. The grandest world championships take place every four years. These are called the **Summer Olympics** (oh-LIM-piks). The whole world watches. Track and field is a big part of the Summer Olympics. In fact, many of the running, jumping, and throwing events you read about were a part of the ancient Greek Olympics.

The athletes compete to win medals for their countries. Everybody wants to win an Olympic



medal. There are three types of Olympic medals. First-place athletes win the gold medal.

Second-place athletes win the silver medal. Third-place athletes win the bronze medal. It's great to win any of these medals.

Many athletes think the Olympics are the most important championships.

Run! Jump! Throw! Anytime

You don't have to be in a championship to get involved in track-and-field activities. You can run at school. You can run at home or in the park. You can run in a lot of other places. You can jump over things in a lot of places. You can throw things in lots of places. Be careful where you throw things though! You don't have to be on a team to do track and field. Just use your imagination. Run down the street. Imagine that you are a champion runner! Leap over a puddle. Imagine that you are the world's



best long jumper! It's that easy. There are only three things you have to remember: Run! Jump! Throw!