

the ARTICLE (for instructors)

The Tallest Basketball Player Ever

It seems that Kenny George can't go anywhere nowadays without someone asking for an autograph or a picture, in part because of his athletic prowess on the college basketball court. In only twenty minutes of play time per game, he averages 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. But people gawk at him because he also happens to be the tallest basketball player ever. At 7 feet 7 inches (234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (163 kilograms), he really stands out in any crowd.

Although most would consider it very cool to slam dunk without any leap whatsoever, George faces a number of not so cool difficulties. For starters, unable to get behind the steering wheel of a car, he's never learned to drive. Moreover, whenever the team goes on a road trip, the bus company has to remove two seats so George can comfortably sit. He also sits on the floor of many of his classes because the desks don't fit.

Kenny George suffers from gigantism, a condition in which the pituitary gland secretes too much growth hormone. The pro-wrestler Andre the Giant is likely the most notable athlete in recent years affected by this condition. Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George extremely self-conscious, and he hates conducting interviews. The questions inevitably turn to his health, size, and condition. (Knee problems required him to sit out much of his sophomore year.) His teammates have become quite protective of him, however, and they tell people to back off and give their friend some room.

Along with a passion for basketball, graphic design and animation vie for George's attention. He has wished he weren't so tall, and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation. Yet a stint in pro-basketball trumps these plans, and George wants to play for the NBA first.

Teacher's Notes:

* Underlined words in **red typeface** are the recommended vocabulary for this lesson.

WARM-UPS

Select one or all of the following warm-up activities.

1. **Define:** What does "gigantism" mean? Can you use it in a sentence? Can you give examples?

2. **Brainstorm:** Brainstorm with a partner(s) words and ideas associated with "basketball" for 2 minutes. Spend another 5 minutes or less discussing the words and ideas together.

3. **Speculate:** Write in the missing words for today's article title: "The () Basketball () Ever." Why did you choose this word for the blanks?

4. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

a.	I would want people to ask for my autograph and take pictures wherever I go.
b.	I wish I were tall enough to play pro-basketball.
c.	I would become shy if people often stared and pointed at me.
d.	It's good to be different and stand out from the crowd.
e.	If a person becomes famous, he/she loses the right to privacy.

- 5. Rank It!:** Imagine that before you were born, you could have picked your future life. Which kind of life would you have wanted? Rank the choices in order, from most to least desirable. Remember to support your decisions!

a.	You're seven feet tall and play pro-basketball.
b.	You're a famous writer, but also happen to be an alcoholic.
c.	Your start-up Internet company is worth billions of dollars, but no one really likes you.
d.	You're a great jazz musician, but die at the age of forty.
e.	You're a supermodel, and you have no privacy to even walk down the street or go to a restaurant.

VOCABULARY

Select one of the following vocabulary acquisition activities.

1. **Vocabulary match:** Individually or in pairs/groups, match the words in column A (from the article) with the best choice in column B.

a.	prowess	q.	skill
b.	gawk	r.	important
c.	road trip	s.	release
d.	secrete	t.	surpass
e.	notable	u.	shy
f.	self-conscious	v.	compete
g.	inevitable	w.	stare
h.	vie	x.	session
i.	stint	y.	unavoidable
j.	trump	z.	journey

2. **Fill in the Blanks:** Fill in the blank with the correct word.

	road trip	self-conscious	stint	gawk	notable
	vie	prowess	secretes	trumps	inevitably
a.	Kenny George is famous in part because of his athletic () on the college basketball court.				
b.	But people () at him because he also happens to be the tallest basketball player ever.				
c.	Whenever the team goes on a (), the bus company has to remove two seats so George can sit.				
d.	Kenny George suffers a condition in which the pituitary gland () too much growth hormone.				
e.	Andre the Giant is likely the most () athlete in recent years affected by this condition.				
f.	Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George extremely ().				
g.	The questions () turn to his health, size, and condition.				
h.	Along with a passion for basketball, graphic design and animation () for George's attention.				
i.	Yet he hopes for a () in pro-basketball.				
j.	Pro-basketball () graphic design and animation, and George wants to play for the NBA first.				

3. **Define:** Define each word, correctly pronounce it, explain the meaning and/or usage, and offer an example sentence to the class.

a.	prowess	c.	road trip	e.	notable	g.	inevitable	i.	stint
b.	gawk	d.	secrete	f.	self-conscious	h.	vie	j.	trump

WORD RECOGNITION

1. **Word Search:** Find the target words (in bold). Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

road trip	self-conscious	stint	gawk	notable
vie	proress	secretes	trumps	inevitably
Y A Z V P T K P Z N T P Y N S J L T K N T R T V S I K L O P R I B I V O A X Y R P R B T M Q A T A W I Z D T J A R A A U S S O E T R E D E G E F T B R A N S D E I A A G A K E E L T N S F Y T O V N D V W S V E S P F U F R R S E C R E T E S H D N D U D E I T N D R X N Z V Y L B A T O N P E I U C I Y R J L V G B I U Y L R C O L W J Q A D U X Q Y R R M C F N K V S U O I C S N O C F L E S W X I W G A W K S U V E Q R S K C E J R O C V T C K K U B O B U				

2. **Target Word Pool:** Find the target words (in bold) with their exact match. Time yourself, and see how many words you can find in three minutes. In five minutes. In ten minutes.

road trip	self-conscious	stint	gawk	notable
vie	proress	secretes	trumps	inevitably
unselfconscious road rage notableness notable stunt inevitability pronounce vied gawk secrete	notably stimulus vie gawked proress unselfconsciously road trips road test inevitableness trumpet	profess vying secretes evidently self-conscious road test stints prosperous	inevitably stink self-consciousness noteworthy gawker view trumps notices gawking stints trumped	secrets caulk vies roadblock trump road trip inevitable prowler secretion self-consciously stint trumping

pre- or post-COMPREHENSION

1. **Word Association:** Brainstorm words associated with today's topic for two minutes. Present to the class.

2. **Brainstorm Questions:** Brainstorm questions that you would like to ask about today's topic. Answer the questions without looking at the article.

3. **True or False?:** Guess (before the article) or answer (after the article) whether the sentence is true or false. If false, correct the sentence.

a.	Kenny George plays pro-basketball.	T / F
b.	He's mostly famous because of his basketball skills.	T / F
c.	Life has usual difficulties for Kenny.	T / F
d.	Andre the Giant had the same condition as Kenny George.	T / F
e.	Kenny wants to become a comic book artist in the future.	T / F

4. **Questions:** Answer the questions to check comprehension.

a.	Which is Kenny George most famous for, his basketball skill or his size?
b.	How tall is Kenny? How much does he weigh?
c.	What are some of the problems he faces?
d.	Why is he so large?
e.	What does Kenny want to do in the future?

5. **Vocabulary:** In pairs/groups, remember how the words were used in today's article.

a.	prowess	c.	road trip	e.	notable	g.	inevitably	i.	stint
b.	gawk	d.	secretes	f.	self-conscious	h.	vie	j.	trumps

6. **Fragments:** Remember how the fragments were used, and complete the sentence from today's article.

a.	At 7 feet 7 inches (234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (163 kilograms)...
b.	For starters, unable to get behind the steering wheel of a car...
c.	Kenny George suffers from gigantism...
d.	His teammates have become quite protective of him, however, and...
e.	Along with a passion for basketball...

post-COMPREHENSION

- 1. **Vocabulary:** Circle any additional unknown words/phrases in the article. In pairs/groups, use your dictionaries to understand the meanings. Present to the class.

- 2. **Class Questions:** Read through the article once more, and write down any questions that you would like to discuss in pairs/groups or as a class. Discuss.

- 3. **Summarize:** Work with a partner to summarize the article in your own words.

- 4. **Discuss:** Talk about the following questions in pairs/groups. Remember to support your answers!

a.	Did you like this article?
b.	What was your general impression after reading this article?
c.	In addition to the problems listed in the article, what other difficulties do you think Kenny faces?
d.	How would you feel if you were Kenny? Please explain.
e.	How would you feel if people often stared and pointed at you? What would you do?
f.	Do you think Kenny faces discrimination of any kind? How about ridicule?
g.	If you were able to interview Kenny George, what three questions would you ask?
h.	Would you want an extraordinary life if you also had an unusual physical condition that made life difficult?
i.	If you saw a very unusual or different person on the train or in a restaurant, what would you do?
j.	Some people believe that celebrities, sports stars, politicians, etc. lose their right to privacy. Do you agree?

- 5. **Role Play:** Form a group of three, with one student playing the role of Kenny George. The other two students will play the role of reporters. The reporters should interview Kenny about his condition and the difficulties he faces. The student in Kenny's role should imagine the answers. After five minutes of conversation, discuss how the questions made the answerer and the askers feel. Did the questions help understand Kenny's life?

Question 1:
Question 2:
Question 3:
Question 4:

- 6. **Google Search:** Type "gigantism" into Google news and read additional articles on this topic. Discuss or write an essay about your findings.

STUDENT HANDOUT (the article)

The Tallest Basketball Player Ever

It seems that Kenny George can't go anywhere nowadays without someone asking for an autograph or a picture, in part because of his athletic prowess on the college basketball court. In only twenty minutes of play time per game, he averages 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. But people gawk at him because he also happens to be the tallest basketball player ever. At 7 feet 7 inches (234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (163 kilograms), he really stands out in any crowd.

Although most would consider it very cool to slam dunk without any leap whatsoever, George faces a number of not so cool difficulties. For starters, unable to get behind the steering wheel of a car, he's never learned to drive. Moreover, whenever the team goes on a road trip, the bus company has to remove two seats so George can comfortably sit. He also sits on the floor of many of his classes because the desks don't fit.

Kenny George suffers from gigantism, a condition in which the pituitary gland secretes too much growth hormone. The pro-wrestler Andre the Giant is likely the most notable athlete in recent years affected by this condition. Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George extremely self-conscious, and he hates conducting interviews. The questions inevitably turn to his health, size, and condition. (Knee problems required him to sit out much of his sophomore year.) His teammates have become quite protective of him, however, and they tell people to back off and give their friend some room.

Along with a passion for basketball, graphic design and animation vie for George's attention. He has wished he weren't so tall, and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation. Yet a stint in pro-basketball trumps these plans, and George wants to play for the NBA first.

Notes:

STUDENT HANDOUT (fill in the blank)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

comfortably	inevitably	secretes	stint	gigantism
notable	trumps	crowd	prohess	self-conscious
gawk	hormone	vie	passion	road trip

The Tallest Basketball Player Ever

It seems that Kenny George can't go anywhere nowadays without someone asking for an autograph or a picture, in part because of his athletic (a. _____) on the college basketball court. In only twenty minutes of play time per game, he averages 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. But people (b. _____) at him because he also happens to be the tallest basketball player ever. At 7 feet 7 inches (234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (163 kilograms), he really stands out in any (c. _____).

Although most would consider it very cool to slam dunk without any leap whatsoever, George faces a number of not so cool difficulties. For starters, unable to get behind the steering wheel of a car, he's never learned to drive. Moreover, whenever the team goes on a (d. _____), the bus company has to remove two seats so George can (e. _____) sit. He also sits on the floor of many of his classes because the desks don't fit.

Kenny George suffers from gigantism, a condition in which the pituitary gland (f. _____) too much growth (g. _____). The pro-wrestler Andre the Giant is likely the most (h. _____) athlete in recent years affected by this condition. (i. _____) has made the twenty-two year old George extremely (j. _____), and he hates conducting interviews. The questions (k. _____) turn to his health, size, and condition. (Knee problems required him to sit out much of his sophomore year.) His teammates have become quite protective of him, however, and they tell people to back off and give their friend some room.

Along with a (l. _____) for basketball, graphic design and animation (m. _____) for George's attention. He has wished he weren't so tall, and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation. Yet a (n. _____) in pro-basketball (o. _____) these plans, and George wants to play for the NBA first.

STUDENT HANDOUT (extended listening)

Listen and fill in the missing sentences. Compare answers with a partner, and then listen once more.

The Tallest Basketball Player Ever

a) _____, in part because of his athletic prowess on the college basketball court. In only twenty minutes of play time per game, he averages 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. But people gawk at him because he also happens to be the tallest basketball player ever. At 7 feet 7 inches (234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (163 kilograms), he really stands out in any crowd.

b) _____, George faces a number of not so cool difficulties. For starters, unable to get behind the steering wheel of a car, he's never learned to drive. Moreover, whenever the team goes on a road trip, the bus company has to remove two seats so George can comfortably sit. He also sits on the floor of many of his classes because the desks don't fit.

Kenny George suffers from gigantism, a condition in which the pituitary gland secretes too much growth hormone.

c) _____. Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George extremely self-conscious, and he hates conducting interviews. The questions inevitably turn to his health, size, and condition. (d) _____.) His teammates have become quite protective of him, however, and they tell people to back off and give their friend some room.

Along with a passion for basketball, graphic design and animation vie for George's attention. He has wished he weren't so tall, e) _____. Yet a stint in pro-basketball trumps these plans, and George wants to play for the NBA first.

STUDENT HANDOUT (activities)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary Match:

a.	q	f.	u
b.	w	g.	y
c.	z	h.	v
d.	s	i.	x
e.	r	j.	t

2. Fill in the Blanks:

a.	proyess	f.	self-conscious
b.	gawk	g.	inevitably
c.	road trip	h.	vie
d.	secretes	i.	stint
e.	notable	j.	trumps

pre- or post-Comprehension

1. True or False:

a.	F
b.	F
c.	T
d.	T
e.	T

2. Fragments:

a.	he really stands out in any crowd.
b.	he's never learned to drive.
c.	a condition in which the pituitary gland secretes too much growth hormone.
d.	they tell people to back off and give their friend some room.
e.	graphic design and animation vie for George's attention.

Student Handout

1. Fill in the Blanks

a.	proyess	i.	Gigantism
b.	gawk	j.	self-conscious
c.	crowd	k.	inevitably
d.	road trip	l.	passion
e.	comfortably	m.	vie
f.	secretes	n.	stint
g.	hormone	o.	trumps
h.	notable		

2. Extended Listening

a.	It seems that Kenny George can't go anywhere nowadays without someone asking for an autograph or a picture
b.	Although most would consider it very cool to slam dunk without any leap whatsoever
c.	The pro-wrestler Andre the Giant is likely the most notable athlete in recent years affected by this condition
d.	Knee problems required him to sit out much of his sophomore year
e.	and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation