

the ARTICLE (for instructors)

The Tallest Basketball Player Ever

Almost everywhere that Kenny George goes, someone stops him for an autograph or a picture. At airports and restaurants, passersby stare and point, too. His athletic ability on the college basketball court is one reason he stands out. In twenty minutes of play time in each game, he averages 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. However, George primarily gets noticed in any crowd because he's 7 feet 7 inches (or 234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (or 163 kilograms). That makes him the tallest player ever.

It may seem very cool to slam dunk without jumping, but George faces a number of unusual difficulties. For starters, he's never learned to drive because he can't fit behind the steering wheel of a car. And whenever the team goes on a road trip, the bus company has to remove two seats so George can comfortably sit. Moreover, he sits on the floor of many of his class lectures because the desks are far too small.

George's pituitary gland releases too much growth hormone, which is a condition known as gigantism. Andre the Giant, who was one of the top pro-wrestlers in the 1980s, is likely the most notable athlete in recent years with the same condition. Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George very self-conscious. He hates giving interviews to reporters, where he often gets asked about his health, his size, and his condition. (He didn't play much in his sophomore year because of knee problems.) George's teammates have become protective of him as a result, and they often tell people to back off and leave their friend alone.

In addition to his passion for basketball, George also has a keen interest in graphic design and animation. He has wished he weren't so tall, and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation. But first he wants to play pro-basketball for the NBA.

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.	passerby	q.	middle
b.	average	r.	second year
c.	road trip	s.	lesson
d.	moreover	t.	shy
e.	lecture	u.	observer
f.	notable	v.	enthusiastic
g.	self-conscious	w.	additionally
h.	sophomore	x.	go away
i.	back off	y.	important
j.	keen	z.	journey

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

	moreover	keen	notable	back off	road trip
	averages	lectures	sophomore	passersby	self-conscious
a.	At airports and restaurants, () stare and point at Kenny George.				
b.	In twenty minutes of each basketball game, he () 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks.				
c.	Whenever the team goes on a (), the bus company has to remove two seats so George can sit.				
d.	(), he sits on the floor of many of his classes.				
e.	In the (), the desks are far too small.				
f.	Andre the Giant is likely the most () athlete in recent years with the same condition, gigantism.				
g.	Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George very ().				
h.	He didn't play much in his () year because of knee problems.				
i.	George's teammates often tell people to () and leave their friend alone.				
j.	George also has a () interest in graphic design and animation.				

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

a.	passerby	c.	road trip	e.	lecture	g.	self-conscious	i.	back off
b.	average	d.	moreover	f.	notable	h.	sophomore	j.	keen

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.

moreover	keen	notable	back off	road trip
averages	lectures	sophomore	passersby	self-conscious
E Z N S T E O R D A N U K Z Y L W O T U R R X O J K H B B S B T A V L O T O H A O E S Q L A I V I I M I W M K D R E E I T W E S N O Z C I H E T C N R O B R L B H J P N S P T R E U N L A U U P X P S O U O B I B A U G C L O V A V R C A S C P C I E T C S P N E S W F F G X H Z S U O I C S N O C F L E S M O R E O V E R R N O B K E P Y B R E S S A P P K P Q L Q S B Q M O I C T E C L C A A J A L E C T U R E A C I Z T N J C Y J V E U E B S T T N G P W J				

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.

moreover	keen	notable	back off	road trip
averages	lectures	sophomore	passersby	self-conscious
back up	unselfconscious	avenger	passersby	self-consciously
	caned	road trip	lecturing	averaged
	mourn over	notable	unnoticed	sophomoric
passing by		backing off	passed by	average
	sophistry	keenly	bypassed	moreover
self-conscious		moribund	kenned	roadblock
	sophomores		averages	soporific
keening		outback	sophomore	lectures
	road rage	lectured	self-consciousness	noteworthy
	more or less		lecture	avenge
	road test		notably	back off
notableness	keen		moming	road trips
			passerby	unselfconsciousness

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.	passersby	c.	road trip	e.	lectures	g.	self-conscious	i.	back off
b.	averages	d.	moreover	f.	notable	h.	sophomore	j.	keen

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

a.	Almost everywhere that Kenny George goes, someone...
b.	For starters, he's never learned to drive because...
c.	George's pituitary gland releases too much growth hormone, which...
d.	He hates giving interviews to reporters, where he...
e.	In addition to his passion for basketball, George...

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

Almost everywhere that Kenny George goes, someone stops him for an autograph or a picture. At airports and restaurants, passersby stare and point, too. His athletic ability on the college basketball court is one reason he stands out. In twenty minutes of play time in each game, he averages 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. However, George primarily gets noticed in any crowd because he's 7 feet 7 inches (or 234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (or 163 kilograms). That makes him the tallest player ever.

It may seem very cool to slam dunk without jumping, but George faces a number of unusual difficulties. For starters, he's never learned to drive because he can't fit behind the steering wheel of a car. And whenever the team goes on a road trip, the bus company has to remove two seats so George can comfortably sit. Moreover, he sits on the floor of many of his class lectures because the desks are far too small.

George's pituitary gland releases too much growth hormone, which is a condition known as gigantism. Andre the Giant, who was one of the top pro-wrestlers in the 1980s, is likely the most notable athlete in recent years with the same condition. Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George very self-conscious. He hates giving interviews to reporters, where he often gets asked about his health, his size, and his condition. (He didn't play much in his sophomore year because of knee problems.) George's teammates have become protective of him as a result, and they often tell people to back off and leave their friend alone.

In addition to his passion for basketball, George also has a keen interest in graphic design and animation. He has wished he weren't so tall, and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation. But first he wants to play pro-basketball for the NBA.

Notes:

STUDENT HANDOUT (fill in the blank)

Fill in the blank with the correct word.

steering	moreover	self-conscious	keen	road trip
notable	back off	gigantism	passersby	teammates
averages	interviews	crowd	lectures	sophomore

The Tallest Basketball Player Ever

Almost everywhere that Kenny George goes, someone stops him for an autograph or a picture. At airports and restaurants, (a. _____) stare and point, too. His athletic ability on the college basketball court is one reason he stands out. In twenty minutes of play time in each game, he (b. _____) 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. However, George primarily gets noticed in any (c. _____) because he's 7 feet 7 inches (or 234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (or 163 kilograms). That makes him the tallest player ever.

It may seem very cool to slam dunk without jumping, but George faces a number of unusual difficulties. For starters, he's never learned to drive because he can't fit behind the (d. _____) wheel of a car. And whenever the team goes on a (e. _____), the bus company has to remove two seats so George can comfortably sit. (f. _____), he sits on the floor of many of his class (g. _____) because the desks are far too small.

George's pituitary gland releases too much growth hormone, which is a condition known as (h. _____). Andre the Giant, who was one of the top pro-wrestlers in the 1980s, is likely the most (i. _____) athlete in recent years with the same condition. Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George very (j. _____). He hates giving (k. _____) to reporters, where he often gets asked about his health, his size, and his condition. (He didn't play much in his (l. _____) year because of knee problems.) George's (m. _____) have become protective of him as a result, and they often tell people to (n. _____) and leave their friend alone.

In addition to his passion for basketball, George also has a (o. _____) interest in graphic design and animation. He has wished he weren't so tall, and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation. But first he wants to play pro-basketball for the NBA.

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

Almost everywhere that Kenny George goes, someone stops him for an autograph or a picture. At airports and restaurants, passersby stare and point, too. a) _____.

In twenty minutes of play time in each game, he averages 12.4 points, 8.8 rebounds, and 4.6 blocks. However, George primarily gets noticed in any crowd because he's 7 feet 7 inches (or 234 centimeters) and 360 pounds (or 163 kilograms). That makes him the tallest player ever.

b) _____, but George faces a number of unusual difficulties. For starters, he's never learned to drive because he can't fit behind the steering wheel of a car. And whenever the team goes on a road trip, the bus company has to remove two seats so George can comfortably sit. Moreover,

c) _____.

George's pituitary gland releases too much growth hormone, which is a condition known as gigantism. Andre the Giant, who was one of the top pro-wrestlers in the 1980s, is likely the most notable athlete in recent years with the same condition. d) _____. He hates giving interviews to reporters, where he often gets asked about his health, his size, and his condition. (He didn't play much in his sophomore year because of knee problems.) George's teammates have become protective of him as a result, and they often tell people to back off and leave their friend alone.

In addition to his passion for basketball, George also has a keen interest in graphic design and animation. He has wished he weren't so tall, and he eventually hopes for a career in comics or animation. e) _____.

STUDENT HANDOUT (activities)

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary

1. Vocabulary Match:

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

2. Fill in the Blanks:

a.	passersby	f.	notable
b.	averages	g.	self-conscious
c.	road trip	h.	sophomore
d.	moreover	i.	back off
e.	lectures	j.	keen

pre- or post-Comprehension

1. True or False:

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

2. Fragments:

a.	stops him for an autograph or a picture.
b.	he can't fit behind the steering wheel of a car.
c.	is a condition known as gigantism.
d.	often gets asked about his health, his size, and his condition.
e.	also has a keen interest in graphic design and animation.

Student Handout

1. Fill in the Blanks

a.	passersby	i.	notable
b.	averages	j.	self-conscious
c.	crowd	k.	interviews
d.	steering	l.	sophomore
e.	road trip	m.	teammates
f.	Moreover	n.	back off
g.	lectures	o.	keen
h.	gigantism		

2. Extended Listening

a.	His athletic ability on the college basketball court is one reason he stands out
b.	It may seem very cool to slam dunk without jumping
c.	he sits on the floor of many of his class lectures because the desks are far too small
d.	Gigantism has made the twenty-two year old George very self-conscious
e.	But first he wants to play pro-basketball for the NBA