

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 answers.

the ARTICLE (for students)

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.

Notes:

STEP ONE

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

STEP TWO

Questions: Read as much of the article as you can in two minutes. Guess the answers to the questions below, then listen to your teacher read the article. Try to confirm your answers.

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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? |

STEP THREE

Fill in the Blanks: Listen to your teacher read the article again. Fill in the blanks with the missing words.

STEP FOUR

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

STEP FIVE

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

- | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a. | How would you feel if you were Kenny? Please explain. |
| b. | If you were able to interview Kenny George, what three questions would you ask? |
| c. | Would you want an extraordinary life if you also had an unusual physical condition that made life difficult? |
| d. | Some people believe that celebrities, sports stars, politicians, etc. lose their right to privacy. Do you agree? |