

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 may be vocabulary unfamiliar to the students.

the ARTICLE (for students)

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:

STEP ONE

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.

STEP TWO

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.

STEP THREE

The Article: Read the article, and work with a partner to understand it. Lastly, summarize in your own words.

STEP FOUR

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

a.	What was your general impression after reading this article?
b.	In addition to the problems listed in the article, what other difficulties do you think Kenny faces?
c.	How would you feel if you were Kenny? Please explain.
d.	Do you think Kenny faces discrimination of any kind? How about ridicule?
e.	If you were able to interview Kenny George, what three questions would you ask?
f.	If you saw a very unusual or different person on the train or in a restaurant, what would you do?

STEP FIVE

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: