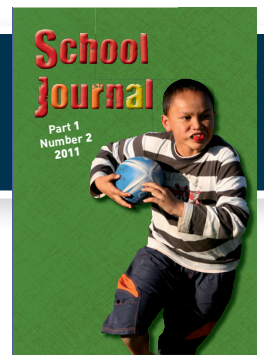


# Making the Team

by Feterika Sao

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Year 4



## Overview

Feterika Sao's simple story about a girl who wants to be selected for a rugby team allows readers to understand the need for fitness and healthy eating to achieve success. Ruby had been "training all week", but she soon learns that it's not enough to make her fit. With support from her parents, especially her Dad, Ruby decides to improve her fitness and is determined to make the team next

time. The story can be used as a springboard for exploring what makes a person fit and healthy. The text offers opportunities for students to build on the key competency of managing self.

Texts related by theme

"Never Give Up!" SJ 1.2.11 | "Mighty Muscles" SJ 1.2.11 | "Hooked on Hockey" SJ 1.5.07

## Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

some words and phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by photographs, illustrations, diagrams, and/or written explanations

some abstract ideas that are clearly supported by concrete examples in the text or easily linked to the students' prior knowledge

some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little or no competing information

Mum raised her eyebrows.  
"And she needs to concentrate on **healthy eating**," said Dad, stretching his hand out for the jar of chocolate biscuits.  
Mum **whisked** it out of his reach. "Seems to me there's more than one person round here who could work on their fitness," she said. "And their healthy eating."  
Dad looked hurt.  
"I suppose we could go for a quick run before tea," I said.

"Tell you what," said Mum.  
"When you both get back from your run, I'll make you each a nice big fruit smoothie."  
Dad and I looked at each other and grinned. "You're on," said Dad.  
Next time, I'll make the team for sure. **And even if I don't, I'll know I've given it a hundred percent.**  
"Last one to the gate's a rotten banana," I said. ■

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

## Possible curriculum contexts

### HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (Personal Health and Physical Development)

Level 2 – Regular physical activity: Experience creative, regular, and enjoyable physical activities and describe the benefits to well-being.

### ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

### ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.

### Possible reading purposes

- To find out what happens when a girl tries out for a rugby team
- To understand the reasons why a girl wants to get fit
- To understand the importance of perseverance.

See Instructional focus – Reading for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

### Possible writing purposes

- To write a true story about a similar experience
- To write a fictional story with a similar theme
- To write a plan for developing fitness.

See Instructional focus – Writing for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

## Text and language challenges

### VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, including “champ”, “rugby trials”, “buzzing”, “positive”, “make the team”, “coach”, “warm-ups”, “stretches”, “injuries”, “jogged”, “sideline”, “huffing and puffing”, “bunched”, “picks”, “clipboard”, “mistake”, “macaroni cheese”, “Black Ferns”, “disappointed”, “dumps”, “awesome”, “fitness”, “raised her eyebrows”, “concentrate”, “healthy eating”, “stretching”, “whisked”, “smoothie”
- Colloquial words and terms: “champ”, “buzzing”, “going great”, “Tell you what”, “You’re on”
- Metaphors: “given it a hundred percent”, “Last one ... a rotten banana”.

### Possible supporting strategies

Identify any words that students may find challenging and introduce them before reading. Discuss the use of colloquial language, including terms and expressions related to sport.

Go to ESOL Online ([www.esolonline.tki.org.nz](http://www.esolonline.tki.org.nz)) for ideas about how you could introduce and practise new vocabulary.

For students who are English language learners, you may need to be aware that consonant clusters such as those in “stretches”, “bunched”, and “whisked” can be difficult for students whose first language doesn’t have consonant clusters. Model the correct pronunciation, breaking them into syllables and drawing attention to the consonant sounds, and provide opportunities for students to hear and say them.

Brainstorm words that the students associate with playing a team sport. Highlight any that occur in the story and discuss their meanings.

Identify new vocabulary students should prioritise for learning. Have them record this vocabulary. Plan for ways to ensure they have opportunities to encounter this vocabulary often and in many contexts.

*The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.

### SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Some knowledge of what is required to get a place on a sports team
- Knowledge of fitness and healthy eating.

### Possible supporting strategies

Ask students who play a team sport to share their stories of getting onto a team. Discuss the skills and attributes required (including fitness) and the reasons they are needed.

Ensure that all students are able to talk (providing supports, for example, speaking frames), have a reason for talking (an information gap), and know the purpose of the activity.

Students who do not play sports can still share experiences related to fitness and healthy eating: be sensitive to students who may have issues in these areas.

### TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Chronological order of events, with language that signals time and sequence: “Ten to three”, “When we got to the field”, “Then”, “After ten minutes”, “After twenty minutes”, “At the end of the game”, “On the drive home”, “When we turned into the driveway”, “Next time”
- Multiple time frames
- A wide variety of past verb forms in the narrative and in the dialogue
- Action that takes place over one afternoon
- The use of repetition to convey feelings
- The use of simple, compound, and complex sentences.

### Possible supporting strategies

Discuss the ways that an author can show the passage of time in a narrative, highlighting examples in the text. You could include activities to help students focus on this before, during, and/or after reading.

**Before:** After reading the title and making predictions, you could give students the words, phrases, and clauses that signal time and sequence and have them put them into the order they think they occur in the story. They could then make predictions. (You could give pairs or individuals a couple each so they have to work together to combine them.) Record the order and the predictions and revisit them as you read.

**During:** Highlight the example in the first paragraph and ask students to identify and record others as they read (you could use a graphic organiser if they need support).

**After:** Give students the words, phrases, and clauses signalling time and sequence and have them use these as prompts to retell the main events of the story.

You may want to focus on one form, for example, the use of adverbial clauses to signal time (“When we turned into the driveway, I could smell the macaroni cheese”). Provide multiple examples, including those with adverbial clauses in both the initial and final positions, to support students to understand the structure and function of these clauses.

# Instructional focus – Reading

## Health and Physical Education

(Personal Health and Physical Development, level 2 – Regular physical activity: Experience creative, regular, and enjoyable physical activities and describe the benefits to well-being.)

**English** (Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.)

### Text excerpts from “Making the Team”

Wesley was still talking – something about not giving up, trying again. But I wasn't really listening.

On the drive home, I didn't say a word. Dad did the talking for both of us, but I wasn't listening to him either.

### Students (what they might do)

Students **make connections** between the text and their own experiences of feeling disappointed to understand how Ruby is feeling. They **infer** that she's upset and can't express her feelings.

### Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

**ASK QUESTIONS** to support students to make connections.

- Have you ever felt really disappointed at missing out on something?
- How does the author show us Ruby's feelings?

**MODEL** making connections.

- When I read this, I put together the words in the text and my own experiences of a big disappointment. This helps me get a better understanding of Ruby.
- The author repeats the words “I wasn't listening” twice. This tells me she wasn't engaging with the coach or her dad. I remember feeling like that once, and this helps me to imagine how bad Ruby is feeling.

**PROMPT** students to make their own connections with the text.

“And she needs to concentrate on healthy eating,” said Dad, stretching his hand out for the jar of chocolate biscuits.

Mum whisked it out of his reach. “Seems to me there's more than one person round here who could work on their fitness,” she said. “And their healthy eating.”

Students **make connections** between the text and their understanding of healthy eating to **infer** that Dad doesn't “practise what he preaches”. They **make connections** between this and the earlier reference to Dad puffing to **infer** that he's not fit.

Students use their knowledge of family interactions to **infer** that Mum is referring to Dad when she says “more than one person round here ...”.

**DIRECT** the students to find clues for inferences.

- Work with a partner to identify the information that shows Dad is unfit.
- Which information is actually in the text, here or elsewhere?
- Which information comes from your own experiences of fitness?
- What can you infer about Dad and Mum from these clues?

Refer students to the activities from before reading.

**ASK QUESTIONS** to help students extend their vocabulary knowledge.

- What is a whisk and what is it used for? How does that relate to the meaning of “whisked” in the story?
- What other words do you know that belong to the same word family as “whisked”? (whisk, whisking, whisks) How would you use these words in different contexts?

Use similar questions to help students extend their understanding of “concentrate”.

Next time, I'll make the team for sure. And even if I don't, I'll know I've given it a hundred percent.

“Last one to the gate's a rotten banana,” I said.

The students **ask and answer questions** to understand the expressions “for sure” and “a hundred percent”. They **make connections** with Ruby's earlier efforts to **infer** that Ruby now understands that fitness takes time to develop. The students **evaluate** Ruby's chances of success next time.

The students use their knowledge of colloquial language to understand the challenge Ruby sets for her father.

**ASK QUESTIONS** to support students as they make connections within the text.

- What has changed for Ruby since the start of the story?
- What clues on pages 3 and 4 tell you about Ruby's fitness? Was she well-prepared for the trials?
- What does she mean by “for sure” and “a hundred percent”?

This excerpt includes future, present, and past time frames. Some students may need support with recognising and understanding these time frames. The time frames are conveyed in a number of ways:

- > the sequence of events
- > words, phrases, and clauses signalling time and sequence, including a wide range of verb forms (often complex)
- > the prior knowledge and logic the reader brings to the story (for example, Ruby's resolutions refer to the future).

You may want to use a timeline to show the sequence of events (including the notion that the narrator is telling the story after it's happened).

**GIVE FEEDBACK**

- You've used your own experience of trialling for the netball team to help you understand how Ruby felt. That's a great way to get more meaning from the story.
- When you didn't understand why Ruby wasn't picked, you reread more carefully and found what you needed to know.

### METACOGNITION

- How did making connections with your own experiences help you to understand what Ruby was going through? What other strategies did you use?
- What was the author's purpose for writing this story? How well do you think she has achieved her purpose?
- What was your reading purpose? Did you achieve it? Why or why not?

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

# Instructional focus – Writing

## Health and Physical Education

(Personal Health and Physical Development, level 2 – Regular physical activity: Experience creative, regular, and enjoyable physical activities and describe the benefits to well-being.)

**English** (Level 2 – Language features: Use language features appropriately, showing some understanding of their effects.)

### Text excerpts from “Making the Team”

When we turned into the driveway, I could smell the macaroni cheese that Mum was cooking for tea – my favourite! But I didn't feel hungry. I just walked past the kitchen and went straight up to my room. I lay down on my bed and stared at the Black Ferns poster on my wall.

After ten minutes, I was huffing and puffing. After twenty minutes, I was totally out of breath and had to sit down with my head between my knees.

Dad knocked on my door. “Rube,” he said, “I know you're disappointed. Come down and let's talk about it.”

Dad always knows how to get me out of the dumps.

“Ruby was awesome today at the trials,” he said to Mum. “But she needs to work on her fitness.”

### Examples of text characteristics

#### COMMAS AND DASHES

A compound or complex sentence can contain two or more ideas, often separated into clauses by commas. Commas tell the reader to pause so they don't confuse the ideas. A dash signals a stronger separation than a comma, and the idea following the dash is often expressed informally. The dash can show a strong reaction or response to the ideas that went before it.

#### CONTRAST

Setting up a contrast can emphasise a feeling in a passage. The conjunction “but” signals that a contrasting idea will follow.

#### USING DETAILS TO IMPLY INFORMATION

Authors can use details to give information that prompts the reader to make inferences. Using detail can support the reader to infer something without the author saying it directly.

#### DIALOGUE

Authors use dialogue to show characters and their relationships. Conventions such as punctuation and signal words help the reader to know who is speaking and what they say.

Breaking up a line of speech helps the reader to feel the natural speech rhythm. It also lets the reader know who is speaking and who is being spoken to.

#### METACOGNITION

- Why did you choose to write a story about this? What message did you want your readers to get?
- How hard was it to use a theme of fitness in a fiction story? Would it be harder or easier to write an informational article about fitness? Why do you think that?
- How have your own experiences helped you as you planned and wrote this story? Do you think readers who don't have similar experiences will understand it? How could you give them more support?

### Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

**MODEL** the use of commas and dashes.

- The first clause (up to the comma) is an introduction to a new part of the text. Here, it gives me information about *when* and *where*. The comma tells me where the clause ends. A good guide for writing is to use a comma at the end of an opening clause that starts with a signal word like “when”.
- The main clause gives me the main idea. Then the dash makes me pause a bit longer as I read her response to the main idea. A dash is often used at the end of a sentence, to show a response or summarise an idea.

**EXPLAIN** that use of a contrasting idea can help the reader to understand a character's feelings.

- The author gives the reader details that show what Ruby did when she got home. She smells her favourite food cooking, but she goes to her room. The use of “But” lets the reader know that even though she smelled her favourite food, she was feeling too bad to eat. This use of a contrasting idea helps the reader to understand how she was feeling.

**EXPLAIN** that authors use a range of structures within their writing.

- Interesting information can be included in different ways. One way is to use a fact box. When you're deciding how to organise information, ask yourself:
  - > Will this fit with my purpose?
  - > Will it interest my audience?
  - > How important is the information to the main idea?
- A fact box is a good way to use information that is interesting but not directly related to the main idea. It still has to fit your purpose for writing though!

**EXPLAIN** the language features used in dialogue.

- Readers need to be able to work out who is speaking and where their spoken words start and stop. That's why we have speech marks and other punctuation around direct speech. Review your use of dialogue and make sure you've punctuated it correctly.
- How will your readers know who is speaking?
- How will they know who a character is speaking to?
- If you want to break a line of speech, what is your purpose? Where will you break it? Check that the punctuation remains correct so your readers are not confused.

Some students may need support with negotiating the multiple time frames. You may need to point out that in a narrative, it's common for the story to be told in the past and the dialogue to be in the present (or a mix as in the example) because people are speaking at that time within the story.

**GIVE FEEDBACK** to affirm the students' choices of language features in their stories.

- You've taken out the long description of the boys' relationship and used dialogue between them to convey the same thing. This use of dialogue has made the story much more interesting.
- You've revised and added commas to help your readers make sense of the long sentences. Using a dash to show how Rob reacted to the surprise is really effective.