

Born to Run

The incredible journey of one of Team USA's youngest stars

About the Story

Lexile® 920L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to the Story tab.

Learning Objective: to explore key ideas and details in a work of narrative nonfiction

Key Skills: figurative language, compare and contrast, key ideas and details

Essential Questions:

- How can we overcome obstacles?
- What drives innovation?
- How do advances in technology affect our lives?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, W.2, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Video:

- Beyond the Story: Meet Ezra Frech

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Differentiated Articles:

- Lower-Lexile version
- Spanish language version

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- "The Fastest Woman in the World"
- Go!
- "El Magnífico"

Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Writing Planner: Ezra's Dreams
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Video Discussion Questions
- Choice Board
- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Core Skills Workout: Summarizing*, Text Structure*, Text Features, Text Evidence*, Nonfiction Elements
- Quiz*
- Contest Entry Form

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson

1. Preparing to Read

30 minutes

Do-Now: Journal and Discuss (10 minutes)

- Project the following on your whiteboard:

Choose one of the following prompts to respond to in your journal or on a piece of paper:

- Write about a time you practiced a skill (in or out of school) and got better.*
 - Write about a time you achieved a goal. How did you do it? How did you feel?*
 - Have you ever felt like giving up at something you wanted to get better at? How did you handle the situation?*
 - What are some short-term and long-term goals you have (in or out of school)?*
 - What obstacles are you encountering as you work toward one of your current goals?*
- Invite volunteers to share their reflections. Then tell students that today they will read about one of Team USA's youngest stars, whose goal is to win a gold medal in the Paralympic Games.

Watch a Video (10 minutes)

- Watch the **Beyond the Story video**, which takes students to California to meet Ezra Frech, the subject of the article. Have students respond to the **Video Discussion Questions** (available in your Resources tab) in small groups or as a class.

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. Highlighted words: *agile, congenital, crude, culmination, innovation, propelling, refine, unrelenting*. Optionally, print or share the interactive link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity before class. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud are embedded in the interactive slides.

2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

- Invite a volunteer to read the **As You Read** box on page 5 of the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the article once as a class. (*Differentiation: Share the **lower-Lexile version** or the **Spanish version** of the article.*) Optionally, have students listen to author Alessandra Potenza read her article aloud while they follow along. The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Divide students into groups to read the article again and respond to the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions.

Close-Reading Questions (20 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **What does it mean to be born to do something? Why do you think the author chose “Born to Run” as the title?** (figurative language) *If you say someone is born to do something, you mean they possess natural talent or ability for that thing. Potenza may have chosen the title “Born to Run” based on what Ezra said about watching the 2016 Paralympic Games: “It was like the universe was telling me, ‘This is what you’re meant to do.’” Perhaps another reason Potenza chose “Born to Run” has to do with the way Ezra has defied expectations. He was born with limb differences and it was uncertain whether he’d ever be able to walk, but after surgery and prosthetics, Ezra went on not only to walk but also to become an extraordinary athlete.*
2. **What made Van Phillips’s prosthetics innovative?** (compare and contrast) *Phillips’s prosthetics were innovative because rather than being designed to closely resemble their human body counterparts, like prosthetics of the past, they were designed with function as their foremost goal. Not focusing on appearance gave Phillips freedom to think outside the box: He used strong, lightweight materials and engineered completely new shapes. This original thinking took artificial limbs from clumsy, heavy, and uncomfortable devices to devices that enable users to move with comfort, speed, stability, and power. Potenza writes that Phillips’s Flex-Foot Cheetah design “can function as well as ligaments and bones and tendons—maybe even better.”*
3. **How did participating in sports affect Ezra as he was growing up?** (key ideas and details) *For one thing, sports were something Ezra was very good at and loved doing, which must have given him a sense of accomplishment, pride, and satisfaction. Participating in sports also helped Ezra make friends and gave him a sense of belonging. In addition, sports gave him an escape from thinking about the ways in which he was different from his classmates.*

4. **What important lesson did Ezra learn while he was training for the Paralympics?** (key ideas and details) *Ezra learned that while working hard is an important part of succeeding as an athlete, it's just as important to rest and take care of your body. After suffering an overuse injury, Ezra took time off to recover and then, with the help of a coach, learned how to safely train and get the rest his body needed. Once he began doing this, his performance improved greatly.*
5. **How has Ezra coped with failing to win the medal he'd hoped for in the high jump?** (key ideas and details) *At first, Ezra was devastated by his mistake and his failure to medal in the high jump. Now Ezra uses his loss "as fuel, energizing him to look to the future." In other words, instead of allowing his failure to discourage him, he is using his failure as motivation to keep working hard and try again to achieve his goal.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **What character traits do you think Ezra has that helped him achieve his goal of competing in the Tokyo Paralympics?** *Answers will vary but students will likely cite Ezra's determination, passion, perseverance, courage, dedication, and resilience.*
2. **How might Ezra's story be helpful to others who face challenges in their lives?** *Answers will vary, but students may offer that if someone else facing challenges learns about Ezra and the obstacles he has overcome, they might feel a sense of hope and inspiration to continue working through whatever they are facing.*

3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete the **Writing Planner: Ezra's Dreams**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the activity on page 9 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

Articles from the Scope archives about elite athletes and changemakers:

- Paired Texts: ["The Fastest Woman in the World"](#) and ["Climbing Toward a Better World"](#) (May 2021)
- Drama: [Go!](#) (February 2021)
- Paired Texts: ["El Magnífico"](#) and ["Should No. 21 Be Retired?"](#) (October 2021)

Support for Multilingual Learners

These questions are designed to help students respond to the text at a level that's right for them.

Yes/No Questions

Ask students to demonstrate comprehension with a very simple answer.

1. Was Ezra born with a condition that affects his limbs? *Yes, he was.*
2. Is a blade meant to look like a human leg? *No, it's not.*
3. Did Ezra achieve his dream of competing in the Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan? *Yes, he did.*
4. Did Ezra win a medal in the high jump event? *No, he didn't.*
5. Is Ezra training for next year's Paralympic Games in Paris, France? *Yes, he is.*

Either/Or Questions

Encourage students to use language from the question in their answer.

1. Are prosthetic body parts a new invention, or have they been used since ancient times? *Prosthetic body parts have been used since ancient times.*
2. Did Van Phillips like the way prosthetics worked, or did he want to improve them? *Van Phillips wanted to improve prosthetics.*
3. Did playing sports growing up have a positive effect on Ezra or a negative one? *Playing sports growing up had a positive effect on Ezra.*
4. Is Ezra's best event running or the high jump? *Ezra's best event is the high jump.*
5. After Ezra got a coach, did his performance improve or get worse? *After Ezra got a coach, his performance greatly improved.*

Short-Answer Questions

Challenge students to produce simple answers on their own.

1. What inspired Ezra to compete in the Paralympic Games? *Ezra was inspired to compete in the Paralympic Games after he watched the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on television.*
2. How does Ezra use his loss at the Tokyo games today? *Ezra uses his loss to energize himself and remind himself of his goal as he trains for the next Paralympic Games, in Paris, France.*

Language-Acquisition Springboard: Review words that express feelings to help students discuss the article.

In the article, the author describes how Ezra felt at several key points in his journey. After reading, ask the following questions about how Ezra felt. Tell students they can answer with words from the article or with their own words. Encourage them to volunteer words from their native languages and to act out the words to help clarify the meanings.

1. How did Ezra feel the first time he ran with a blade? *free*
2. Growing up, how did Ezra feel when he played sports? *better, happy, accepted, secure*
3. How did Ezra feel when he injured his right leg and had to stop training? *scared*
4. How did Ezra feel when he arrived in Tokyo, Japan? *ready, exhilarated, excited*
5. How did Ezra feel after he didn't win a medal? *disappointed, crushed*
6. How does Ezra feel about the Paralympic Games in Paris, France? *determined, positive*