Unit 5/Week 1

Title: A Kind of Grace

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RI.6.1-8, W.6.1, W.6.4, W.6.7, W.6.8, SL.6.4, SL.6.5, L.6.4

Teacher Instructions

*Refer to the Introduction for further details.*

**Before Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Work hard, train hard, and persevere to make your dreams come true.

Synopsis

In Jackie Joyner-Kersee’s autobiography, she writes of the challenges she faced early on while becoming a track and field athlete. She speaks of her first experiences on an all-girls track team and the strength and perseverance she faced in competition. By building on her talents and not giving up, Jackie became an Olympic medaled athlete.

1. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Answers** |
| Two adjectives describe Jackie Joyner in the first paragraph of her autobiography. What are these adjectives and what do they immediately tell you about Joyner? | **Ambitious** - she has a strong desire to achieve her goals  **Energetic** - she has a lot of energy |
| Joyner thinks thoughts to herself, what are these thoughts?  Why does she keep them to herself? | “If my legs are strong enough for dancing and jumping, maybe I can run fast too.”  “It did look like an awfully big circle, which grew wider as we got closer to it.”  Her parents taught her to listen and not speak while adults are speaking. |
| How does the reader know it is a hot day? | * sunny afternoon * dressed in T-shirts and shorts * **squinted** and **cupped** our hands over our eyes to **shield** them from the sun * “It’s hot out here!” |
| What is referred to as **unconventional**? And why? | The track. It is 550 yards round which is a third of a mile. A **standard** track is a quarter-mile. |
| What evidence tells the reader that running around the track was difficult? | * Those who completed the lap were **panting** hard. * They bent over and put their hands on their knees. * Other girls stopped running and were walking. * The girls **mumbled** and rolled their eyes. * Every day, fewer and fewer girls showed up. * Two girls were under **protest**. |
| Why did Joyner breathe a sigh of **relief**? | Joyner doubted if she was a good track athlete. Her coach told her not to worry and to have fun. He reminded her that a ribbon is good, but if she didn’t win a ribbon, that was ok too. |
| Why was Joyner disappointed? | She ran as fast as she could, but could not catch the other girls. After catching her breath, she was disappointed. |
| As an 11-year old, what did Joyner do after school? | Rush home, eat oatmeal cookies or potato chips, complete homework quickly, do her chores or pay Debra to do them, then head to practice with her coach who picked her up. |
| Joyner talks about being scolded and punished, what was she **scolded** for, and what were her **punishments**? | * Joyner chatted with her friends while running instead of running quietly. Her coach made her run in the opposite direction from the others. * She ate junk food before practice. Her coach made her run three extra laps in the opposite direction. |
| Joyner talks about something she **yearns** for. What was she yearning for, and how did she satisfy this yearning? | Joyner yearned to run down the **long-jump track** and leap into the air like a plane taking off.  Joyner and her sister gathered sand from a nearby park to make a sandpit in her front yard. She practiced leaping into the sand every day.  At practice, while waiting for her coach to drive her home she attempted the long-jump at practice with great success. |
| “The sun was ready to set, but the air remained hot and thick. I was tired after running sprints and conditioning drills in the **oppressive** heat. But standing there, looking down the long-jump lane for the first time, I was **energized**.”  How does the key vocabulary in these sentences prove she is ambitious and energetic? | Even though the weather is oppressive, uncomfortable and severely hot, Joyner is energized, excited with an **abundance** of energy, to run the long-jump. Even though it is hot and she is tired after practice, Joyner has a strong desire to achieve her goal of running the long-jump. |
| What does Joyner mean by “exploring **uncharted territory**”? | At the time and place she was living, there were no opportunities to participate in organized sports for girls. A law had just been passed by **Congress** to give girls and boys equal opportunities to participate in sports. |

Vocabulary

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|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING** | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING**  General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION**  not enough contextual clues provided in the text | uncharted territory  long-jump track  Congress | unconventional  standard |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  sufficient context clues are provided in the text | ambitious  energetic  oppressive  abundance  scolded  protest  relief  yearns  energized | panting  mumbled  punishments  squinted  cupped  shield |

Culminating Task

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write
* *There are many dates within the text and photo captions throughout the autobiography. Use the information in the text to create a timeline of Jackie Joyner-Kersee. Look carefully for clues in the story to include her age and date of year for each event.*

Answer:

* 1969 – 7 years – Mary Brown Community Center opened
* 1972 – 10 years – signed up for girls’ track at the Community Center
* 1974 – 12 years – participated in an organized male and female track squad
* 1978 – 16 years – stretches before practicing long jumps
* 1979 – 17 years – girls track state championships, East St. Louis Lincoln High School
* 1984 – 22 years – won silver in the 1984 Olympics
* 1992 – 30 years – won gold medal at 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain
* 1999 – 37 years – gives keynote speech at the NAACP’s sports and business meeting

Additional Tasks

* Rewrite the autobiography as a biography using key facts and dates from the autobiography.
* This autobiography is a great starting point to researching various Olympic Sports and gold medal athletes. Make medals and present information to the class as to who earned the medal, which Olympics, what sport, and athlete background.