

## 6 P.T. Usha, the Golden Girl



**Look at the picture and discuss the questions that follow:**

1. Which sport is shown in the picture?
2. How many sports and games do you know?
3. Which sport/game do you play?
4. What is the difference between a sport and a game?
5. How important are sports/games for everyone?



**Read the following story and answer the questions that follow.**

“P.T. Usha, India.” This was the address on a letter from the Middle East. The letter was delivered by the postal department with no delay whatsoever. This was the status of PILAVULLAKANDI THEKKPARAMBIL USHA who was born as the second daughter of Paithal and Lakshmi Amma on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1964 in the village of Payyoli, Kozhikode District, Kerala.

It was November 1973 when a dedicated physical education teacher called Balakrishnan discovered Usha while conversing with a parent. His eyes, ever watchful, kept drifting to a group of small girls playing blind man’s bluff just across the field. Was there a pair of feet that were moving extraordinarily fast? Was that tiny, dark girl in her blue skirt and white blouse moving like an instinctive athlete? Patient as ever, Balakrishnan waited for the game to be over. Calling the little girl, he gently enquired of her, “What’s your name, child?” The shy little girl hardly raised her eyes from the ground. “Usha,” she whispered and added, “from Class IV.”

Thus was made one of the greatest discoveries in the athletic arena of Asia, a simple question from an observant master, and an equally unassuming answer from a tiny village girl from a distant village in Malabar in Kerala. That same evening, at 4.15 p.m., Usha heard the magical words for the first time in her life – **On your Marks. Get set. Go.** The Master had explained to her what to do, and why. Confused, but very much aware of the ‘seriousness’ of the occasion, she ran for her life. The rest is history.

In 1975, Usha was 11 years old and was practising vigorously for the sub-junior District Meet – her first ever. With three days to go, Usha badly injured her heel, while practising for the long jump. The day of the event; all eyes were on her; she was so puny, so unbelievably tiny that she was the crowd’s favourite even before the race started. A white bandage on her heel won her even more sympathy. She came first in all the four events she participated in – 100m, 200m, long jump, and high jump. She was

also the individual champion at the Meet.

Academically, Usha was an extremely bright student. She was always amongst the top three in her class and was popular with her teachers. She passed her standard VII exams with a first class grade. Just then, the government of Kerala announced a separate Sports Division for girls at Cannanore, a town with special facilities for sports in addition to regular studies.

Usha joined the Sports Division at Cannanore to improve her sport talent. She was left in the safe hands of C.H. Paithal, the headmaster of the school. It was at Cannanore that another great master fired her imagination so much that together they achieved the impossible. His name was Madhavan Nambiar.

By 1977, Usha and Nambiar were inseparable. Nambiar had found the ward he had been waiting for all his life and Usha had found her guru. Nambiar would, from now on, care for her like a father. Usha's meticulous, systematic training began in earnest.

Usha had a regular training run on the beach of Payyoli. She preferred to be trained alone, for the vastness of the beach gave her a sense of freedom. She ran joyfully and freely, and she derived her strength from the serenity and peace of her beloved Kerala surroundings. Nambiar introduced his sand training in her programme to enhance her performance in the athletics, just after the 1982 New Delhi Asian Games. Sand training had enhanced the performance of many great athletes, from Edwin Moses to top flight Indian athletes like Milkha Singh and Sriram Singh.

Usha's athletic achievements are well-known to almost all Indians – two silver medals in the 1982 New Delhi Asian Games; 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 400m at the 1984 Jakarta Asian Meet; and four Golds and one Silver at the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul.

P.T. Usha's story is that of a gifted child, from humble origins, achieving international success through sheer dedication and immense hard work. "Never, never in the history of independent India has a youngster from a remote background town of rural origin caught the imagination of youth in particular and the public in general as Usha has," said a Professor of English in Usha's home town.

instinctive (*adj*): arising from natural ability

vigorously (*adv*): working with strength and energy

puny (*adj*): small and weak

earnest (*adj*): serious

serenity (*n*): calmness

enhance (*v*): to make greater or better



**How well did I read?**

**Fill in the boxes using yes/ somewhat/ no.**

I enjoyed reading the passage.

I got the idea of the passage on my own.

I got the idea with the help of my friends in the group.

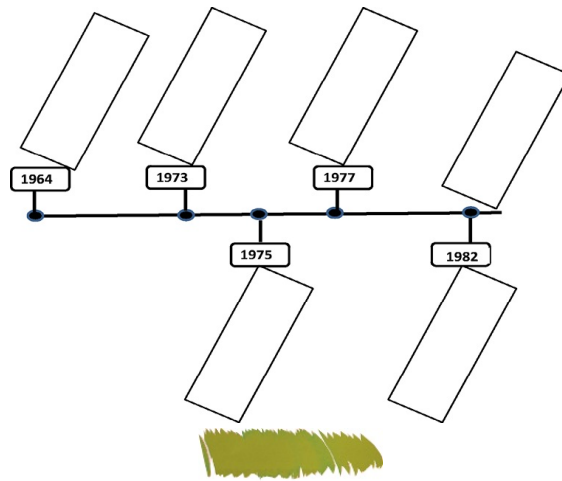
The teacher helped me to understand the passage.

I used the glossary given at the end of the passage.

**I. Answer the following questions:**

1. At what age was Usha's sports talent recognized first? Who did it?
2. What quality do you notice in Usha while she practised athletics from a young age?
3. How was Usha in her studies?
4. How does Usha's life inspire the young girls of our country?
5. What qualities in Usha made her great in athletics?
- \*6. Can you name some great Indian women athletes who may have been inspired by P.T. Usha?
7. List different events in athletics.

**II. Write on "the time line" given below the important events from the life of P.T. Usha.**



### III. Write whether the following statements are True or False in the brackets.

1. P.T. Usha is also called the golden girl. [ ]
2. She is the only daughter of her parents. [ ]
3. Usha was the individual champion in the sub-junior District Meet. [ ]
4. Usha was an average child in her studies. [ ]
5. Madhavan Nambiar alone was responsible for her international fame. [ ]

### I. The following is the list of some sports and games. Classify them into sports and games. Add some other games or sports you know to the list.

Volleyball Cricket  
 Running Chess  
 Badminton Table tennis  
 Soccer Skiing  
 Swimming Motor racing  
 Baseball Sailing  
 Carrom Lawn tennis

#### Sports Games

### II. Pick out from the reading passage the synonyms of the following words:

devoted title-holder attained exceptional  
 small happily tranquility increase  
 talented





5

1

7

11

2

6

12

3

7

13

4

10

8

9

**III. Look at the following sports goods. Write the number of the sports item and its name in your notebook. You may use the words from the box.**

weights goggles shorts a tennis racket a volley ball

running shoes a football football socks a football skirt a basketball

a track suit running shoes a hockey stick a cricket ball a shuttle cock

### **I. Adjectives and their order in a phrase**

**Look at the following sentences from the reading passage:**

Usha was a tiny village girl. She was an extremely bright student.

The underlined words are adjectives. They describe Usha. We may use more than one adjective to describe a person, place or thing or an object. They may give us information about things like quality, colour, age, make, shape etc., of a person, place, thing or an object.

Quality : a pleasant day Size : a small room

Age : a young man Temperature : a hot day

Shape : a square table Colour : a black cat

### **Order of adjectives**

When we use two or more adjectives to describe a noun, we have to take care of their order. The position of the adjectives depends on how closely they are related to the noun. Though hard and fast rules cannot be given, the following guidelines will be of some help.

**Example:** It is Rani's beautiful old brown Indian handmade wooden table.

**I. Rewrite the following sentences with the correct order of adjectives:**

1. Usha was born at farm mother's old her house.
2. Usha is dark little a shy girl.
3. There are flowers some beautiful rose white in our garden.
4. It is new my textbook English.
5. Sunitha was dressed in saree kancheepurm expensive an silk.

**II. Look at the following sentences paying special attention to the underlined phrases:**

1. Usha joined the Sports Division at Cannanore to improve her sport talent.
2. Nambiar introduced the sand training in her programme to enhance her performance in athletics.

**Adjectives : usual order**

Rani's

determiners (articles, demonstratives, possessives)

beautiful  
quality  
size/age/ shape  
old  
brown Indian  
colour origin  
hand made  
past participle  
material  
wooden  
table  
noun

The underlined phrases in the above sentences are used to talk about the purpose of activity and answer the question "why" as shown below.

Why did Usha join the Sports Division at Cannanore?

**... to improve her sports talent.**

Why did Nambiar introduce her sand training?

**... to enhance her performance.**

**1. Ask and answer the following questions as shown in the example:**

A: Why do people go to library?

B: They go to library to read books.

A: Why do people go to school / post-office / the cinema / hospital / market / bus-stand / railway station

B: Why do people use a watch / an umbrella / a toothbrush / a microscope / a mirror / shoes /...

**2. Make sentences using the clues given. The first one is done for you.**

Smt. Lakshmi Devi is an old woman.

eg. She / like / eat / sweets. - She likes to eat sweets.

She / like / eat / soft things - she / hate / eat / hard things - One day she / -want / eat / palkova - She / ask / her neighbour / buy / some palkova - The young woman / agree / get / some - She / promise / buy / a kilo - The old woman / promise / pay her later - In the market / the young woman / remember / buy / something for Lakshmi Devi. - She bought pakodis! - The old woman / refuse / pay.

**3. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate forms of the verbs in the brackets.**

1. Reema is planning \_\_\_\_\_ admission in French classes from next year. ( take)
2. She practised \_\_\_\_\_ with a pitcher on her head.(walk)
3. My grandfather has promised \_\_\_\_\_ care of Sheru, the dog, in our absence. (take)
4. I have no idea how they are planning \_\_\_\_\_ the New Year's Eve this year. (celebrate)
5. I have decided \_\_\_\_\_ the job in view of my financial position. ( accept)
6. My mother dislikes \_\_\_\_\_ alone in the kitchen. (work)



I. You have read about P.T.Usha . Using that information and any other information you may have, try to write a short profile of this great athlete. You can use the following skeleton if you like.

### P.T. Usha - The Payyoli Express

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Coach: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Biographical Sketch: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Achievements in Olympics:

- 1.
- 2.

#### Achievements in Asian Games:

- 1.
- 2.

#### Records Set / Broken:

- 1.
- 2.

#### Medals Won:

- 1.
- 2.

#### Awards and Honours:

- 1.
- 2.



#### How well did I write?

Fill in the boxes using yes/ somewhat/ no.

I was able to explain / describe / narrate well.

The sentences I used were properly connected.

I was able to express my ideas in apt words.

The ideas were arranged in proper sequence.

I used proper punctuation marks.

\*II. Suppose you have Rs. 10,000 to spend on sports equipment. Write in your notebook the things you would want to buy. As the Secretary of The Sports Club in your school, write a letter to M/S. India sports, Hyderabad for placing order for these sports goods. You should ask them to send you the price list of the goods before you place the final order.

\*III. The A.P. Sports Club, Hyderabad has decided to collect data about the popularity of sports in schools in your locality. Prepare a notice about the A.P. Sports Club's visit to your school.

Read this questionnaire and write your answers in the notebook. The points you get depend on your choice of answer, a, b, or c. Look at the table given below the questionnaire for points. For example, if your answer to question 1 is b, you will get 0 points. Mark your answers and calculate your score. Then you will know how sporty you are.

#### How well did I edit my work?

Fill in the boxes using yes/ somewhat/ no.

I deleted the excess words.

I corrected the wrong forms of words.

I corrected the punctuation errors.  
I added new words wherever necessary.  
I corrected the misspelt words.

**Question No.**

- 1.
- 2
- 3
- 4

**How sporty are you?**

- 1. How often do you play sports per week?  
a. Three times b. Never c. Every day
- 2. What do you like to do on a Sunday afternoon?  
a. Watch television b. Study c. Play sports with friends
- 3. How often do you watch sports on television?  
a. Never b. Sometimes c. Often
- 4. During the last world cricket cup  
a. I watched some of the matches.  
b. I watched most of the matches.  
c. I didn't watch any of the matches.
- 5. What do you think of your physical education classes at school?  
a. I hate them. b. I think they are O.K. c. I love them.
- 6. Which of these do you have?  
a. A lot of sports books, magazines and equipment.  
b. Some sports books, magazines and equipment.  
c. No sports books, magazines and equipment.
- 7. Do you ever think of becoming a famous sports player?  
a. Never b. Sometimes c. Often
- 8. Do you plan to participate in sports this weekend?  
a. Yes b. May be c. No

**a**

**Points**

- 1
- 1
- 0
- 1
- b**
- 0
- 0
- 1
- 2
- c**
- 2
- 2
- 2
- 0

**Question No.**

- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8

**a**

0

2

0

2

**Points**

1

1

1

1

**b**

2

0

2

0

**c**



**Score:** Less than 5 points – you hate sports.

From 5 to 9 points – you like sports.

More than 9 points – you love sports.

**Give the questionnaire to the members of your group and tell them how sporty they are.**

**I. Your teacher will read the story, “The Olympic Champion and the Ducks.” Listen carefully and say whether the following statements are True or False. Write T for True and F for false statements in the brackets.**

1. The first Olympic Games were held in Olympia. [ ]
2. Olympic Games are held once in a year. [ ]
3. Bobby Pearce learnt sculling from his father. [ ]
4. When Bobby won his first race, he was six years old. [ ]
5. Myers slowed down the boat because he loves animals. [ ]
6. People praised Bobby for his kindness towards the innocent creatures. [ ]
7. He lost only a single race. [ ]
8. He completed thirty three races in his life. [ ]

**Group work**



**II. Given below are some statements expressing the views of some people about sports and games in schools. Discuss them in your group. Each member should either agree or disagree with the statement and give reasons. One member should record while the others give their opinions. After everyone has finished, the group leader can summarize and present before the class.**

**Sports/games slow down students' progress in their studies.**

**When school children participate in sports/games, they become tired.**

**Girls should not be encouraged to participate in sports/games**

**When girls take part in sports/games, they become masculine and insensitive.**

**Participating in sports/games is a mere waste of time.**

**Sports/games spoil the entire career of students.**

**The success rate is very low in sports/games.**



**Read the following poem:**

## **Indian Cricket Team**

When the umpire puts the toss,

Dhoni is the boss.

When Gambhir hits a century,

Bret Lee goes for a knee injury.

When Sehwag hits the ball to the fence,

Ponting becomes tense.

When Taylor's run out is taken

To the third umpire's decision,

He loses his batting position.

When India is in need of a run,

Down goes the blazing sun.

When India gets the cup,

They raise it up.

fence (n): (here) boundary

blazing (adj): burning brightly



**How well did I read the poem?**

**Fill in the boxes using yes/ somewhat/ no.**

I enjoyed reading the poem.

I got the idea of the poem on my own.

I got the idea with the help of my friends in the group.

The teacher helped me to understand the poem.

I used the glossary given at the end of the poem.



1. Do you like the poem? Give reasons for your answer.
2. Write a similar poem by changing the names of players of another cricket team.

**Collect the measurements of the courts of different games like volleyball, badminton, Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, etc. and share them with your classmates. Also, draw the charts of the courts of some games/sports along with their measurement and display them in your class/sports room.**

## Ranji's Wonderful Bat

"How's that!" shouted the wicket-keeper, holding the ball up in his gloves.

"How's that!" echoed the fielders. "How?" growled the fast bowler, glaring at the umpire.

"Out!" said the umpire. And Suraj, the captain of the school team, was walking slowly back to the tool-shed at the far end of the field.

The score stood at fifty-three for four wickets. Another sixty runs had to be made for victory, and only one good batsman remained. All the rest were bowlers who could not make many runs.

It was Ranji's turn to bat. He was the youngest member of the team, only eleven but strong and bold. Ranji prepared to face the bowler. The hard, shiny, red ball came speeding towards him.

Ranji was going to leap forward and play the ball back to the bowler, but at the last moment he changed his mind and stepped back, planning to push the ball through the ring of fielders on his right, or off side. The ball swung in the air, shot off the grass, and came through sharply to strike Ranji on his pads.

The umpire raised a finger. "Out," he said. And it was Ranji's turn to walk back to the tool-shed. The match was won by the visiting team.

"Never mind," said Suraj, patting Ranji on the back. "You'll do better next time." But their cricket coach was more strict. "You'll have to make more runs in the next game," he told Ranji, "or you'll lose your place in the side!"

Avoiding the other players, Ranji walked slowly homewards. He was very upset. He had been trying so hard and practising so regularly, but when an important game came along, he failed to make a big score.

On his way home, he had to pass Mr. Kumar's Sports Shop. He liked to chat with the owner or look at all the things on the shelves—footballs, cricket balls, badminton rackets, hockey sticks and balls of various shapes and sizes. Mr. Kumar had been a state player once, and had scored a century in a match against Tanzania.

But this was one day when he did not feel like stopping. He looked the other way and was about to cross the road when Mr. Kumar's voice stopped him. "Hello, Ranji! Why are you looking so sad? Lost the game today?"

Ranji felt better as soon as he was inside the shop. "Yes, we lost the match."

"Never mind," said Mr. Kumar. "What would we do without losers? Anyway, how many runs did you make?"

"None. A big round egg. I haven't made a good score in my last three matches," said Ranji. "I'll be dropped from the team if I don't do something in the next game."

"Well, we can't have that happening," said Mr. Kumar. "Something will have to be done about it."

"I'm just unlucky," said Ranji.

"May be. But in that case, it's time your luck changed."

Mr. Kumar began looking closely at a number of old cricket bats, and after a few minutes he said, "Ah!" And he picked up one of the bats and held it out to Ranji. "This is it!" he said. "This is the luckiest of all my old bats. This is the bat I made a century with!"

He held it out to Ranji. "Here, take it! I'll lend it to you for the rest of the cricket season. You won't fail with it."

Ranji took the bat and gazed at it with awe and delight. "Is it really the bat you made a century with?" he asked.

"It is," said Mr. Kumar. "It may get you a hundred runs too!"

Ranji spent a nervous week waiting for Saturday's match. He asked Koki, the girl next door, to bowl to him in the garden. Koki bowled quite well.

At last Saturday arrived, bright and sunny. Just right for cricket. Suraj won the toss for the school and decided to bat first.

The opening batsmen put on thirty runs without being separated. The visiting fast bowlers couldn't do much. Then the spin bowlers came on, and immediately there was a change in the game. Two wickets fell in one over, and the score was thirty-three for two. Suraj made a few quick runs, and then he too was out to one of the spinners, caught behind the wicket. And it was Ranji's turn.

He walked slowly to the wicket. The bowler took a short run and then the ball was twirling towards Ranji. And then a thrill ran through Ranji's arm as he felt the ball meet the bat.

CRACK! The ball, hit firmly with the middle of Ranji's bat, streaked past the helpless bowler and sped towards the boundary. Four runs!

And that was only the beginning. Now Ranji began to play all the strokes he knew. He sent the fielders scampering to all corners of the field.

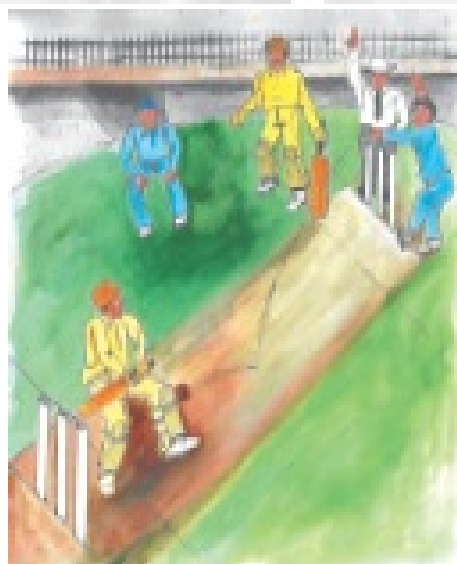
Twenty minutes after lunch, when Suraj closed the innings, Ranji was not out with fifty-eight and Ranji's school won the match. On his way home, Ranji stopped at Mr. Kumar's shop.

"We won!" he said, "And I made fifty-eight—my highest score so far. It really is a lucky bat!"

**- Ruskin Bond**

**Answer the following questions:**

1. What kind of inspiration do you get from this incident?
2. What role did Mr. Kumar play in making Ranji successful?
3. Have you been inspired by anyone in any field like the one above? If so, describe him/her.
4. Do you think that the bat was really a lucky one? Do you believe in such things? Share your ideas with your group.





**Do not believe...**

“Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”

-Buddha

