

## A CHAMPION SWIMMER

**I** Anastasia Pagonis grew up in New York. Even from a very young age, she always loved the water. As she got older, her dream was to participate in freestyle swimming competitions. Just before her fourteenth birthday, Pagonis joined a swim team, but not long afterwards, she lost her vision. It took her a long time to deal with her terrible sadness and depression, but Pagonis learned to accept what had happened. She finally understood that she was blind and wondered what she was going to do with her life.

**II** Pagonis decided to quit the team because her teammates treated her badly. They didn't want a blind swimmer on their team. Pagonis experienced a real crisis. But in time she was able to go back to competitive swimming. Her family gave her enormous support and she was also aided by her amazing coach.

**III** Pagonis's goal was to compete in international paraswimming events. Parasports events are sports events where disabled athletes\* from around the world compete against each other. In 2018, Pagonis competed in Italy, and won a silver and bronze medal. In 2020, she won two gold medals in Australia.

**IV** When Pagonis realized that her experiences could help her make a positive impact on others, she joined social media. She wanted to help people the way that she had needed help. Pagonis was getting messages from her fans telling her that they were being bullied in school. They said that she had helped them deal with their problem and realize how much they were worth.

**V** Pagonis's aim is to eventually compete in the Paralympics. She is now living and training for the Paralympic Games in Tokyo at the Olympic & Paralympic Training Center in Colorado, USA. Pagonis believes that people need to have faith because if they don't try, they will never know. She tells people never to give up on their dreams.



Anastasia Pagonis in a competition

**B** Answer the questions.

1. According to paragraph I, what did Pagonis hope to do?

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

2. What did Pagonis believe after she became blind? (paragraph I)

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.

She wouldn't be able to \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Why are Pagonis's family and coach mentioned in paragraph II?

- (i) They couldn't accept the fact that she was blind.
- (ii) They convinced her to quit her swim team.
- (iii) They helped her through her crisis.
- (iv) They didn't want her to swim any longer.

4. What do we learn about parasports events in paragraph III?

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.

In parasports events, \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Why are 2018 and 2020 mentioned in paragraph III?

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

6. In line 23 (paragraph IV), the writer mentions Pagonis's "experiences". What experiences is the writer referring to?

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

7. According to paragraph IV, why did Pagonis join social media?

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE.

Because she \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Why is Pagonis presently living at the Training Center in Colorado?

(paragraph V)

ANSWER: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. PUT A ✓ BY THE TWO CORRECT ANSWERS.**

**What do we learn about Pagonis from this article?**

- ..... (i) Pagonis gave up on her dreams.
- ..... (ii) Pagonis won a gold medal in the Paralympics.
- ..... (iii) Pagonis learned to deal with her loss of vision.
- ..... (iv) Pagonis was bullied in school.
- ..... (v) Pagonis is now living in Tokyo.
- ..... (vi) Pagonis encourages people to believe in themselves.

**10. Another title for this article could be (-).**

- (i) Freestyle Swimming Competitions
- (ii) An Amazing Coach
- (iii) The Power of Dreams
- (iv) The Impact of Social Media