2.4 READING

A high school hero • collocations
• rituals and routines
• word families

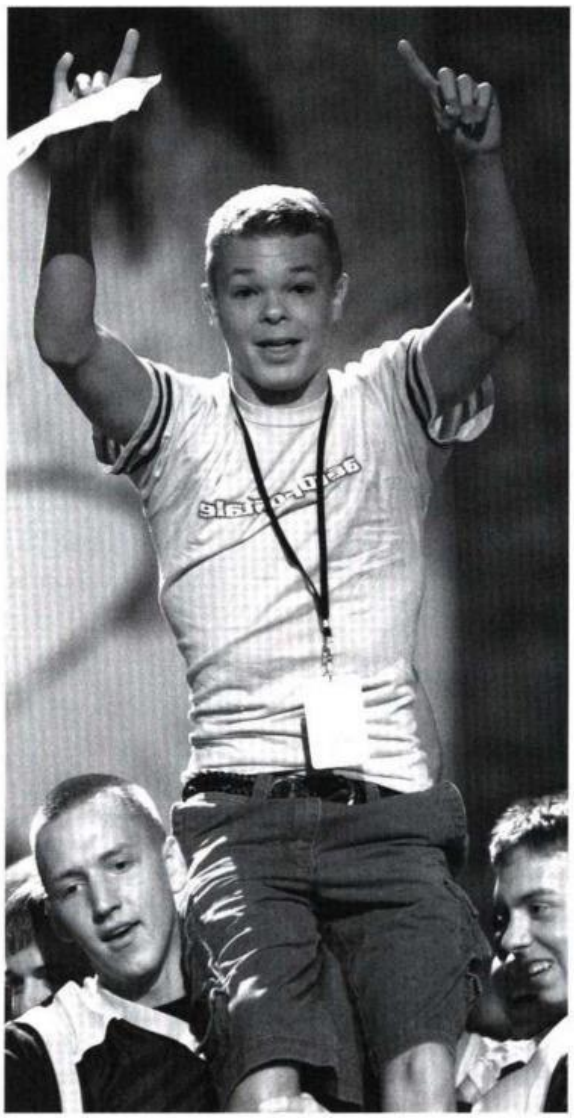
1 Read the text quickly and choose the best title for it.

1 Autistic boy's dream job as school basketball team manager ☐
2 Autistic boy joins national basketball team ☐
3 Autistic boy's basketball dream becomes a reality ☐

It sounds like fantasy: an autistic schoolboy is brought onto the basketball court as a last minute substitute*, scores 20 points in four minutes and becomes a national hero. However, in February 2006 that is exactly what happened to 17-year-old Jason McElwain, from Rochester, New York.

Jason has autism, a condition that makes communicating, socialising and reading other people's feelings difficult. [1]_____. Before that, apart from a couple of minutes in a junior game in 2004, Jason's autism had always stopped him from actually playing for the team. But on the evening of the annual 'Senior Night' game, which was held in the students' final year of high school, the team's coach gave J-Mac, as he is called, a shirt with the number 52 on the back, and told him he would let him play in the all-important game at some point.

In the final few minutes, Jason was sent onto the court. When his teammates passed him the ball, Jason calmly aimed* and scored seven baskets* from 13 shots, scoring five points a minute and breaking school records. Athena beat their opponents Spencerport 79-43. [2]_____. His teammate Rickey Wallace said: 'I knew he could shoot, but I didn't know he could score 20 points.'



Jason's father, David McElwain, 51, said: 'He was really happy on the way home. He didn't sleep a lot that night.' Jason's sporting achievement was filmed, and by the evening, a video of him in action had already gone viral*. Eventually, the video reached the television sports channel ESPN and Jason quickly became famous around the country. [3]_____. Jason even met the American President at the time, George W Bush, who presented him with a special award.

Since 2006, Jason has graduated from high school and found part-time work with a well-known food store. [4]_____. He is also involved in public speaking, and is a talented runner. In September 2012, he completed his first marathon in 15th place, in only 3 hours, 1 minute and 41 seconds. With all the activity that is going on in his life, Jason admits that he hasn't been playing as much basketball, but says: 'Occasionally, I'll go and shoot baskets.'

GLOSSARY

substitute *(n)* – in team sports: a player who is sent onto the pitch/court to replace another player who is tired, injured or playing poorly

aim *(v)* – in sports: to look carefully and choose the place you want to throw or kick a ball, or shoot a weapon

basket *(n)* – in basketball: the rings at either end of the court; also, the point which is scored when you throw the ball successfully into one of those rings

go viral – if a picture, video, joke, etc. goes viral, it spreads widely, especially on the Internet

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Read the text. Complete gaps 1–4 with sentences A–F. There are two extra sentences.

A When that happened the coach couldn't believe the team's good luck.
B He wrote a book, *The Game of My Life*, which was published in 2008 and now travels across the United States raising money for autism charities.
C However, that did not prevent coach Jim Johnson from making him 'manager' of Greece Athena High School's basketball team.
D What is more, because of this condition, he often found it difficult to do any sports activities.
E He received offers from celebrities, such as basketball hero Earvin 'Magic' Johnson and TV star Oprah Winfrey, as well as film companies and publishers keen to tell his story.
F At the end of the game, spectators carried Jason off the court on their shoulders.

3 Read the text again and answer the questions.

1 What is autism?
_____
2 Who gave Jason the opportunity to play in the 'Senior Night' game?
_____
3 At what point did Jason join the game?
_____
4 Which team won the game?
_____
5 Who described Jason's feelings after the game?
_____
6 What did certain celebrities, film companies and publishers want to do?
_____
7 Where does Jason do his charity work?
_____
8 Which of Jason's other sporting achievements is mentioned in the text?
_____

4 Complete the collocations with the verbs from the box. Use the text to help you. There are two extra verbs.

beat bring complete go pass
play present raise score

play for a team

1 _____ someone on as a substitute
2 _____ the ball
3 _____ a basket
4 _____ someone with an award
5 _____ money for charity
6 _____ a marathon (or any other race)

REMEMBER BETTER

When you learn a new verb-noun collocation, you can extend your vocabulary knowledge by looking up alternative verbs that go with that noun in a dictionary. Write them as a word web in your notebook with the noun in the centre.

VOCABULARY PRACTICE | Rituals and routines

5 Look at the vocabulary in lesson 2.4 in the Students' Book. Complete the sentences with a phrase from the box. You may need to change part of the phrase.

a decisive moment break from sb's routine
do the same thing over give sb peace of mind
repeat a sequence the first step
the last phase ~~the point of no return~~

As soon as we go around the next bend, we will go past the point of no return. The water moves so fast that we will only be able to move in one direction – down the river towards the sea!

1 As a _____ I chose to run around the hill rather than over it. It's good to do something different once in a while.
2 The referee sent off our best player for cheating. That was _____ in the game. What a joke!
3 The _____ in becoming a professional athlete is to decide which specialisation to focus on.
4 You can beat this boxer. He always _____ of punches after he moves back two steps. Watch! Left, left, right, left, right. It's the same every time!
5 It might be boring _____ but every successful tennis player knows it's the only way to hit the ball perfectly with your racket.
6 The fact that winning or losing isn't important can really _____ and help you see the bigger picture. It's simply a game and we're playing for fun – so just enjoy it!
7 This is _____ of our yoga class this morning and then you can all go home. Take a deep breath, touch your toes and hold the position for three minutes.

WORD STORE 2E | Word families

6 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

I'm quite lazy, so I prefer less active (ACT) sports like darts or snooker.

1 Plenty of sportspeople are _____ (SUPER). For example, Michael Jordan used to wear his college shorts under his official NBA sports kit.
2 Why can't I be more _____ (DECIDE)? I just don't know which team I want to play for the most.
3 You need pretty _____ (POWER) legs to be a professional long jumper.
4 Don't you find playing chess rather _____ (REPEAT)? You do the same moves over and over again.
5 Athletes need a lot of _____ (RESILIENT) if they are to return after a serious injury and compete at the highest level again.

LIVEWORKSHEETS