

Reading

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

The Chess Champion is a Woman

I

Chess has been a game traditionally dominated by men, but that is changing. Several top women players have been very successful in recent years, including Judit Polgar. Born in Hungary in 1976, Judit comes from a chess-playing family. Her father, Laszlo, studied the lives of great intellectuals, and he decided that chess was an excellent discipline for the mind.

II

Judit and her two sisters began studying chess at the age of four. Laszlo quit his job and stayed home to teach his daughters. The girls played chess most of the day, in addition to learning some school subjects. They went outside once a day to play football or to run around in the garden. This unusual programme of study was controversial. Once, armed government officials came to the door of the Polgar home, thinking that Laszlo's daughters were in a potentially harmful situation.

III

Despite the critics, Laszlo's plan was successful. By the age of five, Judit could already beat her father at chess, and at nine, she won an important competition in New York. When she was fifteen, she became the youngest Grandmaster ever, beating even the record of the legendary Bobby Fischer. In 1998, she was the first woman in history to win the US Open.

IV

Judit has an aggressive style and a competitive personality. She also refuses to compete in any event that is strictly for women. Consequently, she is the only woman who has competed consistently against the top 20 players in the world. Some believe that one day, she will be the number one player in the world. In the meantime, she has broken down gender stereotypes and has made it possible for other female chess players who are interested in competing fairly against their male counterparts.

A Decide whether the following statements are T (true) or F (false). Write the sentences from the text which helped you decide.

- 1. Judit started playing chess over twenty years ago.
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..... 2. Laszlo taught his daughters chess after he got home from work.
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..... 3. Judit once played against Bobby Fischer.
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..... 4. Judit refuses to compete only with women.
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B Choose the best answer according to the text.

1. Laszlo decided that playing chess would be the best education for his daughters after he:
a. grew up playing chess himself.
b. met a chess champion.
c. learned about the lives of famous people.
2. Government officials visited Laszlo's home because:
a. he didn't pay his taxes.
b. they thought his daughters were in danger.
c. he was armed.

3. Judit was the first woman who ever:
a. had a competitive personality.
b. beat her father at chess when she was a child.
c. won the US Open.
4. Judit's unusual success is partly because she:
a. enters competitions that, in the past, were only for men.
b. is friendly to the other players.
c. is the number one player in the world.

C Find the words or phrases in the text that mean the same as:

1. left (paragraph II)
2. dangerous (paragraph II)
3. defeating (paragraph III)
4. only (paragraph IV)
5. equally (paragraph IV)

Writing

On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph about a famous person or someone you know personally. Explain why you admire the person and what helped him / her become the person he / she is today.