

Overcoming Defeat: An Athlete's Comeback Story

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

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Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

- A** Samantha Lee was once a promising young swimmer, known for her speed and determination. At the age of 16, she won a silver medal at the national championships, and everyone expected her to become an Olympic star. However, her journey took an unexpected turn when she suffered a serious shoulder injury during training. Doctors advised her to take a long break from swimming, which was devastating for Samantha. She felt lost, unsure if she would ever return to the sport she loved. During her recovery, she struggled with feelings of defeat and doubt. Yet, she was determined not to let her injury define her. With the support of her family and coach, she began to focus on rehabilitation, setting small, achievable goals each week. Slowly but surely, she regained strength and confidence.
- B** After a year of hard work, Samantha returned to the pool. Her first competition back was the state championships, where she faced fierce competitors. The fear of failure loomed over her, but she remembered her journey and the effort she had put into her recovery. As the race began, she focused on her technique and the rhythm of her strokes. To her surprise, she finished in first place, securing her spot in the national competition once again. This victory was not just about winning; it was a testament to her resilience and dedication. Samantha's story became an inspiration for many young athletes, proving that setbacks can be transformed into comebacks with perseverance and a positive mindset.

Vocabulary Glossary

Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
promising	showing signs of future success or achievement	<i>The young artist is very promising and might become famous one day.</i>
devastating	causing great sadness or damage	<i>The news of the accident was devastating to the family.</i>
rehabilitation	the process of recovering health or skills after an injury or illness	<i>After the surgery, he went through rehabilitation to walk again.</i>
resilience	the ability to recover quickly from difficulties	<i>Her resilience helped her overcome many challenges in life.</i>
determination	a strong feeling that you will do something even if it is difficult	<i>His determination to finish the race was clear from the start.</i>
setbacks	problems that make it hard to continue or succeed	<i>Despite setbacks, she continued to work hard and achieve her goals.</i>
perseverance	the quality of continuing to try to achieve a goal despite difficulties	<i>With perseverance, he finally completed the marathon.</i>
fierce	very strong or intense	<i>The competition was fierce, but she managed to win.</i>

Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. The young scientist was very _____ and could change the future of medicine.
2. The earthquake had a _____ impact on the small village.
3. After his injury, the athlete spent months in _____ to regain his strength.
4. Her _____ was evident as she bounced back from every failure.
5. He showed great _____ in finishing the project despite many problems.
6. Even with several _____ along the way, she never gave up on her dreams.

Comprehension Questions

These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.

Question 1

What was Samantha's initial achievement in swimming?

- A. Winning a gold medal at the Olympics
- B. Winning a silver medal at the national championships
- C. Breaking a world record
- D. Winning her first state competition

Question 2

What helped Samantha regain her strength and confidence?

- A. Winning multiple gold medals
- B. Setting small, achievable goals
- C. Receiving a new training program
- D. Changing her swimming technique

Question 3

What feeling did Samantha struggle with during her recovery?

- A. Excitement
- B. Anger
- C. Defeat and doubt
- D. Happiness

Question 4

What was the significance of Samantha's victory at the state championships?

- A. It was her first competition ever.
- B. She broke a world record.
- C. It showed her resilience and dedication.
- D. She won without any training.

Question 5

What message does Samantha's story convey to young athletes?

- A. Success is only possible with natural talent.
- B. Setbacks can be turned into comebacks with perseverance.
- C. Injuries mean the end of a sporting career.
- D. Winning is the only thing that matters in sports.

Discussion & Writing Prompts

Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).

1. Paragraph A mentions Samantha's unexpected shoulder injury. How do you think injuries impact athletes mentally and physically, and what strategies can help them cope?

2. In Paragraph B, Samantha's first competition back was the state championships. Do you think the pressure of competition motivates athletes to recover faster, or does it create more stress?

3. According to Paragraph B, Samantha's story inspired many young athletes. Can you think of other athletes who have overcome setbacks, and what lessons can we learn from their stories?

Answer Key

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 B

Q2 B

Q3 C

Q4 C

Q5 B

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 promising

FIB2 devastating

FIB3 rehabilitation

FIB4 resilience

FIB5 determination

FIB6 setbacks

Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

1. What was Samantha's initial achievement in swimming?

- ✓ B — Winning a silver medal at the national championships The passage states she won a silver medal at the national championships.
- ✗ A — Winning a gold medal at the Olympics The passage does not mention her winning a gold medal at the Olympics.
- ✗ C — Breaking a world record There is no mention of her breaking a world record.
- ✗ D — Winning her first state competition She participated in the state competition after her recovery.

2. What helped Samantha regain her strength and confidence?

- ✓ B — Setting small, achievable goals The passage mentions she focused on setting small, achievable goals each week.
- ✗ A — Winning multiple gold medals She did not win multiple gold medals during her recovery.
- ✗ C — Receiving a new training program The passage talks about rehabilitation, not a new training program.
- ✗ D — Changing her swimming technique There is no mention of changing her swimming technique.

3. What feeling did Samantha struggle with during her recovery?

- ✓ C — Defeat and doubt The passage states she struggled with feelings of defeat and doubt.
- ✗ A — Excitement Excitement is not mentioned as a feeling she struggled with.
- ✗ B — Anger Anger is not mentioned in the passage.
- ✗ D — Happiness The passage does not mention happiness during her recovery.

4. What was the significance of Samantha's victory at the state championships?

- ✓ C — It showed her resilience and dedication. The passage describes the victory as a testament to her resilience and dedication.
- ✗ A — It was her first competition ever. This was not her first competition ever.
- ✗ B — She broke a world record. There is no mention of breaking a world record.
- ✗ D — She won without any training. She had been training after her recovery.

5. What message does Samantha's story convey to young athletes?

✓ **B — Setbacks can be turned into comebacks with perseverance.**

The passage highlights that setbacks can be transformed into comebacks with perseverance.

✗ **A — Success is only possible with natural talent.**

The passage emphasizes hard work and resilience, not just natural talent.

✗ **C — Injuries mean the end of a sporting career.**

The story shows that injuries do not have to end a career.

✗ **D — Winning is the only thing that matters in sports.**

The focus is on resilience and effort, not just winning.

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