

Steroids

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is doping?
2. Do you think performance-enhancing drugs should be illegal in sports?
3. How do you feel when athletes are stripped of their titles because of doping?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. prescription drug | a) causing a person to want more of something |
| ___ 2. fatigue | b) to prevent one from reaching his or her full adult height |
| ___ 3. regulate | c) a type of drug that a medical professional prescribes |
| ___ 4. ban | d) a pill or health product that provides nutrients one isn't getting from food |
| ___ 5. strip | e) pure, innocent |
| ___ 6. scandal | f) financial assistance in exchange for advertising |
| ___ 7. sponsorship | g) tiredness |
| ___ 8. clean | h) to take away |
| ___ 9. dietary supplement | i) an act that causes the public to be very disappointed or angry |
| ___ 10. stunt the growth | j) to control through supervision |
| ___ 11. addictive | k) no matter what |
| ___ 12. at all costs | l) to disallow entirely |

Reading

STEROIDS

Winning at all costs

1. Steroids are **prescription drugs** that increase muscle mass and help prevent **fatigue**. Anabolic steroids are known as performance-enhancing drugs. They are banned in many professional sports leagues and competitions. Despite the risk of failing drug tests, athletes dope because they want to be the best of the best.
2. Many athletes have been **stripped** of their medals, trophies, and records due to steroid **scandals**. Ben Johnson, who was once called “the Fastest Man in the World,” lost his 1988 Olympic gold medal. Runner Marion Jones lost five Olympic medals and was banned from the Beijing games. These days, steroids are often associated with the sport of cycling. Lance Armstrong lost his Nike **sponsorship** because of a steroid scandal. Like many athletes before him, Armstrong promised his fans he was **clean**. However, in 2012, the International Cycling Union reviewed the evidence and stripped Armstrong of his seven Tour de France titles.
3. Some people think steroids should be **regulated** rather than **banned**. If everyone had access to steroids, would these drugs still be a form of cheating? Statistics suggest that steroid use by athletes improves the experience for spectators. But at what cost? Not only can steroid use ruin an athlete’s reputation, improper steroid use can cause serious health problems. Studies suggest it can **stunt the growth** of teenagers and become **addictive** after long-term use. These risks don’t stop athletes and coaches who want to win **at all costs**.
4. Other performance enhancers have also been banned from sports. These include non-textile swimwear and high-tech basketball shoes. What about **dietary supplements** or top-paid coaches? Do athletes with access to these forms of enhancement have an unfair advantage too?

“The sad thing about doping is how much it obscures our appreciation of greatness.”

—Malcolm Gladwell, journalist

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. Why do athletes dope?
2. What was Ben Johnson known as before he was caught using steroids?
3. Why does the reading mention Nike?
4. What other examples of performance enhancers are mentioned?
5. What can happen to teenagers who use steroids?

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word forms.

1. Lance Armstrong's fans were surprised to find him in a steroid _____.
2. Some people believe that smoking can _____ of teenagers.
3. The swim team that was on steroids wanted to win _____.
4. After the drug test, the cyclist was _____ of his medals.
5. Some people become _____ to prescription drugs.

Vocabulary Review cont.

B. Chunking

Create six words or expressions by pairing the words that are commonly found together in English. Then write a sentence for each example.

Word List

- at all
- costs
- dietary
- drug
- enhancer
- mass
- muscle
- performance
- prescription
- steroid
- supplement
- use

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Discussion

1. Do you think steroid use in sports is unethical? Why or why not?
2. How does steroid use in sports differ from cosmetic surgery in beauty pageants?
3. Should steroids be allowed in a sport such as bodybuilding or wrestling?
4. Who contributes to doping scandals in sports besides athletes?

Critical Thinking

Work with a partner and discuss this question.

Even though drug testing is becoming more accurate, new drugs are becoming more difficult to detect. Do you think competitive athletes and trainers who participate in doping programs enjoy the challenge of passing drug screenings?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

STEROIDS

Winning at all costs

1. Steroids are prescription drugs that increase _____ and help prevent _____. Anabolic steroids are known as performance-enhancing drugs. They are _____ in many professional sports leagues and competitions. Despite the risk of failing drug tests, athletes dope because they want to be the best of the best.
2. Many athletes have been stripped of their medals, _____, and records due to steroid scandals. Ben Johnson, who was once called "the Fastest Man in the World," lost his 1988 Olympic gold medal. Runner Marion Jones lost five Olympic medals and was banned from the Beijing games. These days, steroids are often associated with the sport of cycling. Lance Armstrong lost his Nike sponsorship because of a steroid _____. Like many athletes before him, Armstrong promised his fans he was clean. However, in 2012, the International Cycling Union reviewed the _____ and stripped Armstrong of his seven Tour de France titles.
3. Some people think steroids should be regulated rather than banned. If everyone had access to steroids, would these drugs still be a form of _____? Statistics suggest that steroid use by athletes improves the experience for spectators. But at what cost? Not only can steroid use ruin an athlete's reputation, improper steroid use can cause serious health problems. Studies suggest it can stunt the growth of teenagers and become _____ after long-term use. These risks don't stop athletes and coaches who want to win at all costs.
4. Other performance enhancers have also been banned from sports. These include non-textile swimwear and _____ basketball shoes. What about dietary supplements or top-paid coaches? Do athletes with _____ to these forms of enhancement have an unfair advantage too?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about steroid use in sports. They discuss whether steroid use should be considered a form of cheating or not. The lesson includes vocabulary review exercises and discussion questions.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, sports, steroids, doping, drugs, Lance Armstrong, Olympics, scandal, health

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. j | 5. h | 7. f | 9. d | 11. a |
| 2. g | 4. l | 6. i | 8. e | 10. b | 12. k |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

- Athletes take steroids because they want to be the best of the best.
- Ben Johnson was known as “the Fastest Man in the World” before he was caught using steroids.
- The reading mentions Nike because this company cut its sponsorship deal with Lance Armstrong during Armstrong’s steroid scandal.
- Other examples of performance enhancers include high-tech shoes and non-textile swimsuits. Top-paid coaches are also mentioned.
- Steroids may stunt the growth of teenagers.

Vocabulary Review

A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| 1. scandal | 4. stripped |
| 2. stunt the growth | 5. addicted |
| 3. at all costs | |

B. CHUNKING

Answers will vary for sentences.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. at all costs | 4. muscle mass |
| 2. prescription drug | 5. steroid use |
| 3. performance enhancer | 6. dietary supplement |

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

Critical Thinking

Answers will vary.

Listening

- muscle mass, fatigue, banned
- trophies, scandal, evidence
- cheating, addictive
- high-tech, access