



# ATHLETE STORIES

# Mikaël Kingsbury





# TEACHING GUIDE

## TEACHING VALUES THROUGH OLYMPIC STORIES

The Olympic philosophy of education is about a balance of intellectual instruction, cultural development and physical education. It is about participation, effort, and knowing you have given your all in the pursuit of excellence.

Olympic stories of triumph and disappointment can engage learners in discussions about important value issues. Through the stories and challenges of Olympic athletes, children and youth can explore and connect values to their lives, and perhaps begin to see their world in new and different ways.

### TEACHING GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Current curriculum theory emphasizes the importance of reinforcing values education messages through narratives, storytelling, art, posters, drama, and physical movement, activities based on the stories, events, ceremonies and symbols of the Olympic Games stories have school-wide relevance.

### THE OLYMPIC VALUES

The core Olympic Values are identified as Excellence, Respect and Friendship. The narratives which follow highlight these values. When you engage your learners with these narratives you will be expanding their moral and physical understanding and capabilities.

### PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING

The following principles of learning are highlighted in order to engage students actively in the values education process:

1. Learning is an active and not a passive activity. Students need to be actively engaged in discussion, sharing their ideas in small groups and exploring differing points of view.
2. People learn in different ways. Some people learn best by reading; some people learn best by listening; some people learn best by moving around. The activities associated with these narratives' present different ways of learning.
3. Learning is both an individual and a cooperative activity. Young people need opportunities to work together as well as independently. They also need to practice cooperative behaviours in order to learn competitive behaviours.

### STAGES OF THE LEARNING SEQUENCE

Successful learning is built upon a carefully scaffolded series of steps that **connect** to students' prior understanding, actively **process** or practice new information, and finally **transform** their understandings into powerful demonstrations of learning.

Each values story is presented at three reading levels: Grades 3-4, and Grades 5-6. The accompanying activities are sufficiently open-ended to address a diverse range of learning styles and proficiencies. They focus on six main facets of understanding:

Explaining, Interpreting, Applying, Taking Perspective, Empathizing, and Developing Self-Knowledge. These critical thinking skills are woven into all three stages of the learning sequence in order to promote deep understanding of the values and concepts.

*“Olympism is a philosophy of life; exalting and combining in a balanced whole quality of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example, and respect for universal, fundamental ethical principles.”*

— Olympic Charter, Fundamental principles, Paragraph 2





# MIKAËL KINGSBURY

## Chasing Excellence

*Mikaël Kingsbury stands at the top of a snowy hill. His heart is beating fast. In just one minute, the first Olympic dual moguls race will begin. The air is freezing, but Mikaël doesn't notice. He is thinking only about the race.*

*He looks to his right. His competitor is ready, goggles down, bouncing on skis.*

*The crowd cheers loudly below. But Mikaël is calm and focused. He takes deep breaths and thinks about the course—bumpy snow, sharp turns, and two big jumps. He has trained for years for this moment.*

Mikaël was only 4 years old when he first went skiing near his home in Quebec, Canada. He loved it! So, his parents signed him up for a ski club. At age 8, he started freestyle skiing.

He quickly fell in love with moguls. In moguls, skiers race down a bumpy hill and do two big tricks in the air. Judges give scores for speed, turns, and tricks.

Mikaël didn't just want to have fun—he wanted to be the best. He made a sign with the Olympic rings and wrote, "I will win." He hung it on his ceiling so he could see it every morning and night. Setting this goal motivated him.

He worked very hard. He practiced tricky moves on the hill. He trained in the gym to get stronger. That's why his skiing looks so perfect.

But what makes Mikaël special is how badly he wants to win. He says, "My secret is that I want it more than anyone else."

Lots of kids dream of being great at something. Mikaël made that dream come true. He has won 99 World Cup races and stood on the podium 142 times. He has 15 World Championship wins and 3 Olympic medals—a gold and two silvers.

*But today, none of that matters. What matters now is the next few seconds.*

*The countdown begins. Mikaël grips his poles tight. Everything is quiet except the voice: "Five seconds."*

*Mikaël crouches. This is it.*

*Go!*





## MIKAËL KINGSBURY

### Chasing Excellence

*Mikaël Kingsbury stands at the top of the snowy hill, heart pounding like a drum. Just sixty seconds until the first ever Olympic dual moguls race. The air is bitterly cold. He is so focused on the moments ahead that he doesn't notice. He gives a quick glance to his right. His competitor stands ready, goggles down, bouncing lightly on his skis.*

*The crowd calms to a hush. Mikaël takes deep breaths. His thoughts slow and he visualizes the course—the steep bumps, the sharp turns, the big jumps. He's trained for years for this moment.*

Mikaël was only 4 years old when his parents first took him skiing at Sommet Saint-Sauveur, Quebec. Seeing his love for skiing, his parents signed him up for a ski club. He started freestyle skiing at age 8.

It didn't take long to be drawn to the excitement of the moguls event. In mogul skiing, athletes race down a steep hill filled with bumps called moguls and perform two big jumps with tricks on the way down. The skiers with the best turns, speed, and tricks get the best scores.

He loved the sport, but that wasn't enough for Mikaël. He had to be the best. He made a hand-drawn poster of the Olympic rings with the words "I will win" and hung it on the ceiling above his bed. Every morning, he awoke to those words and every night they stared at him before he turned out the bedroom light. His determination grew every day, month, and year.

Setting a goal of being the best motivated him. It gave him the determination that helped him push himself harder in training. Like most athletes, he works himself to the limit of his physical capacity. He skis hard and practices difficult tricks on the hill. He spends countless hours in the gym doing specific strength work to mimic the demands of skiing over moguls. That's why his style is perfect.

But what makes Mikaël's quest for excellence unique is his hunger to be his best...to be the best. It might sound obvious, but the most important part of being excellent is wanting to be excellent. To be your very best at an activity, you have to have a desire that forces you to push yourself.

"My secret," explains Mikaël, "is that I want it more than anyone else. I want to win."

While many kids dream of being excellent at their favorite activity, Mikaël made that dream come true. He holds the record for most men's moguls World Cup victories (99) and podiums (142). He has won an incredible 15 World Championships and has medaled at three Olympics including a gold and two silvers. Few athletes dominate their sports like he has. But none of that matters now. What counts is what happens in the next few seconds after the start.

*Only seconds until the start. Mikael grips his poles tighter. The all sounds except the countdown have faded. It is just him, the snow, and the finish line. A voice counts down—five seconds. Mikael crouches. This is it. Go!*





# LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## CONNECTING

### *Building a foundation for new learning*

Doesn't it feel great when your teacher writes "excellent" on the top of a test, or when your coach compliments you on your play in a game? It feels great when someone tells us that we did a good job.

#### **PARTNER SHARE (ALL GRADES)**

In pairs, students share their ideas about excellence.

- What does 'excellence' mean to you?
- When have you experienced 'excellence'?
- Is 'excellence' important?
- When is 'excellence' important?
- Why is 'excellence' important?

#### **CLASS SHARE: WHAT IS EXCELLENCE? DOES IT MATTER? (ALL GRADES)**

Ask student pairs to share their definitions. Discuss if excellence is important.

Excellence means doing your best, even when it's hard. It means trying to improve every day. Excellence isn't perfection, it is doing your best and improving every day. It is the determination to be better at something even if it means hard work and overcoming difficulties.

#### **CLASS DISCUSSION: WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE EXCELLENT? (ALL GRADES)**

Brainstorm some things that are needed to achieve excellence. Examples could be practicing, following instructions, never giving up, trying your best, etc.

## PROCESSING

### *Using strategies to acquire and use knowledge*

Ask the students to read the story silently on their own.

Reread the story with the students.

#### **CLASS DISCUSSION: WHAT CAN MIKAËL TEACH US ABOUT THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE? (ALL GRADES)**

##### **Examples include:**

1. Excellence starts with a desire to excel at something.
2. Those chasing excellence always set goals.
3. It helps to write down your goals and to remind yourself frequently of your goal.
4. Goals take hard work to be achieved.

## TRANSFORMING

### *Showing understanding in a new way*

#### **EXCELLENCE GOAL POSTER (GRADE 3-4)**

Mikael began his journey to an Olympic gold medal by drawing a poster with his goal. Think of something that you want to do with excellence. Draw a poster of it and write what excellence would look like for that activity.

#### **CHASING EXCELLENCE GOAL SHEET (GRADE 5-6)**

Mikael began his journey to an Olympic gold medal by drawing a poster with his goal. Think of something that you want to do with excellence.

Use the Chasing Excellence Goal Sheet to outline your goal and to identify five things you need to do in order to chase excellence towards that goal.



## ACTIVITY

Draw a poster of something that you want to do with excellence.



Write what excellence would look like for that activity.

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# ACTIVITY

## Chasing Excellence Goal Sheet

Write out your excellence goal and five things you can do to achieve it. An excellence goal should relate to something where you want to excel and what excellence would look like.

My Excellence Goal : \_\_\_\_\_

1

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2

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4

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5

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