

Cambridge **Discovery Education**[™]
▶ **INTERACTIVE READERS**

Series editor: Bob Hastings

YOUNG AND
AMAZING
TEENS AT THE TOP



Simon Beaver



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One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107622524

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First published 2014

5th printing 2016

Printed in Dubai by Oriental Press

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Beaver, Simon.

Young and amazing : teens at the top / Simon Beaver.

pages cm. -- (Cambridge discovery interactive readers)

ISBN 978-1-107-62252-4 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Teenagers--Juvenile literature.
2. English language--Textbooks for foreign speakers.
3. Readers (Elementary) I. Title.

HQ796.B3438 2013

305.235--dc23

2013016505

ISBN 978-1-107-62252-4

Additional resources for this publication at www.cambridge.org

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Layout services, art direction, book design, and photo research: Q2ABillSMITH GROUP

Editorial services: Hyphen S.A.

Audio production: CityVox, New York

Video production: Q2ABillSMITH GROUP

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Glossary

Before You Read: Get Ready!

Some people do great things – even when they are young. You are going to read about some excellent teenagers in this book.

Words to Know

Complete the sentences with the correct words.



born



competition



ground



gymnast



judge



win

- 1 The _____ said the man did not steal the money.
- 2 Usain Bolt is first! He is going to _____ again!
- 3 Carl Lewis was _____ on July 1, 1961, in Birmingham, USA.
- 4 A _____ can jump and move really well.
- 5 Don't put your food on the _____. It isn't clean!
- 6 They all played in a table tennis _____ to find the best player.

Words to Know

Read the paragraph. Then complete the sentences with the correct **highlighted** words.

Dev and Tania came for my birthday – my **special** day. We wanted to watch TV, but there was no **electricity**. We walked on the beach, but then it started raining, so we had to **turn** and come back. After they left, I was **alone**. I looked outside at the beach and **sea**. “It’s very quiet,” I said. Then I thought, “Why am I talking to **myself**? Am I **crazy**?” It wasn’t my best birthday.

- 1 You ate grass? That’s a _____ thing to do!
- 2 There’s no _____! The food in the refrigerator is going to get warm!
- 3 John and Kate are very _____ people. They’re the best friends I have.
- 4 It’s behind you. _____ around, and you can see it.
- 5 Wait! I’m making _____ a sandwich first, and I’m going to come with you.
- 6 There is a _____ between France and England.
- 7 You can’t do it _____. You need somebody to help you.





CHAPTER 1

The Girl That Everybody Loved

AT THE AGE OF 17, OLGA KORBUT WAS THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS GYMNAST. SHE TAUGHT PEOPLE TO LOOK AT THE SPORT DIFFERENTLY.

Before 1972, not many people watched gymnastics. But a young girl from Belarus in the Soviet Union¹ changed that.

Olga Korbut started learning gymnastics when she was only eight. It was very difficult. She had to work hard for very long hours. But she was a fantastic student.

In 1972, Olga went to the Olympic Games in Munich, Germany. She was 17, but she was very small and thin,² and she looked like a child. People all over the world watched when she danced on the beam.

¹**Soviet Union:** a group of countries in Europe and Asia from 1922 to 1991

²**thin:** not fat

Then she jumped and did a back somersault. Her legs went up above her head – and came down behind her! Without using her arms! And she didn't fall, she stayed on the beam!

Everybody loved Olga. No other gymnasts could do what she did. Before, people thought that Soviet gymnasts did not show how they felt. But when Olga did something wrong, she cried!³ They loved her because of that, too.

In Munich, Olga was first in three competitions. She was second in another. Some people were angry with the judges. They thought that she was best in that competition, too!

Olga was a great example. In 1972, many little girls saw her and wanted to be gymnasts, too. She made the sport **popular**!



Olga doing a back somersault on the beam

³cry: when water comes from your eyes

Video Quest



Eyes on the Olympics

Watch the video and learn about the life of Chinese gymnasts today. What are the good and bad things about that life?