Advanced - Story 15

Class Objective- I am able to read and understand a story.

Concept A: Story:

A biography of Kilian Jornet

When you picture mountain climbers scaling Mount Everest, what probably comes to mind are teams of climbers with Sherpa guides leading them to the summit, equipped with oxygen masks, supplies and tents. And in most cases you'd be right, as 97 percent of climbers use oxygen to ascend to Everest's summit at 8,850 metres above sea level. The thin air at high altitudes makes most people breathless at 3,500 metres, and the vast majority of climbers use oxygen past 7,000 metres. A typical climbing group will have 8–15 people in it, with an almost equal number of guides, and they'll spend weeks getting to the top after reaching Base Camp.

But ultra-distance and mountain runner Kilian Jornet Burgada ascended the mountain in May 2017 alone, without an oxygen mask or fixed ropes for climbing.

Oh, and he did it in 26 hours.

With food poisoning.

And then, five days later, he did it again, this time in only 17 hours.

Born in 1987, Kilian has been training for Everest his whole life. And that really does mean his whole life, as he grew up 2,000 metres above sea level in the Pyrenees in the ski resort of Lles de Cerdanya in Catalonia, north-eastern Spain. While other children his age were learning to walk, Kilian was on skis. At one and a half years old he did a five-hour hike with his mother, entirely under his own steam. He left his peers even further behind when he climbed his first mountain and competed in his first cross-country ski race at age three. By age seven, he had scaled a 4,000er and, at ten, he did a 42-day crossing of the Pyrenees.

He was 13 when he says he started to take it 'seriously' and trained with the Ski Mountaineering Technical Centre (CTEMC) in Catalonia, entering competitions and working with a coach. At 18, he took over his own ski-mountaineering and trail-running training, with a schedule that only allows a couple of weeks of rest a year. He does as many as 1,140 hours of endurance training a year, plus strength training and technical workouts, as well as specific training in the week before a race. For his record-breaking ascent and descent of the Matterhorn, he prepared by climbing the mountain ten times until he knew every detail of it, even including where the sun would be shining at every part of the day.

Sleeping only seven hours a night, Kilian Jornet seems almost superhuman. His resting heartbeat is extremely low at 33 beats per minute, compared with the

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