

Lance Armstrong

Pre-reading

Questions:

- What do you know about Lance Armstrong?
- What would you like to know about him?

Definitions:

- Miracle/Miraculous – a very amazing event
- Triathlon – an athletic competition where people must swim, bicycle, and run particular distances without stopping between events



Reading

Lance Armstrong is an international inspiration. He is both a cancer survivor and the world's top cyclist. During the years 1999 – 2005, he made cycling history by winning 7 consecutive Tour de France races. Who is this international hero and miraculous cycling sensation?

Lance Armstrong was born on September 18, 1971 in Plano, Texas. He was raised by his mother, Linda, in a single-parent home. Linda nurtured his athletic interests and abilities. She got Lance his first bike when he was seven years old. He rode it everyday. Lance's mom also encouraged him to be involved in a variety of sports.

Lance displayed his athletic talents at an early age when he won the Iron Kids Triathlon at the age of 13, and became a professional triathlete at the age of 16. Lance soon decided to focus on a single component of the triathlon, cycling. Lance has said that he was "born to race bikes."

Cycling consumed his life. In fact, his passion for cycling almost cost him his high school diploma. During his senior year of high school he trained with the U.S. Olympic team in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It was a grueling schedule. Only through completing private classes the last few weeks of the school year, was Lance able to graduate with his class.

After graduation, Lance began his career as a full-time bike racer. He competed in many races as well as the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Games. By 1996 he was ranked the number one cyclist in the world. In October of that same year, at the age of 25, Lance's career came to an abrupt halt. He was diagnosed with testicular cancer. The cancer spread to his lungs and brain. Lance Armstrong, the vibrant, super cyclist had less than a 50% chance of recovery.

He began the most aggressive form of chemotherapy available. It weakened him more than anything he had ever experienced. Yet, the treatment worked! Through the help of supportive friends and family, and Lance's **indomitable** spirit, he fought back. The journey from fragile health to a full recovery gave Lance a new perspective on life.

Lance formed the Lance Armstrong Foundation to help other cancer survivors. This international, non-profit foundation has grown into a very influential and successful organization that provides education, advocacy, and research grants. More than 40 million of Lance's yellow "Live Strong" wrist bands have been sold to raise money for cancer research.

Living strong is exactly what Lance Armstrong has done. In May of 1998 he made his official return to professional cycling. In 1999 he won his first of 7 consecutive Tour de France races.

Understanding

1. Why is Lance Armstrong referred to as an international inspiration in this reading? _____

2. What is the goal of the Lance Armstrong Foundation? _____

3. What does the word **indomitable** mean in this story? _____

4. How did doctors treat Armstrong's cancer? _____

5. How did cancer affect Armstrong? _____

6. What is Lance Armstrong's motto for life? _____

7. How has he used this motto to help others? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the story in your own words.

Option B: Write about a struggle, or struggles, you've had to overcome in your life. How have you survived in difficult times?
