



## Overview

This action-packed article uses a present-tense recount to describe what happens in a regular rugby practice session. The session moves through a warm-up, stretches, ball skills, passing and catching skills, tackle practice, and a cool down before concluding with a team huddle.

Students familiar with rugby (or other sports) practice will make

connections to their own experiences. Those who are not familiar with the topic will gain a good understanding of what players have to do and why each part of the practice is important for the overall success of the team. The text offers opportunities for students to build on the key competency of participating and contributing.

Texts related by theme

“Making the Team” SJ 1.2.11

| “Mighty Muscles” SJ 1.2.11

| “Rugby with a Jandal” SJ 1.1.01

## Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

some words and phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by photographs, illustrations, diagrams, and/or written explanations

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

a straightforward text structure, such as a structure that follows a recognisable and clear text form

“Whatever position you play in, you need good **passing and catching skills**,” says Coach. “So here’s a new drill called truck and trailer.”

The players run around the square in pairs, passing the ball to each other. The “trailer” has to stay close to the “truck” as they pass the ball backwards and forwards.

Finally, the players practise passing the ball along lines of four players. They run forward while they’re passing, keeping their eyes on the ball. They need to get rid of the ball quickly and make sure they pass it into the next player’s hands. “Ten push-ups if you drop it!” Coach warns.

### passing and catching skills



Coach has saved the most fun for last – **tackle practice**. “Don’t forget – your head has to stay behind the player you’re tackling,” he says. “And always tackle around the player’s legs so that no one gets injured.”



### tackle practice

figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, or personification

some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little or no competing information

other visual language features that support the ideas and information, for example, text boxes or maps

## Possible curriculum contexts

### HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (Personal Health and Physical Development)

LEVEL 2 – Regular physical activity: Experience creative, regular, and enjoyable physical activities and describe the benefits to well-being.

### ENGLISH (Reading)

LEVEL 2 – Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.

### ENGLISH (Writing)

LEVEL 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.

### Possible reading purposes

- To learn about what happens at a rugby practice
- To compare a rugby practice with a practice of another sport
- To understand how children get fit by playing a team sport.

See [Instructional focus – Reading](#) for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

### Possible writing purposes

- To use the text as a model to describe a practice session for a different sport or activity
- To explain one aspect of a rugby practice in detail
- To explore different ways of writing about an idea, for example, writing a play about a rugby team.

See [Instructional focus – Writing](#) for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

## Text and language challenges

### VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, including “tags”, “muscles”, “properly”, “reminds”, “concentrate”, “balance”, “calves”, “thighs”, “diagonally”, “complicated”, “position”, “drill”, “warns”, “injured”
- Words and phrases related to the topic, including “Warm-up”, “stretches”, “hamstrings”, “push-ups”, “truck and trailer”, “tackle practice”, “tackling”, “six-a-side”, “cool down”, “players of the day”, “huddle”
- The metaphors: “planting the ball”, “eyes on the ball”, “punch the air”.

### POSSIBLE SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Identify and list words, terms, and concepts that relate directly to rugby and that some students may need support to understand. Pair students who do not have a lot of rugby knowledge with those who do. Revise the words and terms you have listed. You may want to provide dictionaries. Have students explain the meaning of four words to a partner. “Share your words (explaining and listening and asking questions), then work together to write an example sentence for each word. Read each of your sentences out to the rest of the group but leave out the word. See if the others can guess the word.”

Identify new vocabulary students should prioritise for learning. Have them record this vocabulary. Plan for ways to ensure they have opportunities to encounter this vocabulary often and in many contexts.

*The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, has useful information about learning vocabulary.

### SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Knowledge of rugby and things that happen in a rugby practice
- Knowledge of physical fitness and exercise
- Familiarity with the concept of training and trying hard to achieve a goal
- Familiarity with playing or working as part of a team.

### POSSIBLE SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Extend the vocabulary activity (above) to include sharing information about what happens in a rugby practice, and why. Support students to make connections between any other experiences they have had that involve training, practice, and development of physical skills.

Before beginning the whole book, ask students to brainstorm sports that are important to them and/or their communities (in pairs or small groups). They could produce a picture or mind map and prepare to tell the others about their sport and why it is important. This enables students to make connections to their prior knowledge and to be “experts”, telling the rest of the class what they know. (If possible, provide opportunities for students who share knowledge of a language other than English to discuss the topic and concepts in this language.) You could then tell them you are going to read about rugby and explore this topic in more depth.

### TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- The use of present tense and third person to recount an event
- The use of red, large-font words for emphasis and as captions for photos
- The use of repetition for emphasis: “Go-go-go”
- The detailed descriptions of how several activities are carried out
- The use of direct speech by the coach that tells what is happening and why
- The use of time signal words to mark the changes of activities
- The use of dashes and an ellipsis.

### POSSIBLE SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Use the photos and large-font words to preview the structure with the students.

Check the students’ understanding of the words in large red font and the reasons they are used.

Look at examples of how time and sequencing language is used, and practise making or reconstructing sentences about the pictures using this language (for example, using “when”, “next”, “now”, and “at last”). Link to other texts that students know that use this language.

During reading, the students could complete a graphic organiser with headings and notes about the main activities and examples of time and sequencing language. They could use this after reading to summarise the text, practising the time and sequencing language as they do so. The students may also benefit from exploring how the content could be written in different ways and how the time and sequencing language can be used in different text types. They could use the graphic organiser and the notes of time and sequencing language to help them write the content as a recount, an explanation of a process (with a present/always time frame), or as instructions for a good rugby practice. Perhaps pairs could write different text types then share them and discuss the similarities and differences. You could display them in the classroom with the time and sequencing language highlighted.

# Instructional focus – Reading

**Health and physical Education** (Personal Health and Physical Development, level 2 – Regular physical activity: Experience creative, regular, and enjoyable physical activities and describe the benefits to well-being.)

**English** (Level 2 – Purposes and audiences: Show some understanding of how texts are shaped for different purposes and audiences.)

## Text excerpts from “Never Give Up!”

## Students (what they might do)

## Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

“Go-go-go,” yells Coach.  
“Warm-up time. Run as fast as you can.”

Ben leaps to his feet and jumps over Logan, who is lying next to him on the grass. The whole team is lying in a row on the field. There’s just enough space for Ben to step between them. He has to get to the end of the line before Jared tags him. He makes it just in time.

*The students use information from the title and ask and answer questions to predict that the article will be about working hard to succeed in rugby.*

*The students identify the repetition to visualise the way Coach speaks and to infer that he wants to motivate the team to work hard.*

*The students make connections between the text, the photos, and what they know about warm-up activities to visualise the activity described.*

**EXPLAIN** that a useful reading strategy is to ask questions in your head as you read. The questions you ask help you to find information.

**MODEL** some possible questions:

- The title of the article is “Never Give Up!”
- Why might someone say “Never give up!”? What might it mean?
- I wonder what I am going to read about?

**ASK QUESTIONS** to support students to make connections and to visualise.

- What do you know about the role of a coach?
- As you read the first lines, did you imagine how Coach sounded? Which words helped you to “hear” his voice?
- When have you heard people speaking like this in a sports context?
- Why did you think he was yelling?
- How do your own experiences of exercises help you to visualise what the team players are doing?

Once the team has that sorted out, they practise picking up the ball and running with it diagonally across the square without crashing into each other.

“Rugby players need to be able to think and run at the same time,” says Coach.

*Students use their knowledge of text structures to understand what “that” refers to and their vocabulary knowledge to work out the word “diagonally”.*

*With support, the students summarise information about the different skills to infer the importance of practising these skills.*

*Students confirm their predictions about the text and re-predict that the author’s purpose is to explain the skills used in rugby practice.*

**PROMPT** the students to identify what the word “that” refers to.

- I wonder what the word “that” refers to in the text?

**ASK QUESTIONS** to support the students to make connections.

- How would you describe the kinds of skills players need? Why do they need them?
- How do these activities help players gain the skills?

**MODEL** how a reader summarises information in order to make inferences.

- I wonder what Coach means by “think and run at the same time”? I see that in each of the activities, the players have to be watching, thinking, and moving at the same time. I infer that if they can’t do that, players will drop the ball. From what I know about rugby, if a player drops the ball, the opposing team might grab it and score. Now I understand what he means.

*For students who have difficulty summarising the information, you could use a graphic organiser like that described earlier to help them keep track of the stages and the activities. You could support them to use the graphic organiser to summarise the article.*

Coach has saved the most fun for last – tackle practice. “Don’t forget – your head has to stay behind the player you’re tackling,” he says. “And always tackle around the player’s legs so that no one gets injured.”

*Students draw on the text and their own knowledge of the risks of rugby to infer that Coach wants to make sure the players are safe.*

*They confirm their predictions about the author’s purpose and infer that she wants her readers to understand the reasons for the rules of tackling.*

**ASK QUESTIONS** to encourage the students to think about the author’s purpose and audience.

- Were your predictions about the author’s purpose correct? Why do you think that?
- Who do you think she had in mind as her audience?
- What do you think she wanted her audience to understand?
- What do you know about rugby now that you didn’t know before?
- Would this text interest someone who didn’t know a lot about rugby? Why do you think that?

**GIVE FEEDBACK**

- I agree with your observation that the present tense made the article exciting. That’s something to think about when writing your sports article.
- I can see you understand why rugby players have to be fit. You’ve added your own experience to the information in the text to infer that.

## METACOGNITION

- Are there places where you had to slow down or reread to understand an explanation or description? What strategies helped you to follow the descriptions?
- What experiences of your own helped you make connections with this article? How did those connections help you to understand it?

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Assessment Resource Banks

# Instructional focus – Writing

English (Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.)

## Text excerpts from “Neve Give Up!”

“Go-go-go,” yells Coach.  
“Warm-up time. Run as fast as you can.”

### ENGAGING THE READER

*Using direct speech and a strong voice helps to grab the reader’s attention.*

“We rugby players need to stretch our muscles properly,” Coach reminds them, “especially our hamstrings.”

### SPECIALIST LANGUAGE

*Using specialist vocabulary gives writing precision and authority. Authors can use various methods to help their readers understand unfamiliar words.*

The boys concentrate on keeping their balance as they stretch the muscles in their calves and thighs. They count slowly to ten as they stretch the hamstrings at the back of their knees.

Now things get more complicated. Instead of planting the ball on the ground at the far side of the square, they have to pass it to a team-mate.

### TIME FRAMES AND VERB FORMS

*The use of a time frame (and using consistent verb forms) can give readers a sense they are reading something “as it happened”. Students need to check that they select a suitable time frame and keep it consistent.*

## Teacher

(possible deliberate acts of teaching)

**ASK QUESTIONS** to help the students consider their writing choices.

- What ideas do you want to explore through writing?
- Will the topic you’ve chosen be a good one to explore those ideas?
- How will you engage your readers?

**MODEL** working out “hamstrings”.

- If I didn’t already know the word “hamstrings”, I could work it out by reading on. The author tells us that the boys stretch the muscles in their calves and thighs. I know where they are, and I’m thinking hamstrings must be in the legs. I read on, and the author tells me the hamstrings are at the back of their knees.
- If you’re using specialist or unfamiliar words, think about how you can help your readers to work out what they mean. One way is to explain the word in the text.
- What are some other ways you could do this?

**EXPLAIN** the use of time frames.

- It’s important that you carefully choose a time frame, or frames, for your writing and that you know why you’re using it.
- Check your writing to make sure the time frame is right for your purpose and that you’ve used the correct verb forms for your time frame.

If you want the students to focus on verb forms, use a graphic organiser to go through the text and discuss the forms and what they convey.

For example:

ACTION	VERB FORM	MEANING (all in a recount with a present time frame)
yells	present simple, third person (verb + -s)	Main action
is lying	present continuous (am/is/are + verb-ing)	Long action that continues while other shorter actions happen
everyone’s warmed up	present perfect (is/are, has/have + verb-ed)	An action that’s just completed (and something now happens because of it – it’s time to do their stretches)

### GIVE FEEDBACK

- The use of the present tense in your writing works well. I really felt like I was right there.
- I hadn’t ever thought about how you’d play rugby in outer space with no gravity! This is a great story. The way you’ve taken a familiar topic and made it feel very unfamiliar works very well.

### METACOGNITION

- What guided your thinking as you decided on the purpose and audience? What would you do differently if you changed the age or gender of your audience?
- How will you know that your writing has given readers a better understanding of the need to be fit to play well?
- What does ... mean? How can you help your readers work this out?
- Do you find it useful to plan and discuss your writing in your first language? How does it help?

Reading standard: by the end of year 4  
The Literacy Learning Progressions