

**Unit Level Materials**

# A Liger's Tale

What do you get when you cross a lion with a tiger? A liger, of course!

There are not a lot of ligers in the world, but one, named Hercules, made a big splash recently at Miami's Parrot Jungle Island.

"It's not something you see every day," the animal's owner, Bhagavan Antle, told New York's *Daily News*.

How did Hercules, who weighs 900 pounds, come to be? Three years ago [2002], his father, a lion, and his mother, a tiger, spotted each other at Antle's South Carolina animal preserve. It was love at first roar.

"We have a big free-roaming area at the preserve," Antle told the *New York Post*. "Sometimes lions and tigers are allowed to go out there and, lo and behold, one particular lion fell in love with one particular tiger and we had babies."

Four, to be exact: Hercules has three brothers—Vulcan, Zeus, and Sinbad.

What do ligers look like? A liger has a thick mane like that of a lion and stripes like those of a tiger. Hercules can consume 100 pounds of raw meat a day. He is able to run as fast as 50 miles per hour. At 3 years old, he's only a baby.

Does Hercules roar like a tiger or a lion? He has his dad's voice, although he swims like his mom. Like most lions, his dad doesn't enjoy the water.

Hercules is special because there are no ligers in the wild. Several have been born in captivity, including one last year in a zoo in Russia. That liger's name is Zita.

Ligers are **rare**<sup>1</sup> because tigers and lions don't usually get along. "Normally the lion will kill the tiger," Antle said.

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<sup>1</sup> **rare**: unusual

Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“A Liger’s Tale” Questions**

- \_\_\_ 1. A “liger” is
  - a. an animal that has a lion and a tiger as parents.
  - b. any large cat with stripes.
  - c. a large cat born at a zoo.
  - d. an African animal.
  
- \_\_\_ 2. The title of this passage means that the passage is
  - a. about the tail on a liger’s body.
  - b. a story about a liger.
  - c. a story told by a liger.
  - d. a fairy tale.
  
- \_\_\_ 3. Ligers are rare in captivity and non-existent in the wild, because
  - a. lions don’t like to swim.
  - b. tigers are afraid of the lions’ roar.
  - c. lions and tigers don’t usually get along.
  - d. lions don’t like the tigers’ stripes.
  
- \_\_\_ 4. Hercules “made a big splash” is another way of saying
  - a. he swims by kicking above water.
  - b. he is really heavy.
  - c. he attracts lots of attention.
  - d. he doesn’t know how to sneak up on something.
  
- \_\_\_ 5. What does the sentence, “It was love at first roar,” mean?

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## Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“A Liger’s Tale” Answer Sheet**

- ViC 1. A “liger” is
- an animal that has a lion and a tiger as parents.**
  - any large cat with stripes.
  - a large cat born at a zoo.
  - an African animal.
- FL 2. The title of this passage means that the passage is
- about the tail on a liger’s body.
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  - a fairy tale.
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- lions don’t like to swim.
  - tigers are afraid of the lions’ roar.
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  - lions don’t like the tigers’ stripes.
- FL 4. Hercules “made a big splash” is another way of saying
- he swims by kicking above water.
  - he is really heavy.
  - he attracts lots of attention.
  - he doesn’t know how to sneak up on something.
- FL 5. What does the sentence, “It was love at first roar,” mean?

Answers will vary. The lion and the tiger were attracted to each other when they first saw one another. The sentence refers to the common expression, “love at first sight.”

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary: captivity, consume, animal preserve*

# Big Burger Battle



photos.com

*Who invented the hamburger?*

Who gets burger bragging rights? A meaty battle is sizzling among three states over the history of the hamburger. In Texas, lawmaker Betty Brown proposed a bill declaring Athens, Texas, the home of the hamburger. Wisconsin has also jumped into the food fight. State Representative Tom Wilson argues that Seymour, Wisconsin, is the place where the famous sandwich was invented.

Not so fast, say the owners of Louis' Lunch in New Haven, Connecticut. Established in 1895, the restaurant is maintaining its claim as the burger birthplace. "It's a well-known and established fact that New Haven is the home of the hamburger," says New Haven Mayor John DeStefano, Jr. "In fact, New Haven's claim to the hamburger is even supported and documented in the Library of Congress."

Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Big Burger Battle” Questions**

- \_\_\_ 1. The word “battle” in the title refers to
  - a. the disagreement about where the hamburger was invented.
  - b. the debate about cheeseburgers and hamburgers.
  - c. a military fight.
  - d. a secret.
  
- \_\_\_ 2. The author uses the metaphor “sizzling” to show that the disagreement is
  - a. heated and energetic.
  - b. easygoing and relaxed.
  - c. funny and laughable.
  - d. personal and mean.
  
- \_\_\_ 3. The number of states claiming to be the first to serve a hamburger is
  - a. two.
  - b. three.
  - c. four.
  - d. five.
  
- \_\_\_ 4. The “birthplace” of the hamburger refers to
  - a. the place where hamburgers are made.
  - b. the place where the hamburger was invented.
  - c. a restaurant in a hospital that serves hamburgers.
  - d. New York City.
  
- \_\_\_ 5. Why does the author give so much detail about Connecticut’s claim as the burger’s birthplace?

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## Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Big Burger Battle” Answer Sheet**

- FL 1. The word “battle” in the title refers to
- the disagreement about where the hamburger was invented.**
  - the debate about cheeseburgers and hamburgers.
  - a military fight.
  - a secret.
- FL 2. The author uses the metaphor “sizzling” to show that the disagreement is
- heated and energetic.**
  - easygoing and relaxed.
  - funny and laughable.
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- two.
  - three.**
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  - five.
- FL 4. The “birthplace” of the hamburger refers to
- the place where hamburgers are made.
  - the place where the hamburger was invented.**
  - a restaurant in a hospital that serves hamburgers.
  - New York City.
- AP 5. Why does the author give so much detail about Connecticut’s claim as the burger’s birthplace?

Answers will vary. Extra details make the claim more convincing and memorable.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary: propose, declare, bill*

# Fatty Foods Flunk Out Of School

Move over, french fries, extra-cheese pizza, and chocolate chip cookies. School cafeterias across the country are trimming the fat!

Last year, 17 states passed new nutrition laws to limit unhealthy foods in schools. Texas officials **nixed**<sup>1</sup> deep-fried foods from school menus. Connecticut lawmakers **banned**<sup>2</sup> the sale of high-fat, high-sugar snacks in vending machines, cafeterias, and school stores.

Legislators in New Jersey passed one of the toughest school nutrition laws in the country. Next year, no schools in that state will be able to sell foods or drinks, such as candy and soft drinks, that list sugar as the main ingredient. Experts predict that more states will soon follow New Jersey's lead.

So what's prompting the menu makeover? Over the past 25 years, the percentage of overweight U.S. kids has tripled. Today, more than 9 million people ages 6 to 19 are overweight, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

School lunches aren't entirely to blame for the obesity crisis, but many experts say the cafeteria menu is a good place to start. More than 26 million children buy lunch at school each day.

Educators and lawmakers hope that providing good food choices at school will help kids make good food choices at home. "Schools play an important role in improving the nutrition of young people," Julia Lear, director of the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools, told *Senior Edition*.

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<sup>1</sup> **nix**: to reject; to veto

<sup>2</sup> **ban**: to forbid, especially by law or social pressure



## Reading Passage

Experts say **obesity**<sup>3</sup> at a young age can lead to health problems, such as heart disease, later in life. "Childhood obesity just can't be ignored anymore," Lear says.

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<sup>3</sup> **obesity:** the condition of being very much overweight

Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Fatty Foods” Questions**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The title of this passage, “Fatty Foods Flunk Out of School,” means:
- a. Children that eat fatty food do poorly in school.
  - b. Cafeteria workers that make fatty foods are losing their jobs.
  - c. Fatty foods are no longer allowed in some schools.
  - d. Companies that sell fatty foods are selling them to schools.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which of the following is an opinion?
- a. Nine million people ages 6 to 19 are overweight.
  - b. Educators hope that providing healthy food in school will encourage good eating habits.
  - c. Seventeen states recently passed nutrition laws for school lunches.
  - d. Schools play an important part in improving children's nutrition.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In this passage, “the menu makeover,” means that schools are
- a. providing different food choices.
  - b. offering fatty meat in the cafeteria.
  - c. serving more fried foods.
  - d. giving the children candy for dessert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The phrase, “move over french fries,” means:
- a. Cafeterias are reorganizing their food storage to make room for healthy food.
  - b. Cafeterias will be offering fewer fatty foods, like french fries, and serving healthier foods instead.
  - c. Instead of using potatoes to make french fries, cafeteria workers will be making mashed potatoes, a healthier option.
  - d. None of the above.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The author says that “school lunches aren't entirely to blame for this obesity crisis.” What are some other things that might be contributing to childhood obesity?

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## Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Fatty Foods” Answer Sheet**

- FL 1. The title of this passage, “Fatty Foods Flunk Out of School,” means:
- Children that eat fatty food do poorly in school.
  - Cafeteria workers that make fatty foods are losing their jobs.
  - Fatty foods are no longer allowed in some schools.**
  - Companies that sell fatty foods are selling them to schools.
- F/O 2. Which of the following is an opinion?
- Nine million people ages 6 to 19 are overweight.
  - Educators hope that providing healthy food in school will encourage good eating habits.
  - Seventeen states recently passed nutrition laws for school lunches.
  - Schools play an important part in improving children's nutrition.**
- FL 3. “The menu makeover” means that schools are
- providing different food choices.**
  - offering fatty meat in the cafeteria.
  - servicing more fried foods.
  - giving the children candy for dessert.
- FL 4. The phrase, “move over French fries,” means:
- Cafeterias are reorganizing their food storage to make room for healthy food.
  - Cafeterias will be offering fewer fatty foods, like french fries, and serving healthier foods instead.**
  - Instead of using potatoes to make french fries, cafeteria workers will be making mashed potatoes, a healthier option.
  - None of the above.
- DC 5. The author says that “school lunches aren't entirely to blame for this obesity crisis.” What are some other things that might be contributing to childhood obesity?

Answers will vary. Factors such as lack of exercise, and foods that children eat outside of school also contribute to the problem.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary: legislator, triple, vending, ingredient*

# Practice Makes...Pain?

At 10, Courtney Thompson was a top-ranked gymnast in New Hampshire. She had been doing flips since she was one year old, and she had her heart set on competing in the Olympics. She practiced four and a half hours a day, six days a week, often repeating the same move 100 times.

Her demanding schedule took a toll. It got to the point where Courtney could barely straighten her elbows unless she put ice on them. On Jan. 12, 2005, she had to stop in the middle of a floor routine. "I jumped up and grabbed my arm," she told *Senior Edition*. "It hurt wicked bad."

Doctors discovered that Courtney's constant workouts had caused the **cartilage**, or connective tissue, in her elbow to separate from the bone. She had surgery on both arms and endured months of painful rehabilitation.

Courtney's experience is part of a growing trend in youth sports—severe injuries, once limited to professional athletes, are now showing up in kids and teens.

"We're starting to see 12-year-old kids look like 40- and 50-year-olds in terms of stress on their bodies," Roch King, a kids' volleyball coach, told reporters.

Experts say kids are pushing their bodies to the limit, practicing sports too hard for too long. The **strenuous**<sup>1</sup> schedules often lead to dangerous injuries that could leave young athletes on the sidelines—permanently.

## Under Strain

From 30 percent to 50 percent of youth sports injuries are due to overuse, according to experts at *The Physician and Sportsmedicine Journal*. **Overuse injuries** are caused by repetitive motion that, over time, puts more stress on a body part than it can withstand. The tissue or bone eventually breaks, stretches, or tears.

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<sup>1</sup> **strenuous**: showing or requiring great energy

## Reading Passage

Danny Clark ended up with an overuse injury last year. The teen baseball player from Altamonte Springs, Florida, hurt himself by throwing 80 pitches in a single game after two months of not pitching at all.

The sudden, repetitive action tore Danny's **rotator cuff**. The rotator cuff is a group of four muscles and the tendons that connect them to bones in the shoulder. Afterward, he couldn't pitch for two months and needed five months of physical therapy.

### Too Much, Too Soon

Experts say injuries such as Danny's are on the rise, in part because more and more kids are abandoning casual sports for organized team competitions that require hours of practice and game time. "Kids [are] playing sports more aggressively at younger ages," explains James Beaty, an **orthopedist**<sup>2</sup> in Memphis, Tennessee.

Kevin Butcher, a 15-year-old soccer player from Fort Collins, Colorado, is no exception. He plays soccer three or four times a week for nine months a year. His dedication pays off—last year he helped lead his team to a state championship. But his success came with a price.

"Last year, I sprained my ankle a few times, dislocated a bone in my foot, and broke both sides of my pelvis," Kevin told *Senior Edition*. The first time he broke his pelvis, Kevin didn't realize it for about a month. He played through the pain until doctors forced him to rest. When he dislocated a bone in his foot, a physical therapist popped the bone into place, bandaged his foot, and let him play the next day.

### Knowing Your Limits

Not every kid who plays sports ends up with serious injuries. Experts say the key to avoiding injury is paying attention to your body. Feeling sore after practice is OK, but sharp pain is a warning sign that shouldn't be ignored.

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<sup>2</sup> **orthopedist**: a doctor who deals with the correction or prevention of deformities, disorders, or injuries of the skeleton (bones) and closely associated structures such as tendons and ligaments

## Reading Passage

Kevin learned that lesson while recovering from his second broken pelvis in less than a year. "There's definitely a glory in playing through pain, but I think there is a limit," he told *Senior Edition*. "You just have to know when to stop."

**How to Stay Safe**

Playing sports doesn't have to lead to injury. Here's how to stay in the game:

- Limit the time you spend playing a sport—no more than 15 hours a week.
- Increase the length and intensity of your training slowly. Never add more than 10 percent a week. If you ran for 20 minutes last week, you can run 22 minutes this week.
- Take a couple of days off from workouts every week.
- Consider *cross-training*, competing for fun in a variety of sports, to even out the stresses on your body.

Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Practice Makes...Pain?” Questions**

- \_\_\_ 1. The author wrote this passage
  - a. to warn about the dangers of exercising too much.
  - b. to inform about injuries associated with strenuous exercise.
  - c. to report the increase of sports related injuries in children.
  - d. all of the above.
  
- \_\_\_ 2. The statement that Kevin Butcher’s “success came with a price” means:
  - a. Kevin had to pay a lot of money to learn to play soccer.
  - b. Kevin helped lead his team to a state championship.
  - c. Kevin became a star soccer player, but he injured himself in the process.
  - d. Kevin enjoyed playing soccer.
  
- \_\_\_ 3. Someone “pushing her body to the limit” means
  - a. she is exercising until she in danger of damaging her body.
  - b. she is committed to winning in the Olympics.
  - c. she needs to exercise more.
  - d. she loves gymnastics.
  
- \_\_\_ 4. When Kevin Butcher told the author, “There’s definitely a glory in playing through pain,” he meant:
  - a. It can be painful to participate in sports.
  - b. A person is admired for continuing to play after being injured.
  - c. Often it is the team with the most injuries that wins the game.
  - d. Coaches want their athletes to ignore pain.
  
- \_\_\_ 5. What is the main idea of this article?

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## Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Practice Makes....Pain?” Answer Sheet**

- AP 1. The author wrote this passage
- to warn about the dangers of exercising too much.
  - to inform about injuries associated with strenuous exercise.
  - to report the increase of sports related injuries in children.
  - all of the above.**
- FL 2. The statement that Kevin Butcher’s “success came with a price” means:
- Kevin had to pay a lot of money to learn to play soccer.
  - Kevin helped lead his team to a state championship.
  - Kevin became a star soccer player, but he injured himself in the process.**
  - Kevin enjoyed playing soccer.
- FL 3. When someone is “pushing her body to the limit,” it means
- she is exercising until she is in danger of damaging her body.**
  - she is committed to winning in the Olympics.
  - she needs to exercise more.
  - she loves gymnastics.
- FL 4. When Kevin Butcher told the author, “There’s definitely a glory in playing through pain,” he meant:
- It can be painful to participate in sports.
  - A person is admired for continuing to play after being injured.**
  - Often it is the team with the most injuries that wins the game.
  - Coaches want their athletes to ignore pain.
- MI 5. What is the main idea of this article?

Answers will vary. The main idea of the article is that children can be seriously injured if they engage in strenuous exercise too often or for exercise sessions that are too long.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary: demanding, endure, rehabilitation, dislocate*

# Return of the Cube

Twenty-five years ago, the Rubik's Cube puzzled people of all ages. They spent hours twisting and turning the movable pieces of the cubed-shaped puzzle so that each side was just one color. Some could solve the puzzle in seconds. Many could not solve it at all.

In 2005, the cube enjoyed a revival as a new generation of "cubers" traveled the country taking part in highly competitive tournaments. "It's very addictive, and it spreads like a virus," Tyson Mao, 20, told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "One person will learn it, get hooked, and then teach others."

Mao is part of the Rubik's Cube Club from the California Institute of Technology. The college has sponsored six tournaments in California since January 2004. Mao and about 40 others competed at the International Rubik's Cube Tournament in San Francisco.

The tournaments usually consist of several events, including those in which cubers compete using one hand. In one difficult event, the competitors first look at the puzzle and then try to solve it while wearing a blindfold. In another event, they try to complete the cube in the fewest moves.

Fourteen-year-old Shotaro Makisumi broke his blindfolded record with a time of 2 minutes 57 seconds.

Many of those at the San Francisco tournament weren't even born when Erno Rubik first came up with the idea for the cube in 1974.

Today's cubers have also found a home on the Internet, where they swap ideas that can shave seconds off their time. The company that makes the cube has sold more than 100 million since the puzzle made its debut in 1980.

Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Return of the Cube” Questions**

- \_\_\_ 1. “It’s very addictive, and it spreads like a virus” is another way of saying
- people begin to think they can’t live without it, and its popularity spreads quickly from person to person.
  - “one person will learn it, get hooked, and then teach others.”
  - people love it and quickly get others to love it too.
  - all of the above.
- \_\_\_ 2. The phrase “shaving seconds off their time” refers to
- finding more time to spend on the cube as a hobby.
  - completing the puzzle more quickly.
  - spending less time at cube tournaments.
  - spending more time doing activities other than solving the puzzle.
- \_\_\_ 3. Which of the following is *not* an event at the tournament?
- People compete to solve the cube puzzle while blindfolded.
  - People use only one hand to solve the cube puzzle.
  - People try to solve the cube puzzle in the fewest moves.
  - People solve the cube puzzle while standing on their heads.
- \_\_\_ 4. How do “cubers” use the Internet to solve the cube puzzle?
- They exchange ideas about how to solve the puzzle faster.
  - They solve the puzzle online using an Internet version of the cube.
  - They research the history of the puzzle.
  - They plan social events.
- \_\_\_ 5. Explain what “the Rubik’s cube puzzled people of all ages” means.

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## Question Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**“Return of the Cube” Answer Sheet**

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  - “one person will learn it, get hooked, and then teach others.”
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  - all of the above.**
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- They exchange ideas about how to solve the puzzle faster.**
  - They solve the puzzle online using an Internet version of the cube.
  - They research the history of the puzzle.
  - They plan social events.
- FL 5. Explain what “the Rubik’s cube puzzled people of all ages” means.

Answers may vary. The Rubik’s cube is a puzzle that confused both young and old people.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary: revival*