

Little People, BIG DREAMS™ EDUCATORS' GUIDE



Simone Biles
Little People, BIG DREAMS™
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SUMMARY:

Simone Biles was born in Ohio but moved to Texas as a small child to be raised by her grandparents. While on a field trip to a local gymnastics gym, her talent was discovered and coaches asked her grandparents to sign her up for training. Simone worked hard in training and amazed everyone with her abilities, earning a spot on the United States senior team when she was only fourteen years old. She has earned countless titles, medals, and awards for not only her gymnastics talents but also her advocacy work. Simone is considered the GOAT—Greatest of All Time—and she is someone whose hard work, passion, and dedication inspire all of us to believe in ourselves as well.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. Why were Simone's grandparents so important in her life?
2. How did Simone discover she had a talent for gymnastics?
3. What are some of the medals and honors that Simone has earned?
4. What difficulties has Simone faced in her life and how did she overcome them?
5. Why is Simone a dreamer who should be admired and respected?



CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Simone was raised by her grandparents and even ended up calling them Mom and Dad (p. 3). Have students share about their own families by asking questions such as "Who do you live with?" and "Who is special to you like Simone's grandparents are to her?"
2. Simone mastered all four gymnastics events: vault, uneven bars, balance beam, and floor exercise (p. 9). Ask students which event they would like to try the most and why. If there are students with gymnastics experience, ask them which event is their favorite and why. Conversely, ask students if there is an event they would not want to try and why.
3. Page 15 depicts the "Yurchenko Double Pike," which is the most challenging women's vault move.

Show the students the illustration and ask them to share which part of the move they would find most challenging and why. Is it the part where you have to launch yourself backwards? The double flip in the air? The landing?

4. Simone had to be brave and speak out against adults who were doing the wrong thing. Ask students to share about a time when they had to be brave and speak up or when they witnessed someone else being brave.

5. On page 20, we learn that Simone made the difficult decision to take a break from gymnastics and focus on her mental health. After providing your own example of a difficult decision you had to make, ask the students to share an experience they have had.

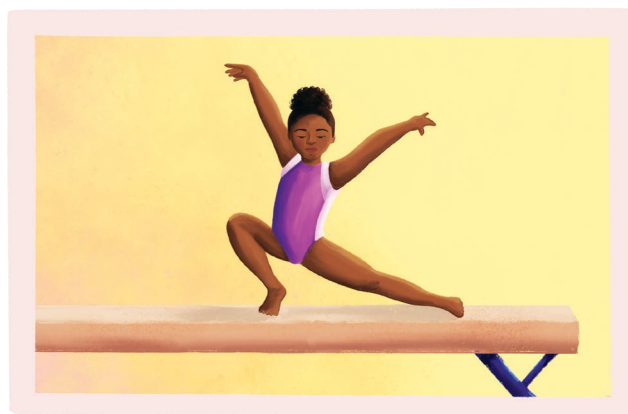
STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. **Gold Medal Classmates:** Simone has won a lot of gold medals in her career, and that is the highest Olympic honor. Provide gold colored paper circles to students and assign each student a classmate so that all students in the classroom are included. They will think of something that classmate does that really shines, such as “Most Helpful Friend” or “Makes Me Smile” or “Shows Kindness to Everyone,” and design a medal for them using words or pictures. Provide ribbon to which the medals can be attached and have a Medal Ceremony so that everyone can present their medals.

2. **Gymnastics Day:** Set up stations in the gym for students to try out various gymnastics events. With the help of the P.E. teacher in your school (or a student who you know is a gymnast), demonstrate beginner level gymnastics skills, such as how to walk on a balance beam and how to do a cartwheel. You can also expose students to rhythmic gymnastics by providing mats and scarves, playing music, and allowing students to have fun dancing. Once back in the classroom have the students vote on their favorite activity and explain why they liked it.

3. Throughout the book, we see Simone’s various leotards of different colors and designs. Provide students with shirt cut-outs made from white paper and art materials, including glitter (just like Simone!), and have everyone design their own unique shirt. Hang finished shirts on a clothesline in the classroom for everyone to enjoy.

4. **You Be the Judge:** Explain to students that a gymnast is always aiming for a perfect score of 10. Depending on the age of your students, practice holding up fingers to represent the numbers one through ten. Show students video clips of Simone doing each of the events and let them be the judge by having them hold up fingers to represent the score they would give her.



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