

TASK 4 (b): Local Heroes – Response Booklet 2

Valérie Grand'Maison – Correction Key

You are almost at the final event. So far, you have learned about the Paralympic Games and sports, and about respecting people with disabilities. You will now discover one of the local Paralympic athletes from Québec who have proudly represented Canada in the Paralympic Games. The information you will collect from **Valérie Grand'Maison's** biography will be very useful for the brochure you will create to promote her achievements.



Benoît St-Amand
Sledge Hockey Goaltender



Benoît Huot
Paralympic Swimmer



Jean Labonté
Sledge Hockey Player



Valérie Grand'Maison
Paralympic Swimmer

Heroes are sometimes closer than we think!

Valérie Grand'Maison's Biography



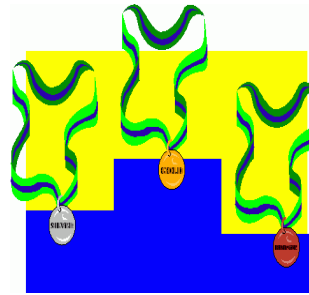
- Read about **Valérie Grand'Maison** and complete the Response Journal on pages 3 and 4.

Personal Information

Name: Valérie Grand'Maison
Sport: Swimming
Date of birth: October 12, 1988
Place of birth: Fleurimont, QC
Disability: Visually impaired
Height: 1m 64
Weight: 64 kg



Personal Achievements



Paralympic medals (6)

Gold
3
Silver
2
Bronze
1

Paralympic Games

- 2008 Beijing, China

Valérie's Story

Valérie Grand'Maison always loved to swim. But when she turned 12, she began losing the vision in her left eye because of a problem with her retina. "I took it very hard," she says. "When you're 12 years old, all you want is to be like your friends". When she became a competitive swimmer at 15, doctors told her to stop swimming because she started losing the vision in her right eye as well and swimming would make it worse. After one year of not swimming, she decided to join the Paralympic Swimming team and that changed her life. "It made me finally accept my disability and gave me new challenges," Valérie says.

When Valérie is discouraged, she remembers some of her achievements and how important every sacrifice is to reach her goals. She was honoured as *Female Athlete of the Year* in 2007 by *Swimming World Magazine*. Valérie is a great example of hard work and determination. She trains hard as an elite athlete and at the same time, she is also a dedicated student. After winning six medals in the 2008 Summer Beijing Paralympic Games, she said, "I don't know what to say, it's a dream come true".

Response Journal

Local Paralympic Athlete: Valérie Grand'Maison

Sport: Swimming

PHASE 1: EXPLORING THE TEXT (INDIVIDUALLY)



My first reactions to the text

- I found the text difficult/easy to read because ...
- I didn't understand (word, sentence, paragraph).
- It is interesting that ...
- I'm surprised that ...

Some questions about the text

Write short answers.

1. **What** is Valérie's disability?
Visually impaired.
2. **How** did she react when she found out about her disability?
She took it hard.
She wanted to be like her friends.
3. **Why** did she have to stop swimming?
She was losing her right eye vision.
4. **What** made her finally change her attitude and accept her disability?
She joined the Paralympic swimming team.
5. **What** else did Valérie achieve in addition to her many medals?
She was named female athlete of the year in 2007 by Swimming World Magazine – She won six medals in the 2008 Beijing Paralympics Games.
6. Valérie works hard to be a successful swimmer. **Where** else does she make an effort to succeed?
At school.
7. **What** did you think of the text?

PHASE 1: EXPLORING THE TEXT (WITH OTHERS)

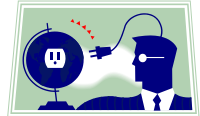


Sharing your initial understanding

1. Valérie is ...
2. She ...
3. Because ...
4. She accepted her disability when ...
5. She was also ...
6. She also ...
7. I think that the text ...I learned that ...

Readjusting my understanding of the text

PHASE 2: CONNECTING WITH THE TEXT



My personal connections to the text

Write short answers.

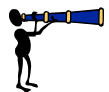
1. **How** do you react when you meet a blind person?
*I think he or she is courageous.
It doesn't make a difference to me; a blind person is a person.*
2. Valérie said, "I just wanted to be like all my friends". Is being part of 'the gang' important for you? **Why?**
Yes, my friends are important. They are like me.
3. Did you ever stop doing something you really loved? **Why?**
*Yes, I had to stop my painting lessons because my teacher moved away.
No, I never stopped skiing.*
4. Valérie thinks of her past achievements when things don't go well. **What** do you do when you feel a little discouraged?
I talked to my grandmother; she listens to me. I listen to my favourite music; I dance.

Sharing your personal connections

1. **When** I meet a blind person, I ...
2. Being part of 'the gang' means ...
3. Yes, I stopped ...
No, I never ...
4. **When** I'm discouraged, I ...

My classmates' connections

PHASE 3: GENERALIZING BEYOND THE TEXT



Paralympic athletes are role models for young people because ...

They are examples of courage and determination. They persevere to attain their goals. They do not get discouraged in front of a challenge. They are passionate about life. Their disabilities don't stop them from working hard. They don't feel self-pity. They believe in themselves.

- Use the following key words to create **two short mottos** that best represent Valérie Grand'Maison. Look at the example.
 1. **Successful:** Work hard to be successful!
 2. **Goal:** Never lose track of your goal! OR Reach for your goal!
 3. **Training:** Training is the key to success!