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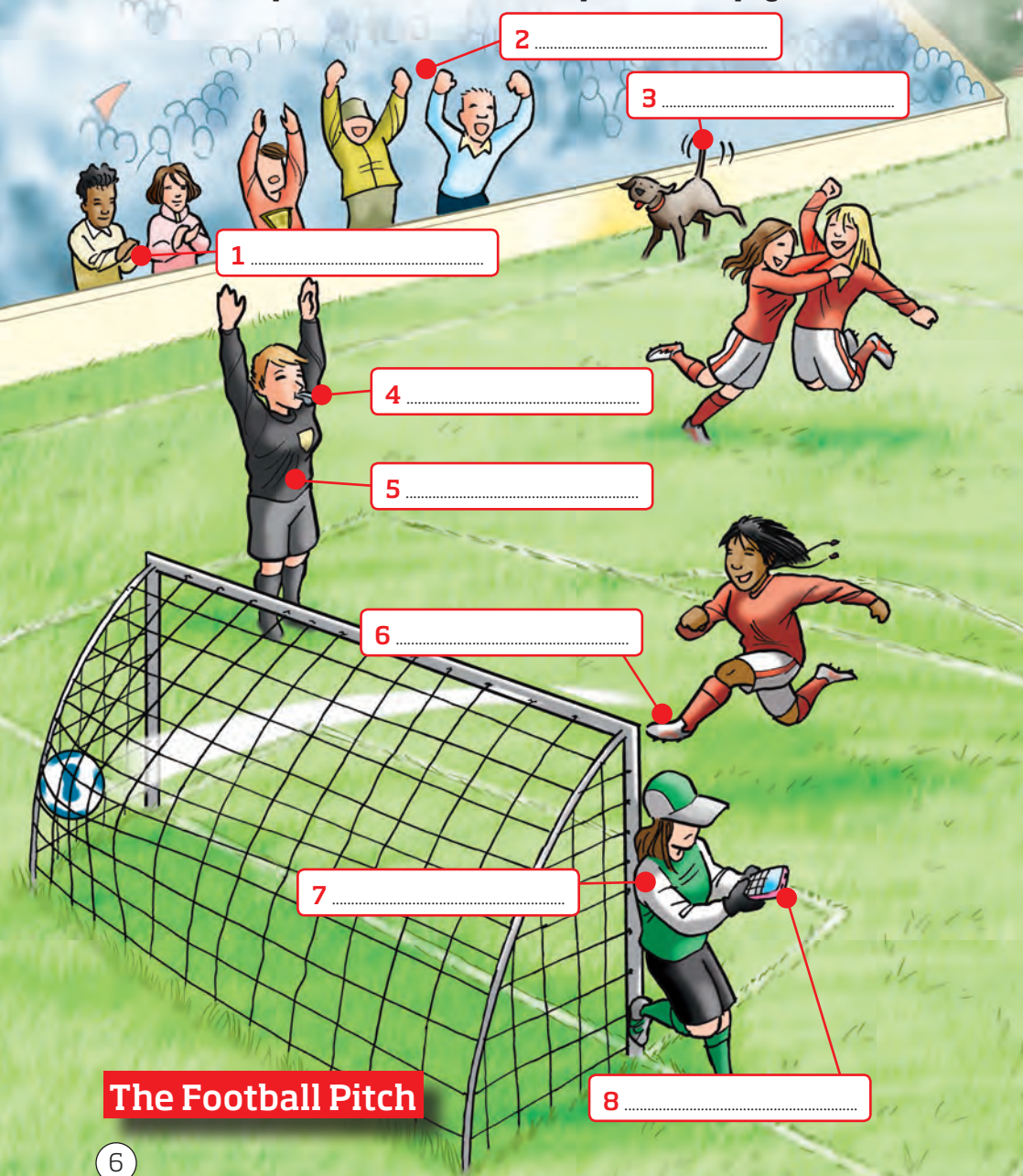
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Hi, I'm Zadie.
This is my story.
I love sports. Look through the book.
Can you guess my favourite
sports?

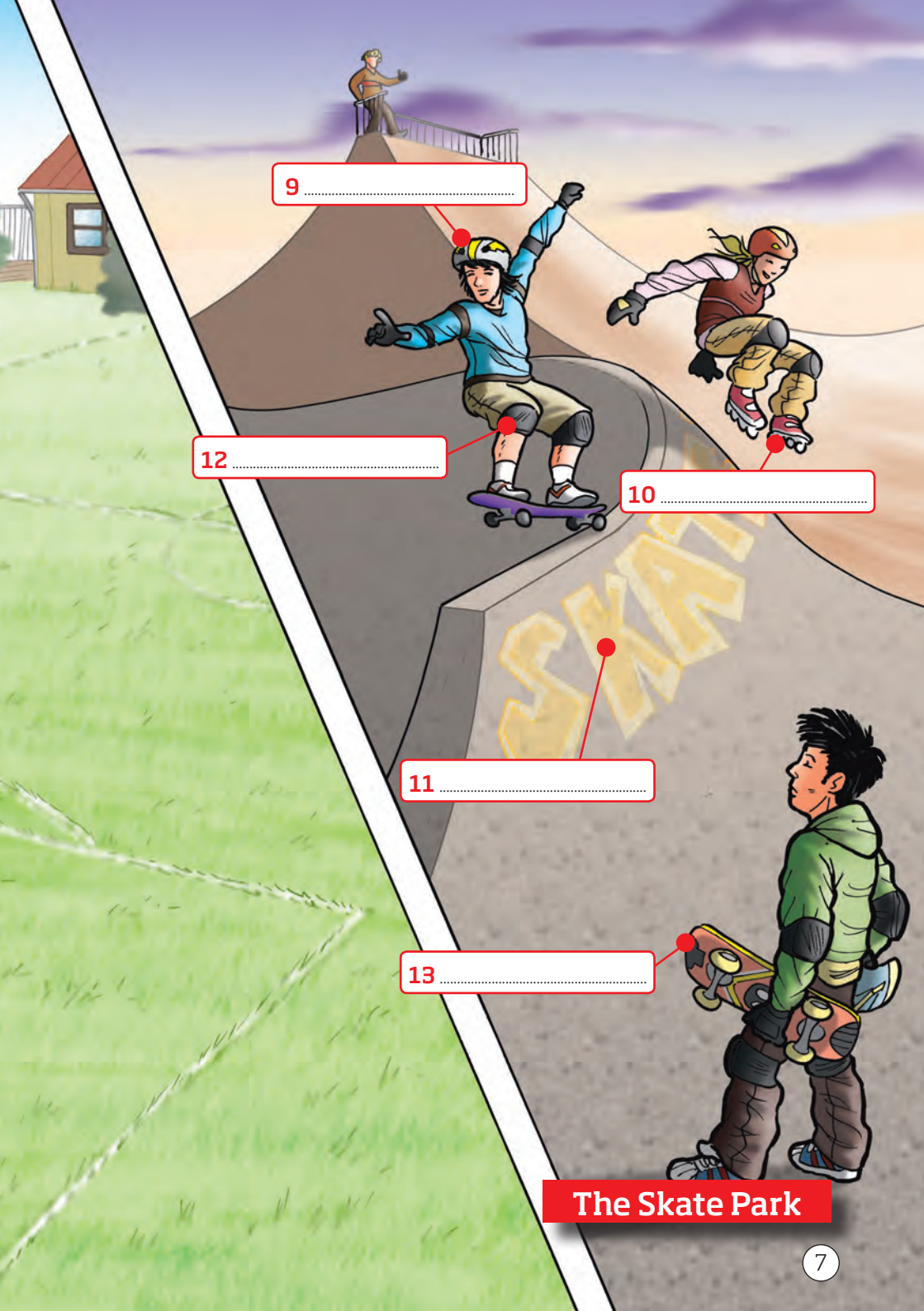


Before Reading

1 Look at the pictures and answer the questions on pages 8 and 9.



The Football Pitch



9

12

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11

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The Skate Park





3 It's a cold wet afternoon in April.

It's a perfect day for sitting in a warm classroom, sending text messages to friends and looking out of the window. It's a perfect day for sitting in a warm office, sending emails and surfing the net. It's a perfect day for looking for new clothes in the warm shopping centre. Or for sitting at home, drinking hot chocolate and watching afternoon TV.

But on the sports field of Westbourne High School, two football teams are running up and down, kicking a heavy wet football. It's an important match – the semi-final of the girls' football championship between Westbourne and New Milton.

THWACK!

The goalkeeper kicks the football high into the air.

The team in red shirts run up the pitch, the team in blue shirts run back.

A girl in a red shirt with black hair and brown eyes watches the ball carefully. She walks slowly into the centre circle.

BOING!

A girl in a blue shirt heads the ball. It flies up into the grey air.

BIFF!

The ball lands at the feet of the girl with black hair. She immediately starts running towards the blue team's goal.

'Go on Zadie!' her team-mates shout.



Zadie runs quickly. The girls from New Milton can't catch her. But then in front of her, Zadie sees a tall girl in a blue shirt. She's big. She's fast. And she's right • in front of her!

But Zadie has an idea.

Zadie kicks the ball to the girl's left, and then runs to the girl's right. The tall girl is confused. She looks at the ball, she looks at Zadie. She doesn't know which way to move. So Zadie runs past her, and gets the ball on the other side!

Now she has only the goalkeeper to beat •.



The goalkeeper waves her arms and opens her legs, ready to jump in any direction. But Zadie has a better idea.

THUMP!

She kicks the ball between the goalkeeper's legs into the back of the New Milton net.

'Goal!!!'

Holly, Grace and her other team-mates run up to Zadie, smiling happily. The score is 1-0 to Westbourne. And there are only another fifteen minutes to play.

The game is nearly over.

But now Zadie is having fun.

With twelve minutes to play, Zadie jumps into the air and kicks the ball over her head. It's her famous scissor kick! The ball shoots into the back of the New Milton goal.

CRASH!

With five minutes to play, Zadie crosses the ball to Grace who heads it past the goalkeeper.

BANG!

And in the last minute of the match, Zadie stops the ball with her chest, turns to her left, then kicks the ball with all her power. It goes like a rocket into the New Milton net.

WALLOP!

The referee blows her whistle. It's the end of the game. Westbourne are in the final!



Once again, Zadie is the hero.

The Westbourne players walk happily off the pitch towards the changing room. A smiling woman with short red hair walks over to Zadie. It's Petty the Pirate.

Actually, her real name is Karen Petty. She's their sports teacher. But because she has a small tattoo on her wrist, all the students call her Petty the Pirate – but not to her face!

'Great game, Zadie,' she says.

'Thanks, Ms Petty,' Zadie replies.

'The final is in two weeks against Greenford. They're a really tough team.'

'Don't worry, miss. We can win!'

And Zadie gives a big confident smile.





At home, Zadie doesn't feel like a hero.

First of all, there's her brother Eric. Now Eric is fifteen years old and clever. In fact, he's very clever.

'Eric has his exam results,' says her dad, as Zadie walks into the kitchen. Her father is making dinner because her mother works late on Wednesdays at the hospital. Eric gives Zadie a little smile. He looks a bit embarrassed.

'Oh really?' she says.

'Yes, he's top in history, English, science and maths.'

Zadie's father thinks that exam results are very, very important.

'That's good,' says Zadie.

'Good? It's excellent! You know, it's very important to do well at school... and your results aren't very good.'



Zadie nods.

She doesn't like sitting in a classroom all day looking at books. And she hates taking exams. She can't remember all those stupid facts! But Eric is brilliant at exams. He can remember everything.

'Tell me about the game,' says Eric.

'We're in the final.'

'Fantastic!' Eric is always impressed by Zadie. He is hopeless at sport.

'How many goals?'

'Three for me, four for the team.'

'Amazing!'

Her father doesn't hear this conversation. He is busy cooking. He empties a jar of pasta sauce into a pan and then looks round.

'Don't forget to do your homework tonight, Zadie. Oh, and after dinner, can you babysit Tania?'

Zadie's second problem at home is Tania, her kid sister.

Tania is five. And whenever her parents need a babysitter, Zadie is always the person they think of first.

'Oh, dad, why can't Eric do it?'

'Sorry, Zadie,' says Eric. 'I'm going out.'

'But I want to go out, too!' says Zadie.

'You can go out after dinner,' says her father, 'and take the dog for a walk. Then you have to look after your sister.'

'That is so unfair!'

Zadie turns round and walks out of the kitchen.

'Come back and lay the table!' her father shouts after her.

'Your dinner's ready!'

Her third problem is their dog, Scamp. Eric never takes him for a walk. It's always Zadie.

Actually, that isn't a problem. Zadie likes taking Scamp out for a run. It's a good excuse for her to go in-line skating. So after dinner, Zadie puts on her new red top, new blue earrings, her skates and finally her MP3 player – and she's ready to go!

Scamp wags[•] his tail and gives a little bark[•]. He's ready to go, too. 'Don't be long,' her dad says, doing the washing-up[•].

But Zadie is already out of the door and on her way.



She skates through the park, under the trees with their new green leaves. The rain is over and the sun is shining. There's a wonderful smell of spring in the air. Zadie loves this time of year. It always promises adventure. She dreams of going on a dangerous expedition up the river Amazon, or skydiving from a plane, or hang-gliding over the sea, or white-water rafting in the Rocky Mountains... but she's too young. And her parents always tell her to think about school. To study. To do her homework. To forget her wild ideas. Life is so unfair! So Zadie skates quickly through the park... while Scamp tries to stay by her side!



Zadie sees Grace at the skate park. She goes over to her.

‘Hi Grace.’

‘Hi Zadie. I like your earrings.’

‘Thanks,’ Zadie says.

Then Grace pats Scamp on the head. He licks her hand. He likes Grace.

Zadie looks at a boy with a skateboard. He has got lots of friends with him.

‘Who’s that?’ asks Zadie.

‘His name’s Simon. He’s new at school. He’s in the year above us.’

Zadie remembers him.

‘What’s going on?’ she asks.

‘He’s doing some tricks,’ Grace replies. ‘He’s really good.’

At that moment, Simon gets on his skateboard and moves towards a ramp...

‘He’s good-looking, isn’t he?’ says Grace.

Zadie gives her a look.

‘Grace, you like every boy in school!’

‘No, I don’t!’ But Grace laughs and her face goes a bit red.



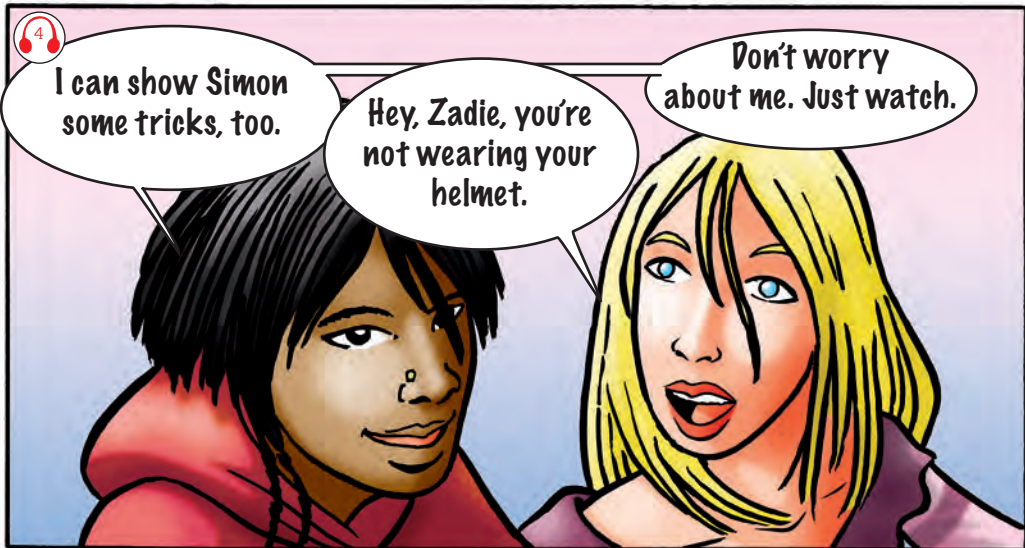
Simon goes quickly up a ramp, turns, and then shoots down again. He is moving very fast. Then he goes up another ramp and shoots up into the air.

When he lands on the back two wheels of his skateboard, all his friends cheer. Grace claps her hands.

'He's fantastic!' Grace says.

'He's OK,' says Zadie. She isn't impressed by this new boy. Her friends call her 'The Queen of the Skate Park'. And she always wants to be number one.





So Zadie skates past Simon and goes up the ramp.



Zadie turns once, twice...



Three times in the air!



Then she lands and comes to a perfect stop.



After Reading

Vocabulary

1 Match the actions with the pictures.

1 to bleed 2 to head 3 to text 4 to land



2 Write a description of each picture.

- a
 b
 c
 d

3 Look at the pictures and ask and answer questions with a partner.

What is the girl doing in picture c?

What's the matter with Zadie in the last picture?