



# Maggie's Activity Pack

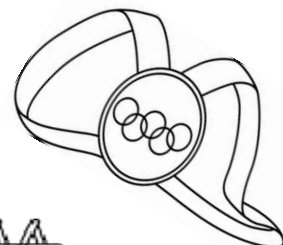
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Countdown to the Olympics

January 30, 2010

Maggie is visiting the Winter Olympics. Take a look at her notes. Then share your thoughts with her

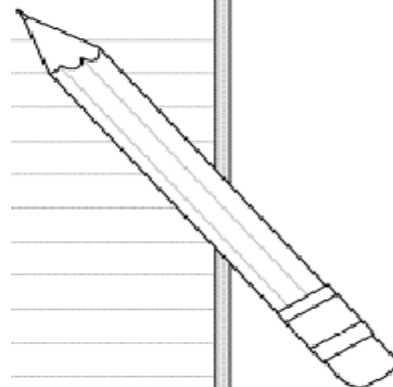


### *Here I am at the VC Place in Vancouver !*

The Opening Ceremony for the Olympic Games is a secret. But I do know a few things about it. This is the first time that a ceremony will be held indoors. Over 55,000 will watch in the VC Place. Millions of viewers will tune in by television. We will all learn more about the people of Canada and their rich cultural heritage.

I am looking forward to the parade of nations. Athletes from Greece are always the first to enter the ceremonies. Canada's athletes will enter the stadium last. All other countries will line up in A-B-C order.

As an added honor, each country chooses an athlete to carry its flag. Canada's flag will be carried by Clara Hughes. She is a speed skater and a cyclist. She already wears medals from past summer and winter games!



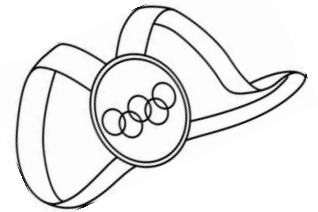
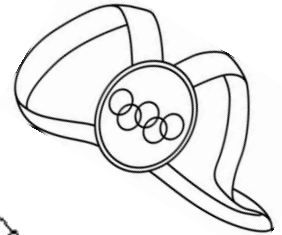
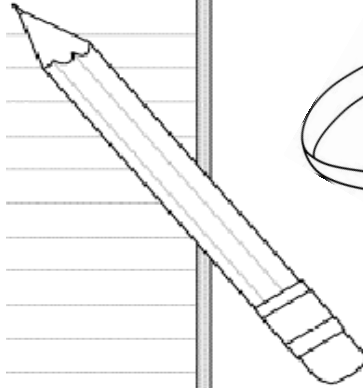
Why do you think it is important to keep the Opening Ceremonies a secret?

***I am wearing mud boots as I stand on Cypress Mountain which is the snowboarding and freestyle skiing site.***

It's not cold here. A light rain is falling. I am standing in a mud puddle not a snow pile.

Everyone is trying to get the mountain ready for the events. With less than two weeks before freestyle skiers will compete on this mountain, I am wondering if all will be ready for them. Many people never thought that warm weather would be such a big worry.

Fortunately, organizers planned ahead. In December, they made snow high up on Cypress Mountain. The manmade snow has been piled up, waiting for the "big moment." Now people are busy spreading this snow down the mountain. Organizers are sure all will be ready for the snowboarders and skiers.



I heard that Cypress Mountain is now closed to skiers. Many who paid to ski here are not happy. Do you think it is a good idea for the mountain to close until the Olympics? Explain your answer.

Many people say that Clara Hughes is the best choice to carry Canada's flag in the Opening Ceremonies. Do you agree? Tell why or why not.

Dear Colleague,

Olympic excitement is upon us, and Maggie's Earth Adventures is right here for all the action. With your students sure to be "tuned in" to the mountains and rinks of Vancouver, we wanted to help you make the most of what already motivates your class. And while this activity uses the Olympic content, the underlying goal is an important one: higher levels of comprehension.

Just the other day I was standing in my classroom holding an open umbrella. I took the chance that this won't bring me years of bad luck as I wanted to illustrate an important point to my reading methods students: reading consists of five components and these ALL fall under the UMBRELLA of reading. My umbrella displayed a sign, READING, and dangling under it were the terms phonemic awareness, phonics/decoding, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. I took the chance of bad luck to show my students that all of these components fall under the umbrella of reading. If a child can say the words (decode) and has little or no understanding of what he or she is reading, we can conclude that reading is really not happening. Too often (as happened in the report from the National Reading Panel) we forget that comprehension is necessary for reading.

This activity not only illustrates the necessity of comprehension but illustrates the higher levels of this skill and models a good way to actually teach comprehension. The questions posed here show that we must go beyond literal understanding of material. We, at Maggie's Earth Adventures, always promote critical thinking and problem solving. One good way to do this is to encourage children to "have a conversation" with the author. The conversation bubbles in this activity encourage your students to answer Maggie by synthesizing the information from the text with their own knowledge.

You can take this a step further and have your students write questions for our "on the spot reporter." Remember that asking questions of an author is a fantastic way to encourage all *three* types of comprehension.

Reluctant learners? Motivate them in simple ways...have them draw a conversation bubble along with a stick figure of themselves. This makes it fun to write their questions for an author. You may even find sticker conversation bubbles for them to use. The unusual and fun make for children who want to do their work!

So...open YOUR umbrellas in the classroom and make sure you are addressing all the components of reading!

Happy teaching,  
Kathy

Answers will vary – I always add numbers or letters to children's desk nametags so that I can easily pair them. I say "The number 1's are partners or the letter m's are partners." This allows me to have children whisper thoughts to each other without any discussions as to how to find a partner. Having a quiet sharing moment about such higher-order questions often encourages deeper thinking. Be sure to walk around your classroom, though. We want children to stay on task ☺

**Goals:**

Children will read short excerpts about the upcoming Olympics. They are asked to respond to questions using higher order comprehension skills. This activity is available on the primary and intermediate levels and correlates with the IRA/NCTE Standard, "Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics)."