

# Celebrity Readers

## FAMOUS FEMALE SPORTS STARS

REM 477

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# INTRODUCTION

Most everyone enjoys reading about celebrities. The short, high-interest, easy-to-read biographies in this book are sure to capture students' attention. Each story is accompanied by an activity page that tests reading comprehension and enhances following-directions skills. Activity pages include fact-based questions, crossword puzzles, true-false/fact-opinion questions, fill-in-the-blanks, and more. A related research project for each story may require the use of a dictionary, an almanac, encyclopedia, atlas, or the Internet. An answer key is provided.

Interest level for this book is grades 3-12. Reading level is grades 3-5.

## Additional Activity:

Since the events in the lives of celebrities are constantly changing, ask students to become reporters and write a "celebrity update," adding any new information that they can find on a particular celebrity. A template for this is provided on page 29. Hold a guided class discussion in which the students share their information and talk about their findings.

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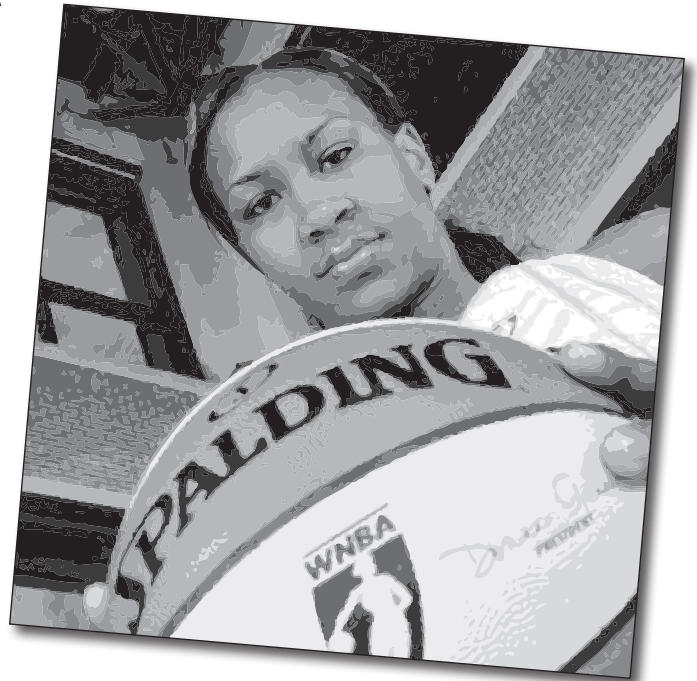
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# TAMIKA CATCHINGS

**W**NBA star Tamika Catchings grew up with basketball in her blood. Her dad played in the NBA for 11 years. He taught Tamika and her siblings how to play. They all learned to love the game. For Tamika, though, basketball was more than just a game.

Tamika was born on July 21, 1979, in Stratford, New Jersey. She was born with a severe hearing loss. She had to wear hearing aids. The kids at school teased her about them. To deal with this, Tamika turned to basketball. For her, basketball was an escape from the teasing. Playing basketball helped her deal with her feelings. It also helped her show everybody that they were wrong about her disability. Tamika did not let her disability stop her from playing basketball. She used it as her driving force to practice and play harder. Because of this, Tamika has become one of the top female basketball players in the world.

Today, Tamika plays small forward for the Indiana Fever. She tore up the court her first year in the WNBA, earning the WNBA Rookie of the Year Award. She has led the Fever in points, rebounds, assists, steals, and blocks every year that she has played. Tamika has also



been a driving force on the U.S. National Team. She helped the team win at the 2002 World Championships and take home the gold in the 2004 Olympics. If you ask other players about Tamika, they will say that she gives 100 percent all the time.

Another place Tamika gives 100 percent is in the community. In 2004, she started the Catch the Stars Foundation, Inc. It gives academic and sports programs to kids who are struggling. Because of her disability, Tamika understands what the kids are going through. She wants to show them that they can achieve their dreams no matter what is going on in their lives.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# TAMIKA CATCHINGS

## Answer the questions.

1. Who taught Tamika Catchings how to play basketball? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What disability was Tamika born with? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What two things did basketball help Tamika do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Tamika become? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Who does Tamika play for? What position does she play? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What has Tamika led her team in every year that she has played?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. When did Tamika help the U.S. National Team win a gold medal at the Olympics? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What do other players say about Tamika? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What is the name of Tamika's foundation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What does the foundation do? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What does Tamika want to show the kids in her foundation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Research:** Find the word *disability* in a dictionary. Write its definition.

# NATALIE COUGHLIN

The woman in the swimsuit pushed her goggles into her face. She wanted to make sure that they wouldn't fall off during the race. When the voice came over the loudspeaker, she stepped onto the diving block. She stood in diving position and waited for the bell to sound.

Natalie Coughlin is a world-famous backstroke swimmer. She was born on August 23, 1982, in California. Her parents took her for her first swim when she was just a few weeks old. When she was 10 months old, they signed her up for swim lessons. Natalie was swimming competitively by the time she was six.

Natalie had talent, but her coaches didn't think she would be famous. She showed them what hard work could do. At 15, she became the first swimmer to qualify for the Summer Nationals in all 14 events.

Since then, Natalie has put quite a few honors under her swim cap. She swam in the 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games. Between the two games, she earned 11 medals. At the 2008 Olympics, Natalie became the first American female athlete to win six medals in one Olympics. She also has five world records to her name.

When not in the pool, Natalie can be found in the kitchen. She loves cooking food



that keeps her body healthy. Her interest in food and health led her to get involved with Edible Schoolyard. It is a program that teaches students about leading healthy lifestyles.

Natalie is very competitive. She broke the 100-meter backstroke world record at the 2008 Olympic Trials. She was planning to take it easy at the next races. Then another swimmer broke Natalie's record. Natalie decided to get the record back. She did more than that. She became the first woman to swim the 100-meter backstroke in under 59 seconds. It is that competitive nature that makes Natalie a true Olympic athlete.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# NATALIE COUGHLIN

Match the clues to the words in the box. Write the answers on the lines.

California	five	14	backstroke
Edible Schoolyard	swim lessons	11	cooking

1. number of events Natalie Coughlin qualified for at the Summer Nationals \_\_\_\_\_
2. where Natalie was born \_\_\_\_\_
3. stroke Natalie swims \_\_\_\_\_
4. number of Olympic medals Natalie has \_\_\_\_\_
5. what Natalie's parents signed her up for when she was 10 months old \_\_\_\_\_
6. program Natalie is involved in \_\_\_\_\_
7. number of world records Natalie holds \_\_\_\_\_
8. something Natalie loves doing \_\_\_\_\_

**Research:** Find *backstroke* in an encyclopedia. Write a description of what is involved in swimming the backstroke.