Worksheet 1, page 1. Reading: Interview with Justine Henin

Read the interview with tennis champion Justine Henin. Then answer the questions.

Interview with Justine Henin

"Winning is important, but not at any price," says Justine Henin, the world-famous tennis champion from Belgium. Henin said this in a speech to about a hundred young teenagers from more than 60 countries.

She spoke about keeping high standards of ethics in sports, and about resisting the temptation to use performance-enhancing drugs. Here are parts of that interview:

Interviewer: You have been a top tennis player for many years, and UNESCO Champion for Sport since last December. Now you are speaking in public on behalf of the Organization’s ideals, right?

Henin: Yes, about the ideals of high standards and not using drugs. It is very important because it involves 13 and 14 year olds. This is a vital age to begin to understand life. I wanted to tell the teenagers that sport has to be nurtured by passion, by love of the game. Of course, sport is my profession, but sport is something that I love beyond everything else. I obviously also love to win -- I’m a competitor -- but I also appreciate the sacrifices that I must make in order to succeed.

Interviewer: Your mission as UNESCO Champion consists essentially of raising the public’s awareness of the problem of doping in sports.

Henin: That’s right. To dope yourself is to cheat, and that is something I cannot conceive of either in my private life or in my career. Winning is important, but not at any price. Doping is obviously a question of ethics, of honesty towards one’s self, of integrity and dignity, but above all, of health. Endangering one’s life to win is something I don’t agree with at all.

Sport is first and foremost a game, and we enjoy playing very much. But, in addition, sport also develops skills for your entire life -- and these skills include being honest and winning by playing by the rules. This is what I tried to explain to the children.

UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
performance-enhancing drugs = drugs like steroids or stimulants used illegally by athletes
on behalf of = instead of someone, or as their representative
doping = the practice of using drugs to improve performance in a sport
Worksheet 1, page 2

Circle T if the statement is true according to the reading. Circle F if the statement is false.

1. T / F Justine Henin made this speech to a group of experienced professional tennis players.

2. T / F She spoke about ethics in sports.

3. T / F She represents UNESCO.

4. T / F She is passionate about the sport of tennis.

5. T / F Henin’s principal mission for UNESCO is to teach tennis.

6. T / F The worst thing about doping in sports is that it is unhealthy.

7. T / F She believes that winning is the only important thing in life.

8. T / F A sport is only a game, and it doesn’t teach us anything about life.