

Unit

2

Reading A : True Height

Reading B : What Is a Player? (Poem)

Reading C : V.V.S. Laxman,  
Very Very Special



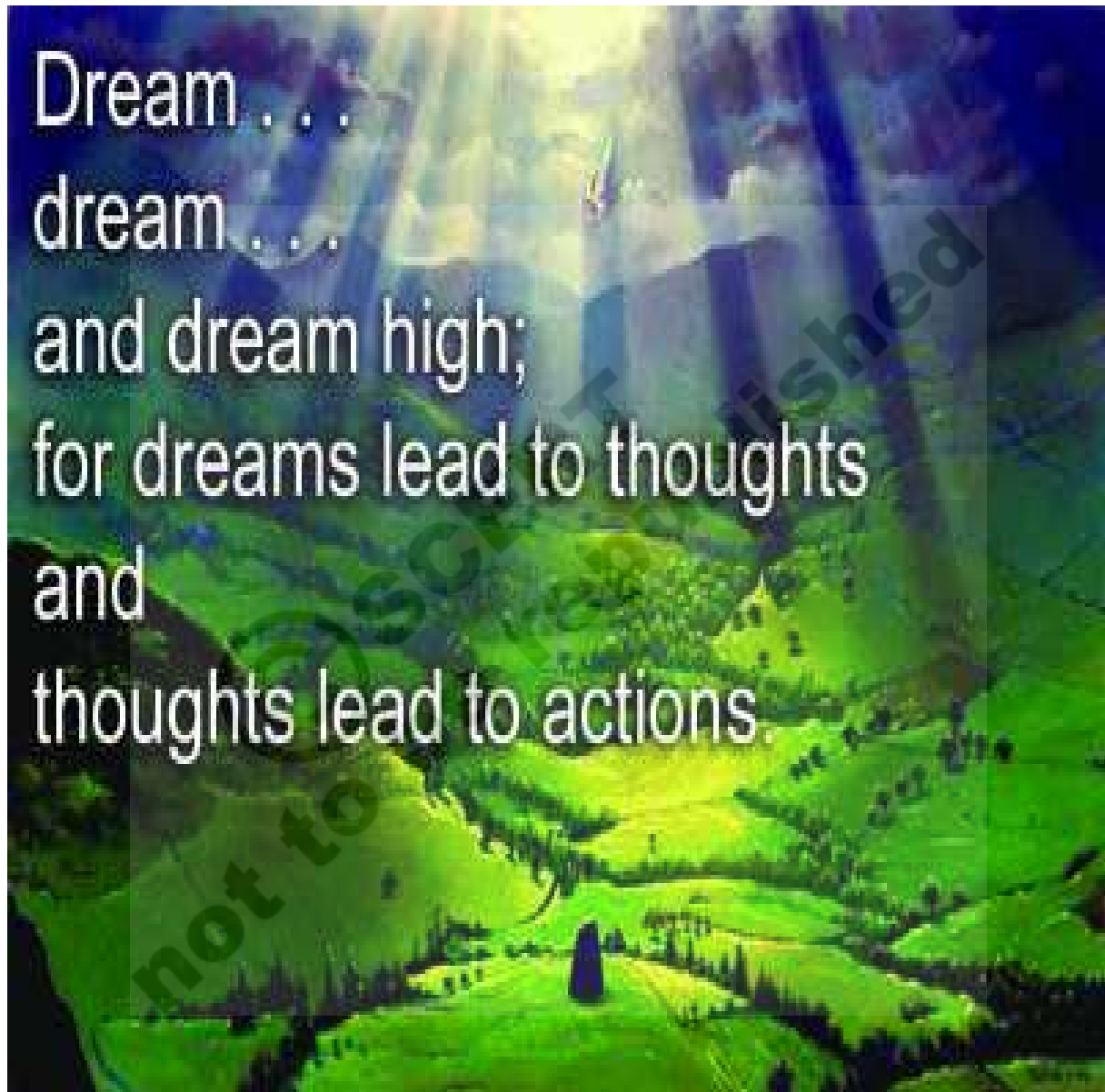
Games and Sports

# Games and Sports

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Read the following quotation and answer the questions that follow.



1. What, according to you, does this quotation express?
2. Is it essential to dream high? How can anyone make one's dream come true?
3. What is your dream in life?
4. Have you ever heard of a child with special needs becoming a champion?

**Here is one such a story.**

## True Height

*This story talks about the feelings of an athlete as he pursues his dream. Read about a nerve-wracking day in Michale Stone's life as he prepares to take the ultimate test of his sports career. It is an awe-inspiring achievement that will leave you breathless.*



His palms were sweating. He needed a towel to dry his grip. A glass of ice water quenched his thirst but hardly cooled his intensity. The astroturf he sat on was as hot as the competition he faced today at the National Junior Olympics. The pole was set at 17 feet. That was three inches higher than his personal best. Michael Stone confronted the most challenging day of his pole-vaulting career. The stands were still filled with about twenty thousand people, even though the final race had ended an hour earlier.

The pole vault is truly the glamour event of any track and field competition. The sportsman combines the grace of a gymnast with the strength of a bodybuilder. Pole-vaulting also has the element of flying, and the thought of flying as high as a two-storeyed building is a mere fantasy to anyone watching such an event. Today it is not only Michael Stone's reality and dream – it is his quest.

As long as Michael could remember, he had always dreamed of flying. Michael's mother read him numerous stories about flying when he was growing up. Her stories were always the ones that described the land from a bird's-eye view. Her excitement and passion for details made Michael's dreams full of colour and beauty. Michael had this one recurring dream. He would be running down a country road. He could feel the rocks and chunks of dirt at his feet. As he raced down the golden-lined wheat fields, he would always outrun the locomotives passing by. He would begin soaring like an eagle.

Where he flew would always coincide with his mother's stories. His dad, on the other hand, was not a dreamer. Bert Stone was a hard-core realist. He believed in hard work and sweat. His motto: If you want something, work for it!

From the age of fourteen, Michael did just that. He began a very careful and regimented weightlifting programme. He worked out every other day with weights, with some kind of running work on alternate days. The programme was carefully monitored by Michael's coach, trainer and father. Michael's dedication, determination and discipline was a coach's dream.

Besides being an honour student, Michael Stone continued to help his parents with their farm chores. Michael's persistence in striving for perfection was not only his obsession but his passion.

Mildred Stone, Michael's mother, wished that he could relax a bit more and be that 'free dreaming' little boy. On one occasion she attempted to talk to him and his father about this, but his dad quickly interrupted, smiled and said, "You want something, work for it!"

All of Michael's vaults today seemed to be the reward for his hard work. If Michael Stone was surprised, thrilled or arrogant about clearing the bar at 17 feet you couldn't tell. As soon as he landed on the inflated landing mat, and with the crowd on its feet, Michael immediately began preparing for his next attempt at flight. He seemed oblivious of the fact that he had just surpassed his personal best by three inches and that he was one of the final two competitors in the pole-vaulting event at the National Junior Olympics.

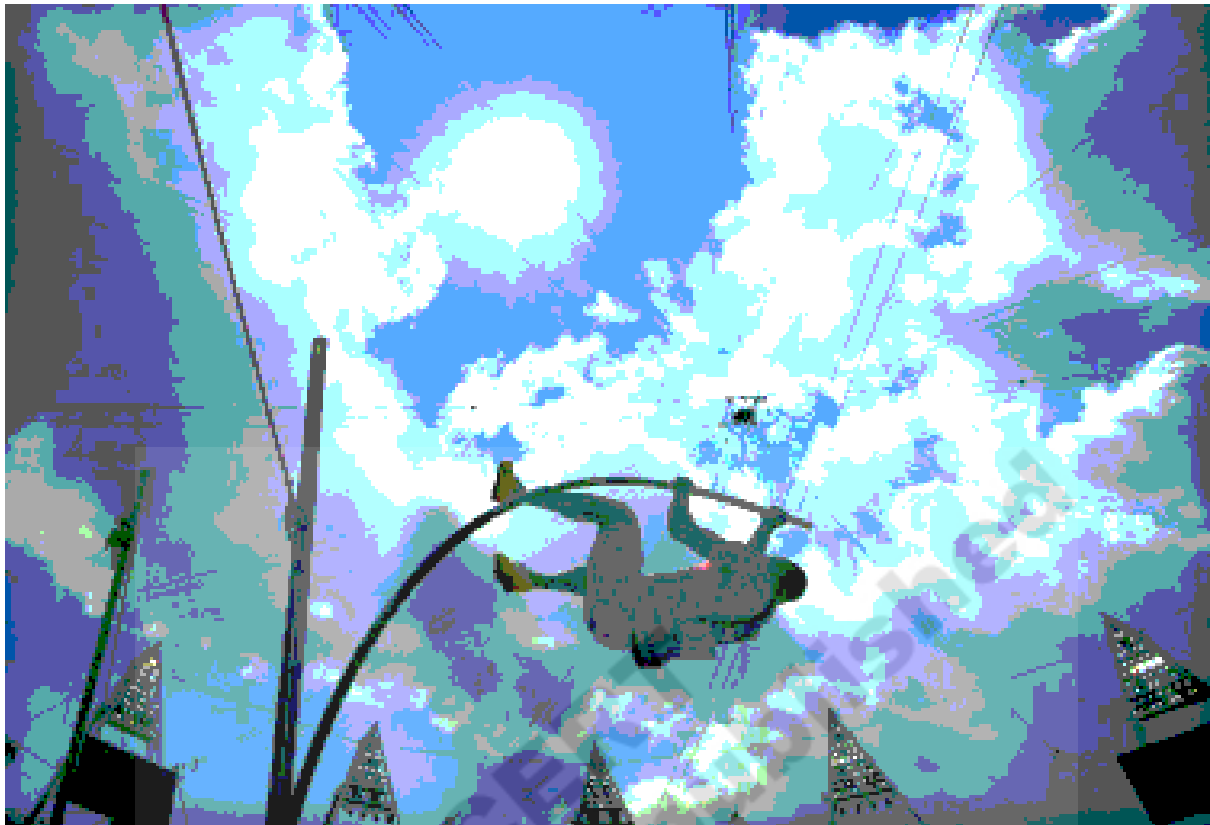
Michael cleared the bar at 17 feet and 2 inches and 17 feet 4 inches; again he showed no emotion. Constant preparation and determination were his vision. As he lay on his back and heard the crowd groan, he knew the other vaulter had missed his final jump. He knew it was time for his final jump. Since the other vaulter had fewer misses, Michael needed to clear this vault to win. A miss would get him second place. Nothing to be ashamed of, but Michael would not allow himself the thought of not winning first place.

He rolled over and did his ritual of three finger-tipped push-ups. He found his pole, stood and stepped on the runway that led to the most challenging event of his seventeen-year-old life.

The runway felt different this time. It startled him for a brief moment. Then it all hit him like a wet bale of hay. The bar was set at nine inches higher than his personal best. "That's only one inch off the National record," he thought. The intensity of the moment filled his mind with anxiety. He began shaking off the tension from his body. It wasn't working. He became more tense. "Why is this happening to me now?" he thought. He began to get nervous. A afraid would be a more accurate description. What was he going to do? He had never experienced these feelings. Then out of nowhere, and from the deepest depths of his souls, he envisioned his mother. Why now? What was his mother doing in his thoughts at a time like this? It was simple. His mother always used to tell him when you felt tense, anxious or even scared, to take deep breaths.

So he did. Along with shaking the tension from legs, he gently laid his pole at his feet. He began to stretch out his arm and upper body. The light breeze that was once there was now gone. He could feel a trickle of cold sweat running down his back. He carefully picked up his pole. He felt his heart pounding. He was sure the crowd did, too. The silence was deafening. When he heard the singing of some distant robins in flight, he knew it was his time to fly.

As he began sprinting down the runway, something felt wonderfully different, yet familiar. The surface below him felt like the country road he used to dream about. The rocks and chunks of dirt, the visions of the golden wheat fields seemed to fill his thoughts.



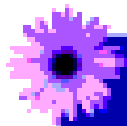
When he took a deep breath, it happened. He began to fly. His take-off was effortless. Michael Stone was flying, just as in his childhood dreams. Only this time he knew he wasn't dreaming. This was real. Everything seemed to be moving in slow motion. The air around him was the purest and freshest he had ever sensed. Michael was soaring with the majesty of an eagle.

It was either the eruption of the people in the stands or the thump of his landing that brought Michael back to earth. On his back with that wonderful hot sun on his face, he could only envision the smile on his mother's face. He knew his dad was probably smiling too, even laughing. Bert would always do that when he got excited, smile and then sort of giggle. What he didn't know was that his dad was hugging his wife and crying. He was crying harder than Mildred had ever seen before. She also knew he was crying the greatest tears of all: tears of pride.

Michael was immediately swarmed with people hugging and congratulating him on the greatest accomplishment of his life. He later went on that day to clear 17 feet 6½ inches – a National and International Junior Olympics record.

With all the media attention and heartfelt congratulations, Michael's life would never be the same. It wasn't just because he won the National Junior Olympics and set a new world record. And it wasn't because he had just increased his personal best by 9½ inches. It was simply because. . . Michael Stone was blind.

*- David Naster*



## Glossary

astroturf ( <i>n</i> )	: a type of artificial grass surface used especially for sports grounds
pole vault ( <i>n</i> )	: a sport in which you use a long pole to swing over a high barrier
a bird's-eye view ( <i>n.phr</i> )	: view of all the aspects of something
hard-core ( <i>adj</i> )	: strong
motto ( <i>n</i> )	: a saying that expresses aims and beliefs of a person
regimented ( <i>adj</i> )	: strict and organized
obsession ( <i>n</i> )	: a state in which a person's mind is completely filled with a thought of one particular thing / person
oblivious ( <i>adj</i> )	: not aware of something / unaware
ritual ( <i>n</i> )	: any customary observance or practice
finger-tipped ( <i>adj</i> )	: the tips of fingers touching the ground
envision ( <i>v</i> )	: have a vision of somebody or something
runway ( <i>n</i> )	: (here) running track
sprinting down ( <i>v</i> )	: running at a very fast speed
swarmed with ( <i>v</i> )	: surrounded by

### Answer the following questions.

1. What was Michael Stone's dream?
2. What impact did the mother's stories have on Michael?
3. How did Michael prepare himself to become an Olympic champion?
4. Michael's mother and father had different ideas about training. How did these two approaches help Michael fulfil his dream?
5. What was so special about Michael's achievement?



# Vocabulary

## Synonyms

Use a thesaurus / dictionary to find out synonyms of these words from the biographical account you have read.

Word	Synonyms
quench	
glamour	
passion	
persistence	
arrogant	
pounding	

## Suffixes

Look at the following words taken from the passage:

competition, excitement, persistence, immediately, wonderful, effortless, childhood, national, intensity.

Now, pick out the suffix from each word and form new words of your own in the table given below. One is done for you.

Word	Suffix	New Word
competition	-ion	completion

## Collocations

A collocation is an arrangement of words or other elements, especially those that commonly co-occur.

e.g. *heart-felt congratulation.*

**There are certain word combinations.**

- Adjective+ Noun e.g. bright/harsh/intense/strong light
- Verb+ Noun e.g. cast/ emit/give/provide/shed light
- Noun+ Verb e.g. light gleams/glows/shines
- Noun + Noun e.g. a light source
- Preposition+ Noun e.g. by the light of the moon
- Noun+ Preposition e.g. the light from the window
- Quantifier+ Noun e.g. (of) a beam / ray of light

Use a dictionary and write which word in column 1 can collocate with those in the next five columns. Put a tick ( ✓ ) mark in the relevant column. Use the apt collocations in your own sentences.

word	sympathy	opinion	welcome	congratulations	dream
heart-felt					
deep					
childhood					
express					
strong					
warm					



**Look at the following sentences taken from the reading passage:**

1. As he raced down the golden-lined wheat fields, he would always outrun the locomotives passing by.



2. When he heard the singing in some distant robins in flight, he knew it was his time to fly.

3. Since the other vaulter had fewer misses, Michel needed to clear this vault to win.

In the above sentences the clauses with *as* and *when* denote time whereas *since* denotes reason. **As** and **when** refer to time and the other parts state what happened at that time. In the third sentence, the clause beginning with **since** states the reason and the other states the consequence.

The words **as**, **when**, **since** are conjunctions, which connect two sentences (clauses). The clauses containing these words are called **Adverbial clauses**. These adverbial clauses cannot stand independently, so they are called **Dependent clauses** or **Subordinate clauses**. The clause that stands on its own is an **Independent clause** or **Main clause**.

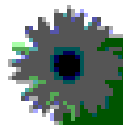
The linkers *as*, *when* and *since* (Adverbs) are placed before the clauses to make them Subordinate clause.

**Now, read the biographical account once again and pick out the Adverbial clauses and Main clauses and write them in the table or in your notebook.**

Sentence from the text	Adverbial / Dependent Clause	Main / Independent Clause

**Complete the following sentences with appropriate Adverbial clauses. Use the adverbs wherever they are given in brackets.**

- The teacher entered the class, \_\_\_\_\_.
- The dog ran into a speeding car, \_\_\_\_\_.
- I was in deep sleep, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Someone knocked at the door, \_\_\_\_\_.
- The crowd cheered Michael Stone, \_\_\_\_\_ . (*as soon as*)
- It is high time the cricket board thought of different alternatives, \_\_\_\_ . (*as*)



## Writing

**You have read the biography of Michael Stone. Think of some world-famous sporting personalities from India. Collect information about any one of them and write a biographical sketch.**

You may include the following.

1. Date and place of birth
2. Information about the family
3. Achievements of the person: awards, prizes, honours etc.
4. Important events in the life of the person: education, marriage, profession etc.
5. Inspiration to others / message to the society
6. Contribution to his/her field and society

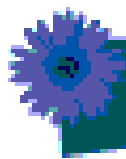


## Study Skills

**You have finished reading the text “True Height”. Write the summary of the story in your own words.**

Use the following ideas to complete your summary effectively.

- Make a note of the important points in the text and the supporting details.
- Sequence of the events.
- Identify the words/ phrases which carry ideas.
- Use appropriate linkers.
- Focus on the words/ phrases that express the essence of the text.
- Present the ideas briefly in your own words.
- Do not include examples in the summary.



## Listening

Listen to the commentary on a cricket match and answer the questions.

### I. Tick ( ✓ ) only the correct ones from the statements given below.

1. Sachin and Gambhir opened the Indian innings. (    )
2. Umar Gul opened the Pakistan's attack. (    )
3. Laxman is one among the Indian squad. (    )
4. Gul bowled out Gambhir. (    )
5. India is 14 without loss after the first over. (    )

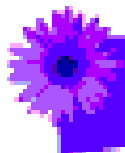
### II. Answer the following questions.

- \*1. Which two world teams of cricket do you like? Why?
2. Who are the openers?
3. Who are the commentators?

### III. Complete the Score Board given below:

#### India Vs Pakistan

Name of the batsman	Runs scored	No. of balls faced	Fours	Sixes
1. Sehwag				
2. Gambhir				
Extras		No. of overs bowled		
Total		No. of wickets lost		



## Oral Activity

Imagine, you were listening to the commentary, your father came there and reminded you of the ensuing examinations. He said, "Listening to cricket commentary is a waste of time."

Now develop a conversation between you and your father.

## What Is a Player?

A player is one, who doesn't give up at the sight of defeat,

But learns from their mistakes and puts them beneath.

A player is one who doesn't give up at the sound of the buzzer,

Always giving what they have from one side of the court to the other.

A player is one who doesn't whine about their play time,

Because a player knows it's an unacceptable crime.

A player is one who practises game-speed,

Always keeping in mind that their shots are not guaranteed.

A player is one who doesn't settle for anything less,

Even knowing, that they're not the best.

They will be the ones you see outside practising,

Day or night, rain or shine,

They are the ones running on hurt ankles, admitting they're fine.

A player is one, who has a strong, sensible mind,

Never pondering about failing, only contemplating prevailing.

A player is one who doesn't chicken out,

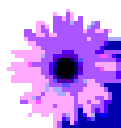
Who wants to be in the game when everything counts

Now, that is a true player.

*- Jessica Taylor*

## About the poet

**Jessica Taylor** was born in Louisiana. She is a young poetess. She has developed her love for music and poetry at an early age. Most of her poems have focussed on emotional issues with an emotional touch. “*Loneliness*”, “*I Miss You*”, “*I Hate*”, and “*I Am Worried*” are some of her popular poems.



## Glossary

give up ( <i>phr.v</i> )	:	leave
whine ( <i>v</i> )	:	complain
pondering ( <i>v</i> )	:	thinking about something carefully for a period of time
contemplating ( <i>v</i> )	:	considering about
chicken out ( <i>phr.v</i> )	:	to decide not to do something because of fear

### Answer the following questions.

1. What are the qualities that a true player should have?
2. What according to the poet is an unacceptable crime of a player?
- \*3. Which game do you like the most? What are the qualities of a player stated in the poem? Which of them do you have?
4. The poet talks about certain Do's and Don'ts for a true player. List them out in the following table. One is done for you.

Do's	Don'ts
regular practice	give up at the sight of defeat

## V.V.S. Laxman, Very Very Special

*'Treat success and failure on the same wavelength'*

*"Success and failure are parts of anybody's life. The key is self-belief and performing consistently in tough conditions," V.V.S. Laxman tells V. V. Subrahmanyam.*

*One of the finest players in contemporary cricket has called it a day. For someone who delighted cricket lovers with his brilliance with the willow for 16 long years in Test cricket, Vangipurapu Venkata Sai Laxman announced his retirement at a crowded media conference in Hyderabad, ahead of the two-test series against New Zealand.*

*The 37-year-old star batsman, who was part of the fabulous batting line-up which helped India become the No.1 Test team, shares his experiences and thoughts in an exclusive interview with Sportstar.*



**Sportstar:** When you look back, how has the journey been in the world of cricket?

**V.V.S.Laxman:** It has been wonderful. I was lucky that the Hyderabad Cricket Association promoted me and Zaki (Syed Moinuddin Zaki) from the under-16 level itself. They made us play in the under-19 grade the same year. It was a huge leap for us and very encouraging. Fortunately, by 18, I was on the verge of playing for Hyderabad in the Ranji Trophy.

Honestly, I feel that all the hard work and commitment I put in from the start of my career have culminated in 16 long years of international cricket. It has been an immensely satisfying feeling to have contributed to Indian cricket in my own way.

**SS :** Who has been the biggest influence on you?

**VVS:** My parents (Dr. V. Shantaram and Dr. V. Satyabhama), no doubt about that. Especially, given the fact that sports was never an integral part of our family. But, the guiding philosophy which they taught was handling success and failure with equal ease.

**SS :** What did the sport teach you?

**VVS:** Character. To treat success and failure on the same wavelength. It also taught me to be very balanced and obviously whatever I am today is because of cricket.

**SS :** What was the most difficult phase of your career?

**VVS:** It was when I had to prefer cricket to academics. That was the toughest moment of my life. Though there was always the dream to play for my country, I also had a natural desire to be a doctor, coming from a family of doctors. Luckily, my father gave me the complete freedom to choose any one of the two. Here the role of my uncle Baba Mohan was very crucial along with some of the coaches then.

**SS :** Do you believe that it will be difficult for the modern-day young talent to make it as big as you did? Have things changed a lot in this regard?

**VVS:** Frankly, now-a-days it is more easy to perform and be recognised because of the media glare. There are many platforms for real talent to come good and the IPL is one such which pushes you into national reckoning. If you perform you are bound to get recognized.

**SS :** From where did you draw the strength to emerge as a giant every time there was an effort to dwarf your achievements?

**VVS:** My parents and my entire family again. They, along with my well-wishers, were always the source of inspiration. The best part is that they never changed irrespective of whether I was performing or not.

**SS :** What were your biggest moments as a cricketer?

**VVS:** There were many. But some stand out. Though I never played the World Cup that saw India as the No.1 team, being a member of the Indian team which was the world No.1 in Test cricket was one of them. The 281 against the Aussies in Kolkata in 2001 was another. That Test remains the most memorable match for me. In fact, that Test series was very special for all the players for it was also the best and the most memorable series. That series gave us the confidence that we can be the best. Clearly, that was the turning point of Indian cricket itself.





**SS :** When you look back, what were the reasons for India becoming the No. 1 side?

**VVS :** It is important to remember that it was not a sudden transformation which had come in one year. It all started in early 2000 when Sourav (Ganguly) became the captain. I feel lucky to have played under Sourav, my first captain Sachin and M.S (Dhoni). They all led by example. Everyone was a true performer and all of them had traits of leadership.

**SS :** How different was Sourav Ganguly as a captain?

**VVS :** I must say that the combination of Sourav and Coach John Wright was influential in changing the mindset of Indian cricket itself. For, it was then that we started doing well consistently, especially abroad. And we had some amazingly talented individuals with the hunger for success, who played with great pride, worked really hard and showed great commitment levels.

**SS :** What has been your funniest incident on the field?

**VVS :** Well (with a big smile), when I and Sourav collided while taking a single in an Oval ODI. It is still amusing and embarrassing, when I look back as to how it could have happened.

**SS :** What was the most disappointing moment for you?

**VVS :** There was nothing like that. But, I would feel terribly disgusted whenever I dropped a catch. I would feel sorry for the bowler who puts in such a great effort and the chance is floored! That hurt me the most.

**SS :** What are your hobbies?

**VVS :** I love to spend time with my family members. It gives you so much of peace. I do love reading biographies of successful individuals. For, they help us know how they handled different aspects in life and in sport.



**SS :** You are a complete family man now. Outside you are a celebrity and at home a normal caring father...

**VVS:** I am lucky to have such a wonderful well-knit family with a wonderful wife. And it's a great feeling to see the kids grow up so fast. It's a real joy to be with them.

**SS :** Who are the cricketers whom you admire?

**VVS:** In my early days, Azhar. Well, Sachin is such a role model in every aspect. Kapil was a great inspiration too.

**SS :** What is your favourite cuisine?

**VVS:** I am vegetarian. I love to taste all sorts of dishes. Thai cuisines are my favourite.

**SS :** What kind of music do you normally listen to and who are your favourite singers?

**VVS:** India has been very fortunate to have seen so many great musicians and singers. And, I love listening to Kishore Kumar and our own S. P. Balasubrahmanyam, with whom I fortunately enjoy a special, personal relationship.

**SS :** Which TV programme do you love to watch?

**VVS:** Generally I don't miss any big sporting events and Wimbledon is one such that I love to watch without fail. And, with the family members I do enjoy watching the singing and dancing competition programmes. I am amazed at the talent actually.

**SS :** Who was your childhood hero?

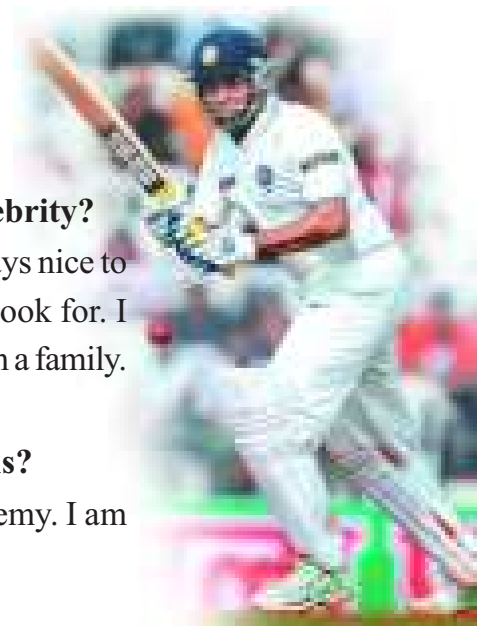
**VVS:** Childhood and current hero -- it is my dad.  
I owe everything to him.

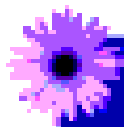
**SS :** What is that you miss by being a cricketing celebrity?

**VVS:** I never thought of myself as a big cricketer. It is always nice to be with my family. My wife has all the qualities I look for. I have two wonderful kids and I am blessed to have such a family.

**SS :** Have you given thought to post-retirement plans?

**VVS:** Well, I have a dream to set up a school and an academy. I am confident of realising this big dream.





## Glossary

call it a day ( <i>idm</i> )	:	decide or agree to stop doing something, temporarily or permanently
on the verge of ( <i>idm</i> )	:	close to the point where something new begins
immensely ( <i>adv</i> )	:	great extent or extremely
integral ( <i>adj</i> )	:	essential
glare ( <i>n</i> )	:	a focus of public attention
reckoning ( <i>n</i> )	:	recognition / calculation
mindset ( <i>n</i> )	:	attitude / way of thinking
commitment ( <i>n</i> )	:	assurance/ dedication
collide ( <i>v</i> )	:	crash
embarrassing ( <i>adj</i> )	:	uncomfortable
cuisine ( <i>n</i> )	:	a style of cooking; food cooked in a certain style

### Answer the following questions.

1. What is Laxman's philosophy of life as per the interview you have read?
2. What role did Laxman play in making India, No. 1 test cricket team?

**On basis of your reading of V.V.S. Laxman's interview with Sportstar magazine complete the following table.**

Sl. No.	Events / incidents in his life	Your responses
1.	Home ground	
2.	Teams he represented	
3.	Levels he played at	
4.	People who influenced him	
5.	Things he likes /hobbies	
6.	Memorable events	
7.	His message	



## Writing

Write personal views and reflections on V.V.S. Laxman in a paragraph of about 75 – 100 words.

Discuss the following questions in groups before writing the paragraph individually.

- What is the main idea that you wish to project?
- What are the supporting ideas that you think of?
- How do you organize your ideas?
- How do you link your thoughts?
- How do you conclude?



## Project Work

**Collect the information from newspapers, magazines, periodicals and books about two famous Indian sportswomen and prepare their profiles.**

**Fill the details of the following information and you may use them as tips for profile writing and speaking.**

Name	
Date of Birth	
Height	
State / Team they represent	
Sports / Game they are associated with	
Debut (first entry)	
Best in the career	
Hobbies	
Awards / Medals received	

**Talk about one profile in the class.**

## Self Assessment

How well have I understood this unit?

Read and tick (✓) in the appropriate box.

Indicators	Yes	Somewhat	No
I read and understood the text:			
A. True Height.			
B. What Is a Player?			
C. V.V.S. Laxman, Very Very Special.			
I was able to do the exercises given under 'Vocabulary'.			
I was able to identify and use 'the main clause and the subordinate clause' in a sentence given under 'Grammar'.			
I was able to write a biographical sketch.			
I listened to and understood the cricket commentary and answered the questions.			
I was able to develop an oral conversation.			
I was able to write my personal views and reflections on V.V.S. Laxman in a paragraph.			
I was able to prepare the profiles of two famous Indian sports women under 'Project Work'.			

### SHRINKING WORDS (Language Game)

The object of this game is to make each word shorter by taking away one letter at a time (keeping the remaining letters in their original order) to form a new word. Do this as many times as you can, each time forming a new word as a letter is deleted.

**Example:** FORUM, FORM, FOR, OR.

1. PLATE.

8. PAINT.

2. STAND.

9. BOUNCE.

3. WAIST.

10. BOARD.

4. STOOP.

11. BEREFT

5. SNORE.

12. FRIEND

6. CHASTE.

13. SHINGLE

7. THINK.

14. DINNER