

## Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes

written by Patty Cisneros Prevo  
illustrated by Dion MBD

### About the Book

**Genre:** Nonfiction

**Format:** Hardcover  
40 pages, 11 x 9-1/4

**ISBN:** 9781643790985

**Reading Level:** Grade 6

**Interest Level:** Grades K-8

**Guided Reading Level:** X

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:**  
N/A

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

\*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

**Themes:** Disability, Diversity, Dreams & Aspirations, Identity/Self Esteem/Confidence, Nonfiction, Optimism/Enthusiasm, People In Motion, Persistence/Grit, Sports, Sports History

**Resources on the web:**

[leeandlow.com/books/tenacious](http://leeandlow.com/books/tenacious)

### SYNOPSIS

***Meet fifteen remarkable athletes who use adaptive equipment in this beautiful and truth-telling picture book.***

A downhill skier whose blindness has sharpened her communication skills. An adaptive surfer who shreds waves while sitting down. A young man who excels at wheelchair motocross--but struggles with math. *Tenacious* tells their stories and more, revealing the daily joys and challenges of life as disabled athletes.

These competitors have won gold medals, set world records, climbed mountain peaks, claimed national championships, and many more extraordinary achievements. Get to know them in *Tenacious!*

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

## BACKGROUND

### Author's Note from Patty Cisneros Prevo

At age eighteen I became a part of the wonderful community of disabled people. As a freshman at Indiana University, I was involved in a car accident resulting in a spinal cord injury. During rehab, my physical therapist introduced me to wheelchair basketball, and as an avid athlete, I was hooked. It was so much more than a sport. It was therapeutic emotionally, mentally, and physically. I was surrounded by individuals who had goals and dreams. As a young disabled adult, that's what I needed in order to push forward. I went on to compete at the 2000, 2004, and 2008 Paralympic Games and win back-to-back gold medals—one as captain at the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games.

When I began writing *Tenacious*, I wanted to showcase the rich diversity in the adaptive sports world. And luckily, through the power of sport and community, I consider all the featured athletes in this book to be close friends. They each graciously made themselves available to be interviewed and answered all my questions. I am grateful to know and share their stories. All fifteen of these individuals agree that their own tenacious journey toward a full, meaningful life began with the support of family, friends, and the vast, encouraging community of disabled people. If you or someone you know has acquired a disability and needs support—whether disability-related or sport-related—please visit the resources listed here or on my website, [pattycisnerosprevo.com](https://pattycisnerosprevo.com).

**Daily Challenge:** As a disabled athlete, I have often engaged in and perpetuated ableist language and culture. The activist Talila “TL” Lewis defines ableism as “a system of assigning value to people’s bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normalcy, productivity, desirability, intelligence, excellence, and fitness.” Simply put, ableism is a system of oppression that discriminates or is prejudiced against disabled people. One of the most common and harmful tropes of ableist culture is the “supercrip” trope. Disabled people are portrayed as somehow “overcoming” or “fixing” their disability through some superhuman effort or other ability, and not because we are driven, passionate, and tenacious people. I am constantly challenged to recognize my own internalized ableism and learn how to become a better disability advocate.

**Daily Joy:** Spending as much free time as I can with my two amazing kids, Elliana and Elliot.

### Preferred Language in this Book

As an advocate in this space who continues to learn more about the disability justice movement, I prefer using identity-first language versus person-first language. Identity-first language puts the disability before the person, like “disabled girl.” Person-first language puts the person before the disability, like “girl with a disability.” As the author of *Tenacious*, it was a personal decision to mostly use identity-first language. It is important to note, however, that it is always best to allow and ask individuals how they prefer to identify.

Here are some other terms to consider while discussing this book:

Instead of *disAbled*, *differently abled*, *physically challenged* . . . Use **disabled** or **disability**.

*Disabled* and *disability* are not bad words. Having a disability or being disabled is a culture and identity.

*I am disabled. I have a disability.*

Instead of *handicapped* . . . **Use accessible.**

Language is constantly changing, and *handicapped* is outdated.

*They are parked in an accessible parking spot. She is using the accessible bathroom stall.*

Instead of *use your voice* . . . **Use platform.**

Not everyone has spoken language.

*The activist used his platform.*

Instead of *wheelchair-bound* . . . Use **wheelchair user.**

Disabled people can move in and out of their wheelchairs. They are not stuck to them.

*The kid is a wheelchair user.*

Instead of *special needs* . . . Use **needs.**

We all have needs. Disabled people have needs, and their needs are not special because the person is disabled.

*The student was given extra time for the test to better meet her needs.*

### Resources

Accessibility in the National Parks

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/accessibility.htm>

Americans with Disabilities Act

<https://www.ada.gov>

Association of Adaptive Surfing Professionals

<https://adaptivesurfingprofessionals.com/>

CrossFit Games Adaptive Divisions 2022

<https://games.crossfit.com/article/2022-crossfit-games-seasonadaptive-divisions/games>

International Paralympic Committee

<https://www.paralympic.org>

Move United

<https://moveunitedsport.org/>

National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA)

<https://www.nwba.org/>

National Wheelchair Softball Association (NWSA)

<https://www.wheelchairsoftball.org/>

Operation Comfort

<https://operationcomfort.org/>

US Department of Veterans Affairs

<https://www.va.gov>

US Paralympics

<https://www.teamusa.org/Team-USA-Athlete-Services/Paralympic-Sport-Development>

US Tennis Association (USTA) Wheelchair Tennis

<https://www.usta.com/en/home/play/adult-tennis/programs/national/about-wheelchair-tennis.html>

Wheelchair Motocross (WCMX) International

<https://wcmxinternational.com/>

### Glossary

Refer to the Glossary at the back of the book to learn more about the specific words and vocabulary defined in *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.

### A Timeline of the Paralympics

1944: Near the end of World War II, Dr. Ludwig Guttmann opened a spinal injuries center at the Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Great Britain for returning war veterans and civilians. He provided sports as a way of mental, physical, and social rehab for wheelchair patients.

1948: During the London Olympic Games, Dr. Guttmann organized an archery competition in which wheelchair athletes—fourteen men and two women—competed as the first Paralympians. This event was named the Stoke Mandeville Games and was meant to coincide with the Olympic Games.

1952: The Stoke Mandeville Games became an international competition when the Netherlands sent athletes to compete.

1960: The Stoke Mandeville Games officially became the first Paralympic Games in Rome, Italy. There were four hundred athletes from twenty-three countries. The Paralympic Games were then held every four years like the Olympics.

1976: Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, hosted the first Winter Paralympic Games. There were 198 athletes from sixteen countries.

1988: The Summer Paralympic Games were held for the first time in the same city—Seoul, South Korea—using the same venues as the Summer Olympic Games.

1989: The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) was founded. The IPC and the International Olympic Committee agreed to have the Paralympic Games take place in the same cities and venues as the Olympic Games.

1992: The Winter Paralympic Games were held for the first time in the same city—Albertville, France—using the same venues as the Winter Olympic Games.

The Paralympic Games have certainly grown! Most recently, the 2020 Summer Paralympic Games—which were postponed to 2021 due to the global pandemic—welcomed around 4400 athletes from 162 national Paralympic committees and held 539 medal events in Tokyo, Japan. The 2022 Winter Paralympic Games, hosted in Beijing, China, featured around 564 athletes from 46 national Paralympic committees and held 78 medal events.

### Bibliography

Disability and Philanthropy Forum. "What Is Disability Justice?" Accessed October 5, 2022. <https://disabilityphilanthropy.org/resource/what-is-disability-justice/>

Inside the Games. "The History of the Paralympic Movement." Accessed October 5, 2022. <https://www.insidethegames.biz/articles/1010776/the-history-of-the-paralympic-movement>

International Paralympic Committee. "Paralympics History." Accessed October 5, 2022. <https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/history>

Lewis, Talila A. "Working Definition of Ableism: January 2022 Update." January 1, 2022. <https://www.talilalewis.com/blog/working-definition-of-ableism-january-2022-update>

PBS. "About the Paralympics: Paralympic History." Accessed October 5, 2022. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/medal-quest/past-games/>

Toole, Tucker C. "How the Paralympic Movement Evolved into a Major Sporting Event." National Geographic, September 2, 2021. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/how-the-paralympic-movement-evolved-into-major-sporting-event>

Treisman, Rachel. "When Did the Paralympics Start? Here's a Brief History of the Games." NPR, August 25, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/08/25/1030629549/paralympics-history-name-meaning>

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

- Who are your favorite athletes? Do you have a favorite athlete? What sport do they play? Why do you like this athlete?
- What are sports or activities that are meaningful to you? How do you practice? What does it mean to work on that sport or activity? How do you improve, and what do you do to get better?
- What does it mean to be persistent? How do you demonstrate persistence even though something may be challenging? Why is it important to be persistent? Do you think persistence can be learned? How so?
- How do you show determination? What does it mean to be determined? Have you ever been determined to do something? What did you do?
- Why is important to practice something? Whether you play an instrument, sport, or are learning how to do something, how does practice help you improve?
- What does it mean to be passionate about something? Do you have passion for a specific hobby, sport, or other activity? How does doing that thing make you feel? Why do you think passion is important in life?
- How does someone make a difference? What do you think making a difference means? What do you think it means to use a "platform" to discuss important topics?
- Who are you inspired by? Are there people in your life that you look up to? What about athletes or other public figures? Why do they inspire you? Note to Teachers: Since "inspire" is often used patronizingly within the disabled community, be sure to define the word inspire and ensure students are using it correctly when talking about disability and/or disabled individuals.
- Was there a time when you took a chance on something? What did you do? What was the result? Was it worth taking a chance? How are taking chances important in your life?
- What famous athletes do you know who are disabled? What sport do they play? If you don't know of many disabled athletes, where can you find out more information about athletes who are disabled? What do you know about adaptive sports? Why is it important to learn about disabled athletes and people?
- What do you know about the Paralympic Games? Have you watched the Paralympic Games? What kinds of events are in the Paralympic Games?

## Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- **Read Patty Cisnero Prevo's Biography:** Read about Patty Cisneros Prevo on the jacket back flap as well as on her website (<https://pattycisnerosprevo.com/>). Where do you think Patty Cisneros Prevo got the idea for this book? How do you think she gets inspired to write?
- **Read Dion MBD's Biography:** Read about Dion MBD on the jacket back flap as well as on his website (<https://www.dionmbd.com/>). How do you think Dion MBD created the illustrations for this book? What other books has he illustrated?
- Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the read-aloud when they: learn new information, see a powerful image, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or hear new words.
- Have students quickly write a feeling in their notebooks during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote down that feeling and have them write a journal entry about it.

## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what adaptive sports are featured in the book
- what sports the 15 different disabled athletes play
- what awards and accolades the 15 disabled athletes have won in their sport
- how the athletes demonstrate determination and passion for their sports
- how their sports make the athletes feel
- why each athlete's daily challenges and joys are highlighted on each spread
- why it's important to learn and read about disabled people and athletes and their accomplishments

Encourage students to consider why the author, Patty Cisneros Prevo, would want to share this story with young people.

## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Many words can be found in the glossary at the end of the book, but there are also some that are not included. Students could be encouraged to create a log of these words—they will not be listed here.

### Content Specific

spastic diplegia cerebral palsy, physical therapy, adaptive, tap, hip-hop, ballet, NCAA, All-American honors, long jump, high hurdles, 4 x 400-meter relay, Olympic, hurdles, hyperextended, artery, reconstruction, disease, amputation, rehabilitation, prosthetic Paralympic Games, Team USA, retinitis pigmentosa, visual impairments, Vision4Gold, multiple sclerosis, alpine skiing, *Dancing with the Stars*, spina bifida, wheelchair basketball, National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA), MVP, recreational therapist, aerodynamic, stroke, Brown University, osteoarthritis, able-bodied, CrossFit, osteogenesis imperfecta, grassroots programs, National Wheelchair Softball Association, spinal cord, paralyzed, quadriplegic, wheelchair rugby, road cycling, recumbent handcycle, ESPN ESPY, IED, rehab, sled hockey, Cayambe, Cotopaxi, Ecuador, Western Samoa, Pacific Ocean, adaptive surfing, waveski, US Open Adaptive Surfing Championships, transverse myelitis, Haiti, wheelchair motorcross (WCMX)

### Academic

passion, enrolled, determination, navigating, overcome, universal, inspiration, blindness, gestures, nonverbal, unconditionally, matured, dominant, parenting, self-doubting, regardless, paralyzed, towered, severe, brittle, longevity, facilitated, empowering, dabbled, onlookers, mobility, unbreakable, traverse, elevated, adversity, blockade, venture, sustained, transitioned, billboard, headlining



## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

For each spread, ask students the following questions:

1. What athlete is featured on this spread?
2. What sport does the athlete play?
3. What accomplishments and accolades does the athlete have?
4. What events has the athlete competed in?
5. What is the athlete's disability?
6. What are the athlete's daily challenges?
7. What are the athlete's daily joys?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes* to you after reading the book? Why do you think the author chose this specific title?
2. Why is it important that athletes of all abilities are included in sports? How do these fifteen athletes demonstrate the power of adaptive sports?
3. What did you learn from the fifteen athletes' daily challenges and daily joys? Why do you think the author chose to include this feature in the text? What did you learn about all of the different athletes?
4. How do the different adaptive sports make the athletes powerful and empowered? How are their sports important to them?
5. What did you notice about the common themes amongst the fifteen different athletes? What did the athletes have in common? How did they differ?
6. How does each athlete represent a unique journey in adaptive sports? What adaptive sports did you know about prior to reading this book? What adaptive sports did you learn about?
7. If students are a part of or know about adaptive sports communities, what did they connect with from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*?

8. If students do not know about adaptive sports communities, what did they learn from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*?
9. How is this book different from other books that you've read featuring disabled people and/or athletes? What makes it stand out from other books about disabled people and/or athletes?
10. Explore the structure of this text. Does the story describe events chronologically, as comparison, as cause-and-effect, or as problems and solutions? Why do you think the authors structured the text the way they did? How does this story compare to other texts you have read?

### Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. What is one big thought you have after reading this book? Think about the fifteen different athletes featured in the text and their lives. What is your takeaway from the book? What would you tell a friend about the book?
2. What do you think is Patty Cisnero Prevo's message to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind Patty's intentions for creating this book. What do you think she wanted to tell her readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kinds of connections did you make from this book to your own life?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make between this book and what you have seen in the world, such as online, on television, or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?
6. What do adaptive sports mean to students after reading? After reading *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*, how did your perspectives change about what it means to play an adaptive sport?
7. What does community mean to you after reading this book? Why is it important to have a community that loves and supports you? How do the athletes discuss their adaptive sports and family communities in the book?
8. Why is it essential to learn about disabled athletes and people? What did you learn from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*? How can you continue to connect with or learn from disabled people and/or athletes?

## ELL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading: 1) Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing. 2) Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about one of the athletes featured in the book and what they learned from that athlete.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

## Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. What kinds of emotions and feelings do the athletes experience during their lives? How do they feel when they are playing their sport? What kinds of feelings do they mention during their daily challenges? Their daily joys?
2. Why do you think it's important to not look down on or treat disabled people and athletes differently from nondisabled people?
3. How does *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes* present the themes of determination, persistence, and resiliency? How are those elements integral to the different athletes' lives? How do you show determination, persistence, and resiliency in your own life?

4. Discuss how this book might change students' perspectives on adaptive sports and disabilities. If students are disabled, what did they enjoy about or connect with when reading this book? If students are not disabled, how did their viewpoints change on how to discuss disabilities or adaptive sports?
5. How are the athletes' families and friends critical to their success as an athlete? How do the athletes talk about support from their families and friends? How do your family and friends support you in your daily life?
6. Why do you think it's important that the author chose to include "Daily Challenges" and "Daily Joys" for each athlete? What did you learn from these sections that you didn't gather from the rest of the text?
7. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, fear, anxiety, frustration, hope, perseverance, and so on. Illustrate or act out what that emotion looks like in *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Before engaging with the activities in this book, have students explore the "Preferred Language in this Book" section in the back of the book.** What did they learn from this section about language to use regarding disabilities and disabled people? If students are disabled, how did they feel about this section? Did they connect with or appreciate any of the language or terminology? If students are not disabled, what did they learn about appropriate language to use to address disabled people? Display the "Preferred Language in this Book" on chart paper or enlarged poster board for students to refer to throughout the activities and year-round.
- **Have students read other Lee & Low nonfiction titles featuring disabled athletes, including *Silent Star: The Story of Deaf Major Leaguer William Hoy* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/silent-star>) and *Knockin' on Wood: Starring Peg Leg Bates* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/knockin-on-wood>).** Have students discuss the following questions after reading the three titles, including *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled*

*Athletes*: what do the athletes have in common? How did they work to achieve their goals? How do William Hoy and Clayton Bates celebrate their daily joys and challenges, like the athletes featured in *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*? What are their goals and aspirations? How are their disabilities represented in each book? Students can share out what they connected with and learned from the three books and share their thoughts in an analytical essay.

- **Encourage students to select a quote that resonated with them the most from one the athletes featured in the text.** Why did students select that quote? What did this quote make them think about? How did it make them feel? How did it help them to learn about that particular athlete's life? Students can share their thoughts with a partner or small group, and then record their reactions to the quote in an essay.
- **Ask students to read through the text as well as the Backmatter of *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes* and to then create an informational poster about an athlete of their choosing featured in the book.** Students should refer to the Author's Note, the timeline of the Paralympic Games, and the Resources and Bibliography sections of the Backmatter. Using information from the book and additional research, students can create posters using photographs, facts, diagrams, and informative captions. What do they want to share about this athlete? What are this athlete's accomplishments and accolades? What are their goals and what do they hope to do for their adaptive sports community? How have they made a difference in the adaptive sports world? Students can share their posters with small groups, the whole class, or the school at large.
- **As a follow-up activity, have students conduct a project on a disabled athlete that was not featured in *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.** Resources that students can consult include Bleacher Report's "12 Incredible Athletes with Disabilities" (<https://bleacherreport.com/articles/1743213-12-incredible-athletes-with-disabilities>) and Paralympics' New Zealand "Who are the most famous Paralympians?" (<https://paralympics.org.nz/news/blog-who-are-the-most-famous-paralympians/>) to start their research. Students should consult the same questions from the previous activity, such as what sport does the athlete play, what accomplishments they've achieved in their sport, how they've made a difference in the Paralympic community, and how they've made a difference in the adaptive sports world at large. Students can create informational posters with their findings and discuss why they chose this specific athlete to learn about and highlight.
- **The book has a poetic main idea sentence featured on the art and narrative prose in a separate section of each spread. How is each of these an example of nonfiction writing?** Which type of writing do you think is more effective in explaining complex information? Which is more enjoyable to read? Which type helps a reader retain information better? Why do you think the author, Patty Cisneros Prevo, chose to employ several nonfiction writing styles to present the fifteen disabled athletes featured in *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*?
- **How was reading a picture book different from reading a newspaper article about the Paralympic Games?** Have students read the article "When did the Paralympics Start? A Brief History of the Games" (<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/25/1030629549/paralympics->

**history-name-meaning**). After reading, students can create a Venn Diagram with the headings "Picture Book Nonfiction: Tenacious" and "Expository Nonfiction: 'When did the Paralympics Game Start? A Brief History of the Games.'" Students can compare the different formats of the texts and the information they learned in each. How are picture books helpful to digest information? How are they different from reading newspaper articles, and vice versa? How can picture books be helpful for older readers to retain information?

- **Come up with questions to interview the author, Patty Cisneros Prevo.** What was her process behind creating *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*? What was her inspiration for featuring the stories of these particular fifteen athletes? How did being a disabled athlete influence her writing this book? Read the Author's Note from Patty Cisneros Prevo with students and have them discuss what they learned and how it made them think about the book differently. Why do you think she created this book for young readers? What does she want to tell the world about disabled athletes, people, and adaptive sports communities? How does she think this book will make a difference? Consider reaching out to Patty Cisneros Prevo for a virtual author visit (<https://pattycisnerosprevo.com/>).
- **Watch Patty Cisneros Prevo's video about her disability and Paralympic experience** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DK3Z0YaqfJo>). What did they learn from Patty's talk that they didn't gather from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*? How does Patty discuss her disability? What was her Paralympic Games experience like? What does she want people to know about disabled people and athletes? What did students connect with, or learn from, her talk? Students can write about their reflections in an essay and share their thoughts with a partner, small group, or whole class.
- **Conduct an audit of all the titles featuring disabled characters in their classroom library.** Students can work in small groups to analyze the texts in their classroom. Students can answer the following questions: in what time period does this story take place? Who is featured in this story? Whose story is being told? Who is the author and what is their background? Who is being centered in the story? What disability does the character or characters have? How is their disability discussed? What kind of language do they use around the disability? Afterward, students can reflect on their findings. What voices were being centered the most? What was it like to do this activity? If more titles centering disabled characters are needed in their library, what can they do to add more books? The Free Wheelchair Mission has a list, "19 Books about Disability to Read with Your Family" ([https://www.freewheelchairmission.org/blog-post/books-disability/?gclid=CjwKCAjwjMiiBhA4EiwAZe6jQ9kGe9Z4TDxRqO4AcZUh9L\\_0-zzIPaeJ5nKo1KPLud6rdqDrq2ijzhoChyMQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.freewheelchairmission.org/blog-post/books-disability/?gclid=CjwKCAjwjMiiBhA4EiwAZe6jQ9kGe9Z4TDxRqO4AcZUh9L_0-zzIPaeJ5nKo1KPLud6rdqDrq2ijzhoChyMQAvD_BwE)) to get started.
- **As a follow-up activity, create a poster with chart paper on how students can create a welcoming environment for all students, using what they learned from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.** Have students reflect on what they learned from the text and how they can continue to promote a school environment that supports all abilities and needs. What does their classroom and school do well? What do they need to improve for students who are disabled? Students can brainstorm different ways to support a caring and supportive community and refer to the chart year-round. Be cognizant

of students' needs and abilities in your classroom while conducting this activity, making sure not to ostracize any student or group. Other resources including Reading Rockets' "Creating Positive School Experiences for Students with Disabilities" (<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/creating-positive-school-experiences-students-disabilities>), the Nora Project: Building Inclusive Classrooms (<https://thenoraproject.ngo/mission>), Edutopia's "How to Improve Students with Disabilities' Sense of Belonging" (<https://www.edutopia.org/article/how-improve-students-disabilities-sense-belonging/>), and Welcoming Schools' "Advocating for LGBTQ+ Students with Disabilities" (<https://welcomingschools.org/resources/advocating-for-lgbtq-students-with-disabilities>).

### Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Learn more about the history of the Paralympic Games. The International Paralympic Committee** (<https://im-possible.paralympic.org/system/files/document/2017-11/LEARNERS%206-8%20PARALYMPIC%20VALUES%20SAMPLE.pdf>) **and PBS** (<https://www.rmpbs.org/usopm/4th-and-5th-grade-modules/>) **all have lesson plans, activities and resources dedicated to learning more about the history of the Paralympic Games and different events featured in the Paralympic Games** (<http://archive.pov.org/olympia/lesson-plan/>). Why are the Paralympic Games important to learn about? What sports are in the Paralympic Games? How do athletes compete in the Paralympic Games? When did the Paralympic Games begin, and where do they take place? Who are some famous athletes to compete in the Paralympic Games? What do the Paralympic Games mean to athletes? Students can refer to the timeline, history, and Bibliography in the Backmatter of *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes* for additional information. Students can write an analytical essay or prepare a poster to showcase their findings about voting rights and voting history to share with a partner, small group, or whole class.
- **Encourage students to select an organization from the Resources section in the Backmatter of *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.** There are several organizations mentioned throughout the book that the athletes have started themselves or are affiliated with. What organization did students select? What does that organization do, and why did that athlete create or is associated with that organization? Students can discuss what they learned from investigating this organization, and write about this experience in an essay or display their findings in an informational poster.
- **As a follow-up activity, have students select a source from the Bibliography section at the back of the book.** Students can examine the piece, whether it's a book, video, photograph, or website, and write a reaction to how they think the author and illustrator were informed by this information and how it helped develop the text. Have students consider what kind of resource it is, how they know that it contains accurate and correct information, and why research is critical in developing a book. The Library of Congress has a lesson plan for further information about teaching students about using primary sources (<http://www.loc.gov/>)

[teachers/usingprimarysources/](#)).

- **Select one of the adaptive sports from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes* and conduct a more detailed research project about that adaptive sport.** What sport did students select, and why? How is that sport played? When did that adaptive sport begin? What famous athletes have participated in that sport? Students can display their findings on an informational poster and discussed what they learned. Move United has a list of adaptive sports (<https://moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-sports/>) as well as the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs (<https://adaptedsports.org/>).
- **Have students select an event from “A Timeline of the Paralympics” in the back of *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.** To help students understand the historical context of the Paralympics, encourage students to research the events in the book by gathering photographs and other primary source documents about the events mentioned and creating a timeline to display in their classroom. Consider showing the entire timeline in the front of the class so that students have easy access to the years and events. Students may work in groups in different years (i.e. 1940-1950) and then add additional events and findings to the class timeline. Have students reflect on what they learned about the important history of the Paralympic Games, and how they can continue to learn about the Paralympic Games in the future.

### Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **On each spread in *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*, there is a poetic sentence.** Have students read through the story again, focusing on just the poetic sentences of each spread. How does the story read differently when students concentrate on only that text? Afterward, students can create their own poems in response to *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*. How did the story make them feel? What do they want to convey in their poems?
- **Have students create a drawing, painting, or other visual representation of a cause in their community that they’re passionate about, inspired by *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.** Why did students choose this cause? Students can create posters, paintings, or other visual representations of the cause that they’re passionate about, and then display their work in small groups or for the whole class to see.
- **Consider having students conduct an illustrator study about Dion MBD.** Visit Dion MBD’s website for a complete list of his children’s books (<https://www.dionmbd.com/books>). If possible, display the books for students to examine the illustrations, and have students brainstorm how Dion MBD’s illustrations are similar across the books, or how they differ per book.
- **As a follow-up activity, have students come up with questions to interview Dion MBD.** What is his process behind creating the illustrations for a children’s book? What



medium did he choose to create the illustrations? Why? Consider contacting Dion MBD for a school visit (<https://www.dionmbd.com/books>).

- **Encourage students to select the illustration that resonated with them the most from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.** Have students write a reflection about the illustration. What stood out to them? How did it make them feel? What did it make them think about? How did it help them to visualize the athlete's experience and performance in their sport?

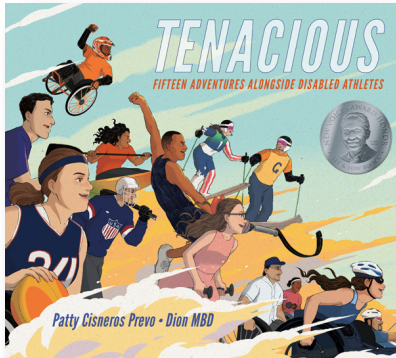
### School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Share the Backmatter from *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes* with families, including the "Preferred Language in This Book" and the Resources and Bibliography sections.** If students are disabled or have disabled family members, have them discuss what they connected with, appreciated, or learned from these sections. If students are not disabled or do not have disabled family members, have them discuss what new information that they learned. Have students reflect on why it's critical to feature books with disabled people, athletes, and fictional characters at home and in their classrooms and libraries.
- **Have students investigate different organizations in their community that have adaptive sports or support disabled people.** How do these communities uplift and support disabled people and athletes? How can students get involved with these organizations? For example, students based in New York City and consult NYC's Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities' Advocacy Groups page (<https://www.nyc.gov/site/mopd/resources/advocacy-groups.page>). Stanford's Office of Accessible Education also has National Disability Organizations and Resources for more information (<https://oae.stanford.edu/students/advocacy-community/national-disability-organizations-and-resources>). Students may bring their findings to class and build a map or book of resources to share so that all families have access.
- **Learn more about the Paralympic Games and adaptive sports communities featured in *Tenacious: Fifteen Adventures Alongside Disabled Athletes*.** Share the different articles, organizations, and resources provided in the book with families so they can learn more about the Paralympic Games, including (<https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/history>), (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/how-the-paralympic-movement-evolved-into-major-sporting-event>), and (<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/25/1030629549/paralympics-history-name-meaning>). If families are already familiar with or are involved with the Paralympic Games or adaptive sports, if possible, extend an invitation if families are interested in sharing their experiences with the class.



## Ordering Information

### General Order Information:

[leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](https://leeandlow.com/contact/ordering)

### Secure Online Ordering:

[leeandlow.com/books/tenacious](https://leeandlow.com/books/tenacious)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25

**By Fax:** 212-683-1894

### By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue,  
New York, NY 10016

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Patty Cisneros Prevo** is a first-generation Latina, writer, two-time Paralympic gold medalist, and proud mom and partner. She also works as a Program Manager of DEI at UW-Health. Her manuscript for *Tenacious* won the 2018 Lee & Low New Voices Award Honor and marks her debut as an author. Learn more about her at [pattycisnerosprevo.com](https://pattycisnerosprevo.com).

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Dion MBD** or Dionisius Mehaga Bangun Djayasaputra, is an Indonesian illustrator and designer who lives and works between Brooklyn and Bandung. Dion received his Illustration BFA from Ringling College of Art Design in Florida where he grew his fascination with clouds. Check out his website to learn more about him at [dionmbd.com](https://dionmbd.com).

## REVIEWS

"MBD's expressive, energetic portraits of athletes in motion, overlaid by brief, italicized rhyming text, nearly fill each single-page profile. . . Each spread provides more biographical details and includes quotes from the subjects, who share their daily joys and challenges. . . An eclectic, encouraging lineup."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"This upbeat offering promises profiles of 15 disabled athletes but delivers even more. . . Readers will come away with an enhanced understanding of the scope of adaptive sports (BMX, surfing, CrossFit) and great respect for these dedicated, tenacious athletes."—*Booklist, starred review*

"This is precisely the book I dreamed of growing up as a young girl with a disability. It shows what is possible to achieve and acknowledges the very real hard points, while fostering and supporting healthy, positive disability identity development."—*Dr. Anjali Forber-Pratt, Paralympic medalist and disability activist*

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](https://leeandlow.com).