Across the English Channel

**SUMMARY** This nonfiction reader tells about some of the earliest attempts to swim across the English Channel and highlights a few of the cross-channel record holders. The book also describes the conditions in the Channel that make it such a challenging body of water for swimmers.

**LESSON VOCABULARY**
- celebrate
- continued
- current
- drowned
- medal
- stirred
- strokes

**INTRODUCE THE BOOK**

**INTRODUCE THE TITLE AND AUTHOR** Discuss the title and the author of *Across the English Channel*. Ask students to predict what the English Channel is, based on the cover photographs. Discuss with students who the woman pictured on the cover might be.

**BUILD BACKGROUND** By a show of hands, find out how many students in the class like to swim. Have volunteers talk about where they like to swim, such as in pools, lakes, or the ocean. Tell students to describe what they like most about swimming in these places and what they like the least.

**ELL** Have ELL students describe their favorite swimming places in their home countries and compare them with places where they have gone swimming in the United States.

**PREVIEW/USE TEXT FEATURES** Explain to students that the selection is about a body of water called the English Channel. Have students look at the maps on pages 3 and 6. Discuss with students what conditions in the Channel might be like. Then have students skim through the rest of the pictures in the book. Ask students to describe the people in the pictures and what they seem to be doing.

**READ THE BOOK**

**SET PURPOSE** Invite students to look at the cover of the reader once again. Help them to set a purpose for reading by having them complete the following statement: “I would like to read this book about the English Channel to find out more about __________.”

**STRATEGY SUPPORT: QUESTIONING** Tell students to see what questions the author raises and how reading further helps you answer them. After reading, encourage students to think about what they read and to go back to the text for answers. As they begin to formulate a generalization, these questions and answers will help them assess the importance of what they read.

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

**PAGES 4–5** What general statement can you make about the English Channel? (Possible response: Across the English Channel is always difficult to swim.)

**PAGES 8–9** Is there anything you find confusing on these pages? What fix-up strategy can you use? (Possible response: I was confused about how Gertrude Ederle broke the men’s record by only two hours when Matthew Webb swam the Channel in 22 hours. Then I reread and realized that Ederle broke the men’s record of her period, not Webb’s old record.)

**PAGE 10** Find a statement of fact on this page. How do you know it is a statement of fact? (Possible response: Others are part of a team of two or more swimmers. It can be proved true or false by checking in a book.)

**PAGE 12** Find a statement of opinion in the first paragraph on this page and tell how you know it is an opinion. (Possible response: That difficult task seems like something to celebrate. It’s an opinion because it’s the author’s belief about why someone should celebrate.)
REVISIT THE BOOK
READER RESPONSE
1. Possible responses: Facts: The English Channel is a narrow body of water (p. 3). Many kinds of goods are carried through the Channel each day (p. 4). Opinions: Some swimmers see these wild waters as a challenge (p. 7). That was an awesome feat (p. 9)!
2. Responses will vary but should include a question and show understanding of the text.
3. Stir may also mean “to mix.” Possible responses: The wind stirred the leaves gently. She stirred the cake batter until it was smooth.
4. Possible response: I would like to run a marathon because that is the ultimate running challenge!

EXTEND UNDERSTANDING Explain to students that graphic sources are visual aids, such as maps, graphs, time lines, and pictures with captions, that help the reader understand the text. Point out that sometimes graphics provide additional information. Have students look through the pictures and captions in The English Channel and find one piece of information that they learned from the captions that was not in the text. Invite volunteers to share their answers.

RESPONSE OPTIONS
WRITING Tell students to think of an amazing feat that they might try, such as swimming underwater the entire length of a pool. Have students write a plan to prepare for their feat, including information on training, diet, and equipment.

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION
Explain to students that a strait is a type of channel. Have students research other famous channels and straits from around the globe, including the Bering Strait, the Bosporus Strait, and the Strait of Magellan. Tell students to write brief reports describing the geography and conditions of their channels, as well as how people use them today.

Skill Work
TEACH/REVIEW VOCABULARY
Write a sentence for each word on the chalkboard. Have volunteers guess the meanings of the words by using context clues. Then have other students look up each word in the dictionary and tell the class the definition.

TARGET SKILL AND STRATEGY
FACT AND OPINION Explain to students that a statement of fact is a statement that can be proved true or false. A statement of opinion is a person’s beliefs or ideas about something. Point out that as readers they just need to know that the statement can be checked by looking in reference sources, by asking an expert, or by observing. Give examples of statements of facts and opinions, and discuss with students how to distinguish each. Then tell students to look for at least one statement of fact and one statement of opinion in the reader.

QUESTIONING As students read, have them ask themselves about swimming the English Channel. Help them organize their answers into logical generalizations.

ADDITIONAL SKILL INSTRUCTION
GENERALIZE Explain to students that sometimes authors make a statement about several ideas or things in a book. The statement can tell how the ideas or things are all alike or mostly alike or how they are all or mostly different. Provide examples of generalizations that state how things in a group are alike or different. As students read, have them look for a general statement that the author makes about the English Channel.
Fact and Opinion

- A statement of **fact** is a statement that can be proved true or false. You can check a statement of fact by looking in reference sources, asking an expert, or observing.
- A statement of **opinion** is a person’s beliefs or ideas about something. You cannot prove whether it is true or false.

**Directions** Decide whether each sentence below is a statement of fact or opinion. Write your answer on the line.

1. The English Channel is about 350 miles long.

2. The English Channel is quite shallow.

3. There is always a chance that a swimmer could drown.

4. In 1926, Gertrude Ederle of the United States became the first woman to swim across the English Channel.

5. But if you have the stamina, the skill, and the desire for a challenge, you might consider swimming as an alternate way to cross the English Channel.
Vocabulary

**Directions** Fill in each column of the chart below with the correct words from the box. You may use a word more than once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs in Past Tense</th>
<th>Words with Endings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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**Check the Words You Know**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>celebrate</td>
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<td>medal</td>
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<td>continued</td>
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<td>stirred</td>
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<td>strokes</td>
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<td>drowned</td>
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**Directions** Write an original paragraph about something special that you did. How did you celebrate? Describe your accomplishment and use the word *celebrate* in your paragraph.

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