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The sound of the ball caught Olivia's attention. She wondered who was already playing tennis on the court at the city park. She and her mother were usually the first ones to arrive each day. She rarely had any problem finding time to practice her favorite sport because the court stayed so empty. Olivia didn't understand why everyone didn't want to play tennis. Most of her friends played basketball or softball. A few were into soccer and volleyball. She was the only one who was passionate about tennis. She couldn't imagine her life without playing the game.

Olivia didn't recognize the two boys on the court. They were hitting the ball back and forth across the net. Olivia thought the two boys looked like they were about her age, but she'd never seen either of them at her school. She wondered whether they were part of a tennis team from a nearby neighborhood. Olivia's mother sat down on a park bench and pulled out her phone. She explained to Olivia that she planned to make a few phone calls while they were waiting for their turn to play. Olivia did not join her mother. She thought watching the other players would be more fun. She enjoyed watching tennis even if it was only a practice instead of a real game.

It didn't take long for the two boys to realize they had an audience. The boy to her right finally stopped the ball and held it. Then the two players walked over to the side of the court to speak to Olivia. Olivia found out the two boys were visiting their uncle who lived down the street from her. They played tennis at their school in Florida. One of the boys had hurt his wrist and was having a hard time playing. They asked Olivia if she'd like to take his place. She asked her mother for permission before agreeing to play. As they walked onto the court, the boy told Olivia he was sure he would beat her, but he would enjoy the practice. Olivia almost laughed when she realized he doubted she would be a very good player. Her hand tightened around her racket as she thought, *just watch*. After the ball went across the net, she met it with a firm hit from her racket. She watched the ball sail past her opponent before he even had time to react. Olivia was satisfied. She knew she had proven a point without saying a word.

During the 1950s, Althea Gibson was known as one of the top female tennis players in the world. During this period in history, many people did not believe women could be strong competitors in athletic events. Amazing female athletes like Althea Gibson helped prove how wrong many of those people were.

Althea began playing paddle tennis, or tabletop tennis, when she was growing up in New York. People noticed her skills at the game and suggested she try playing tennis on a full court. She began training and became very good. She was so good, in fact, that she toured the world after she became a member of the United States national tennis team. Not only was Althea a breakout female athlete, she was also the first African-American female to play tennis at Wimbledon.

Another famous female tennis player was Billie Jean King. Billy Jean played tennis during the 1970s. She played during a decade when women did not always have equal rights with men. One inequality was in the amount of money women earned when they completed the same or equal task that men did. She was upset that men earned larger cash amounts in prizes than women did when competing at the same tournaments. This inequality caused Billie Jean King to react. She helped others who felt the same way as she did to establish a successful professional tennis tour for women.

Billie Jean didn't become a well-known name only because she wanted equality for women's pay in sports. She also became known for a tennis match where she played against a well-known male tennis player named Bobby Riggs. Everyone was anxious to see what would happen between these two players. The match was shown on television. She won the match and helped prove to many people all over the country and even the world that women could do just as well (if not better) than men at sports.

**UNIT 5
QUESTIONS**

Name

Date

The following pages have questions based on the texts from Unit 5. You may look at the stories to help answer any questions. Use the back of the page if you need extra space for writing your answers.

1 What does the word *opponent* mean as it is used in the following sentence?

She watched the ball sail past her opponent before he even had time to react.

- a** someone who is your adversary
- b** someone who is your ally
- c** someone who is your friend
- d** someone who is your neighbor

2 Write the sentence(s) from the text that show(s) how Olivia feels about playing tennis.

3 What do Billie Jean King and Althea Gibson have in common?

- a** They both played tennis.
- b** They both acted in movies.
- c** They both sang the national anthem before a sporting event.
- d** They both beat Bobby Riggs in a tennis match.

4 In the text "Just Watch," why are Olivia and her mother going to the park?

- a** so Olivia can practice running for an upcoming marathon
- b** so Olivia can meet up with some friends from school
- c** so Olivia can collect leaves for her leaf collection
- d** so Olivia can play tennis on the courts at the park

5 Explain why the text is titled "Just Watch."

**UNIT 5
QUESTIONS**

Name _____

Date _____

- 6** Why does Olivia play tennis with the boys?
- a** One of the boys knows her.
 - b** She asks them whether she can play tennis.
 - c** One of the boys is hurt and can no longer play.
 - d** She demands that the boys share the tennis court.

7 What do the two texts have in common?

8 List in chronological order three events that happened in the text "Just Watch."

- a.** _____
- b.** _____
- c.** _____

9 List two adjectives that would describe both Billie Jean King and Olivia.

- a.** _____
- b.** _____

10 Think about the words you chose for #9, and explain why you chose the words you did.

- a.** I chose the word _____ because _____
_____.
- b.** I chose the word _____ because _____
_____.



Time to Write!

Directions: Many famous athletes endorse or help sell products. For example, you may see a famous athlete's name on a brand of shoe, or you might see his or her face on a box of cereal.

Choose a famous athlete or use one from the text you read, and design an advertisement for the breakfast cereal below. Draw a picture on the cover of the box. Be sure to include lots of strong adjectives describing the celebrity endorsement.

On the back of the page, write a paragraph explaining why you chose this particular athlete. Be sure to research the athlete you chose if you want to know more facts about him or her before you begin.

