



SCHOOL PROGRAM

ATHLETE STORIES

Alexandre Bilodeau —
Inclusion // Grade 2-3

About Alexandre

BORN September 8, 1987

BIRTHPLACE Montréal, Quebec

SPORT Freestyle Skiing

OLYMPIC GAMES Sochi 2014,
Vancouver 2010, Turin 2006

ROLE MODEL My brother Frederic
because he never gives up

FAVOURITE ANIMAL Kangaroo

FAVOURITE COLOUR Gold, ha-ha!
No, probably red



Alexandre Bilodeau — Inclusion

Alex Bilodeau takes a deep breath and looks down from the start line of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games' freestyle ski run. British Columbia's Cypress Mountain is steep. It is covered with bumps of snow called moguls. In just a few seconds Alex will race down this course. He is hoping to win a gold medal.

"I could feel the pressure. No Canadian athlete had ever won a gold medal at an Olympic Games in Canada before. But the biggest pressure was from myself. I wanted to win and I knew I could."

The huge crowd begins to chant "Canada! Canada!" The sound, like thunder, rolls up the hillside. Alex knows one of the loudest voices in that crowd is his older brother, Frederic. Alex calls him his hero.

"He is always at my races. He always cheers me on. Frederic has Cerebral Palsy [a condition that affects his body]. He has lived all his life with that. I think about that a lot. His example keeps me grounded."

The starter yells, "Go!" Alex flies down the mountain. His knees flash as he goes over each mound of snow. He digs his poles into the snow to help him keep his balance.

"Life is like a moguls run. It goes really fast. You have to deal with all sorts of bumps and obstacles. You have to work hard and also stay calm to beat them."

Like any elite athlete, Alex has had injuries. He has had disappointing results and bad scores from judges. His brother has always pushed him to work harder, to keep trying. He tells Alex to never give up.

"Doctors told Frederic that he wouldn't be able to walk after he turned ten. He's now in his late twenties and still walks. He never gives up, even when obstacles get in his way so why would I? He never complains so why should I? He's taught me what it means to be tough. I wouldn't have this gold medal without him."

Alex hits the jumps. His body is travelling at incredible speed. If he makes even a small mistake here he could lose points. He's going too fast to think about that.

"The Olympics are a mental game. My brother is as quick mentally as anyone else. Living with him has made me mentally quick as well. He always gives me advice and feedback."

Alex lands without missing a beat. He is almost at the finish line. Alex is a natural. But moguls wasn't his first choice of sport. He wanted to focus on downhill skiing, but when they were kids Frederic wanted to try freestyle instead. Alex started freestyle skiing for Frederic.

"It's funny. I'm an athlete and people see me as a kind of "normal" person. Frederic can't move as well but he is just as much of a competitor in life. I always try harder and never quit thanks to his example."

Alex crosses the finish line with a great time. The judges give him great scores. But there is one more racer, a very good one. Alex and Frederic watch his race.

"I watched him and knew he had made some mistakes. I looked over at the crowd and Frederic was giving me the thumbs up. He knew."

The final scoreboard flashes "#1. Alexandre Bilodeau".

Alex lets all his emotions pour out. He rushes over to the crowd and gives Frederic a huge bear hug. Frederic hugs him back just as hard. Alex has made history. Frederic has one final message for his little brother, the Olympic champion.

"He only said three words to me: 'I love you.' That meant everything. When I got my gold medal, I knew I had to dedicate that victory to one person, my hero, my brother Frederic."



Alexandre Bilodeau — Inclusion



1. With a friend, talk about a time you have been included in a game during recess. Tell them how being included made you feel. Next, talk about a time when you have been left out. Explain how excluding people makes them feel. In the boxes, **write and draw 3 things** you can do to be more inclusive at school.

To be more inclusive at school,
I can _____

To be more inclusive at school,
I can _____

To be more inclusive at school,
I can _____



Alexandre Bilodeau — Inclusion



2. Alexandre says his role model is his older brother Frederic. Frederic always works hard and never gives up. Now it is your turn, **draw a picture of you with your role model.**

