

ALEXANDRIA LOUTITT

From the age of 6 watching the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games, Alexandria Loutitt knew she wanted to be an Olympic ski jumper. The extreme jumps and watching the athletes fly through the air sparked her interest immediately. At the age of nine, she was able to try out the sport. “I fell in love with it immediately and I knew, this is what I am going to do”.

It was around that time that Alex cut out the Olympic Rings to put up on her bedroom door. This served as an important reminder of what she was setting out to do. Alex is an adventurous person who calls herself an “adrenaline junkie”. She enjoys travelling, meeting new people, trying new things and taking part in ski jumping which is an exciting and thrilling sport!

When Alex was just 14 years old she was faced with the most difficult decision she had to face. The ski jumping hills in Calgary, where she lived, got closed down. These were the only hills in Canada where Alex would be able to practice ski jumping to make it to the Olympics. At that point, she had to make a choice. Should she risk it all and move to a completely new country in Europe alone to pursue her dream, or stay at home in Canada and live a normal life? “It was a hard moment for me because at that point I was really far away from being at that Olympic or World Cup level. I was too young to really see my potential and it was absolutely a risk”. She didn’t know if things would work out for her yet, but she followed her dream.

Alex travelled far from her family in Calgary, to Germany which was about 7,500 kilometres away. She stayed with different families there and worked hard to become better at her favourite sport. After two years, she moved up to the National Development team which was a big step towards her dream of being on the National Team. Alex faced each transition and challenge with determination. Her hard work paid off when she competed in the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games, winning the bronze medal for Canada. This was a very special event because it was the first time Canada had a mixed team ski jumping Olympic event. Alex, with her team, won Canada’s first ever Olympic medal in the sport. Alex continues to break down barriers and set world records. In fact, she became Canada’s first ever world champion in ski jumping. She also made history as the first Canadian woman to win a junior world title and the first Canadian woman to win a world cup ski jumping event!



PHOTO BY MARK BLINCH



Now, Alex is committed to giving back to others and supporting the next generation of athletes. Alex is an Indigenous athlete from Gwich'in first nation. She comes from a line of Indigenous Olympians, in fact her distant cousins are Sharon and **SHIRLEY FIRTH! SHARON FIRTH** and Alex connected after the Olympic Games and she has become a mentor to her. Alex's culture is a source of strength, grit and determination that help her focus on her goals. She feels that her family's work ethic and values shaped by overcoming discrimination they faced, gives her an extra boost of grit and ability to work hard. Alex is setting a positive example for others to follow in her path. She credits a lot of her success to her family that came before her. Her grandfather, a residential school survivor, went on to achieve success. "I think if people are able to learn from bad situations and they are able to develop the skills to succeed in these awful environments, that you can create success and you can deal with hardship a lot better".

Whenever Alex finishes on the podium after an event, she will always be wearing her beloved and lucky rabbit fur moccasins. She is so proud to showcase her Indigenous culture on the world stage, and she also has the special opportunity to educate others on Indigenous culture in Canada. One of the things Alex has encountered is that some people use hurtful words without realizing their impact. She knows they might not mean to be unkind, they just lack understanding. Instead of getting upset, she sees these moments as a chance to teach and share her knowledge. "I can't expect them to know everything so I'm going to take this opportunity to share my culture and a part of my history, my family's history and Canadian history with the world." Educating others about her Gwich'in roots is essential to Alex and she does it with kindness and patience. She believes getting defensive doesn't help people listen and learn, so instead she is compassionate and understanding. Of course it's not always easy, but Alex knows the impact of her effort is worth it.

Alex has some important advice to share when it comes to setting a goal or reaching for a dream of any kind. "If someone tells you your goals are unrealistic, it's because they don't think they would be able to do that in your situation, it doesn't mean that you can't do it. The more you listen to the people saying 'you can't' you'll start to believe it, even if it's not true." When Alex was a young girl, she too faced skepticism from those around her who thought making it to the Olympics in ski jumping was an unrealistic goal, yet she made her wildest dreams a reality. Alexandria encourages everyone to surround themselves with other people who share in their dream who will lift you up.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES

LEARNING GOAL

The purpose of this lesson is to inspire students to identify their goals and dreams and express them in a way that represents them. Students will design a 2 dimensional work of art to bring home and hang it somewhere they will see it every day that symbolizes this big goal. By the end of the lesson students should connect their own hopes of what they want to achieve to Alex's story and realize that no dream is too big.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Social- Emotional learning, Visual Arts

MATERIALS

- Card-stock paper
- Scissors
- Glue (optional)
- Alexandria Loutitt Athlete story (one per student, per group or displayed somewhere all students can see)
- Thought bubble BLM (one per student)
- Drawing materials (pencil crayons, markers, watercolour, oil pastels)
- Lamination optional

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When Alex was 10 years old, she cut out the Olympic Rings and put them on her bedroom door as a reminder of what she wanted to accomplish. What are some symbols, words or pictures that remind you of your goals?
- Alex sets an example of how kindness can be a powerful tool for change. She shows the world we can all learn from each other. Share a time where you got upset and how you could use kindness as a tool next time. You can also share an example of a time where you did lead with kindness. What was the result?
- When Alex was 14 she had a difficult decision she had to make. She chose to take a risk and it paid off! Think about a time when you had to make a choice, big or small. What was the result? Did anyone help you or support you in your decision?



CONNECT

Have students think back to their answers to discussion question 1 and reflect on the significance of having dreams and aspirations. If you didn't have the opportunity to conduct the discussion question with the class, take a moment to engage students in a discussion of the part in the story where Alex cut out the Olympic Rings and put them on her bedroom door. Explain that she did this to remind herself every day of what her big dream was, and that when we have a visual reminder of what we hope to accomplish, it can motivate us and keep us focused.

PROCESS

Have students independently brainstorm something that symbolizes what their goal or dream is. Students can draw or write during the brainstorm process. These can be related to hobbies, academic achievements, personal growth or anything they aspire to accomplish. Remind them to be specific and use positive language. Allow 10-15 minutes for brainstorming.

Tell students that today we will be designing something to put on our own bedroom doors at home to remind us of our goals and dreams. The art work will go on provided card-stock. Students can use art materials of their choice or whatever medium is being learned about in class (water colour, acrylic paint, oil pastels). Tell students that when they are finished, they will use the provided thought bubble sheet below to share 3-5 sentences about what they designed and why this goal is important to them.

After students have finished their art works, you have the option to laminate them before students bring them home to hang up.

TRANSFORM

To extend this activity, ask each student to share their completed design to the class. As they present, have them briefly explain the dreams or goals it represents. Encourage classmates to provide positive feedback and support each other's aspirations and art work. Remind students of Alex's advice and that it is important to support one another as we pursue our goals.



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FEATURED ATHLETES

Alexandria Loutitt
Jesse Cockney
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WRITERS

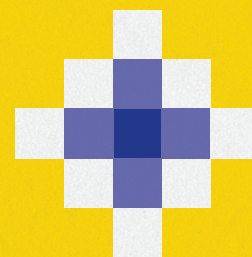
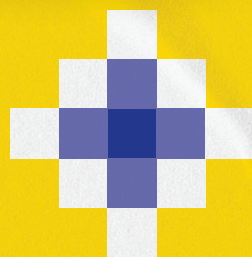
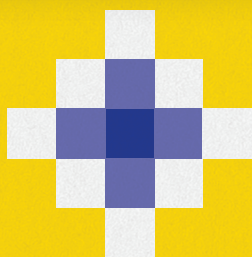
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ALEXANDRIA LOUTITT
LEARNING ACTIVITY

GRADES 4-6

NAME: _____



A large, light orange thought bubble shape with a scalloped border. Inside the bubble are six horizontal white lines for writing. To the bottom left of the main bubble are three smaller, solid orange circles of decreasing size, arranged in a diagonal line.

