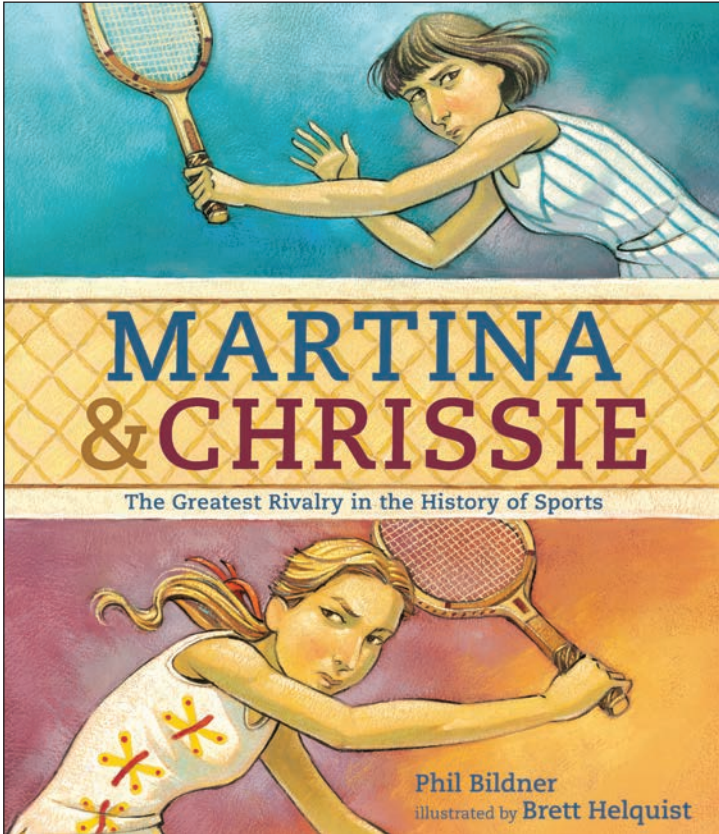


MARTINA & CHRISSIE

The Greatest Rivalry in the History of Sports

Phil Bildner illustrated by Brett Helquist



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About the Book

Were tennis stars Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert the greatest rivals in sports history? This engaging true story contends that they were, which is all the more amazing because they were also friends. A conversational narrator draws readers in to the story of calm, controlled Chrissie from Florida and emotional Martina from Communist Czechoslovakia. Action-packed illustrations convey their competition and camaraderie over the years as they mesmerized the world with their extraordinary skills. What happens when intense rivals are also good friends? Join them on the tennis court and find out.

Common Core Connections

This biographical picture book celebrates the power of equality, respect, and sportsmanship of two tennis masters. A highly appealing choice for class discussion or independent reading, *Martina & Chrissie* is both a great sports story and a great resource for learning about a different era. In this guide, you'll find questions for discussion and writing about ideas, setting, language, and integration of text and illustration, which require the close reading called for by the Common Core Standards. Suggested classroom activities extend the book and its topics into a variety of curriculum areas.



Discussion Questions

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

These questions correlate to Common Core ELA Reading Standards for Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details RI.1–5.1, 1–5.2, 1–5.3; Craft and Structure RI.1–5.4, 1.6; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas RI.1–4.7; and ELA Speaking & Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration SL.1–5.1.



1. Who are Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert? Talk about where they are from, when they became famous, and why they are so well known and respected. Why did people tune in for years to watch them on television?
2. What does the word *rival* mean? Discuss the author's statement, "Most rivals don't like each other. Some rivals HATE each other." Why would sports rivals such as tennis players dislike or hate each other? Where else is there rivalry besides the sports world?
3. Explain what the Cold War was and why it meant the two players "were supposed to distrust and despise" each other. Why do you think Martina and Chrissie became friends as well as rivals?
4. Analyze the narrative voice and what makes it different from the voice in many books, starting before the title page with the first line: "Hey, guy—yeah, I'm talking to you." Who is speaking? Who is the narrator speaking to? Analyze how the narrator uses questions. What's your reaction to the narrative voice?
5. Some words appear in all capital letters, in a larger, bolder typeface than the words around them. Find examples of this and discuss what effect the larger word has when you're reading the sentence. What's the effect of using exclamation points with the larger words and in other places?
6. How do the illustrations create excitement when they are depicting tennis matches, especially the French Open? How do the illustrations show the ups and downs in the players' friendship? Find places where the pictures convey information and emotion not mentioned in the text and discuss how that adds to the story.
7. What kind of effort and emotional strength does it take to be a great tennis player? Point to places in the text that help explain why each woman excelled at tennis.
8. When Chrissie won a match in the U.S. Open in 1971 as a teenager, she lost the tournament but "won something better: the hearts of the fans." What does it mean to win the hearts of the fans? How is that better than winning a tournament? When did Martina win the hearts of the fans, and how did she do it?
9. If you go just by the numbers, Martina might be considered the better player of the two. Why does the narrator say that numbers never tell the whole story and that no rivalry is just about the numbers?
10. Why is the story of Martina and Chrissie important? Discuss the statement that they made each other "better players, and better people, too."

Curriculum Connections

COMMON CORE CONNECTIONS

These questions correlate to Common Core ELA Reading Standards for Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details RI.1–5.1, 1–5.2, 1–5.3; Craft and Structure RI.1–5.4; Integration of Knowledge and Ideas RI.1–5.7; ELA Speaking & Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration SL.1–5.1, 1–5.2, 1–5.3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas SL.1–5.4, 1–5.5; ELA Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes W.1–5.2; Production and Distribution of Writing W.3–5.4; and Research to Build and Present Knowledge W.1–5.7, 1–5.8.

GAME. SET. MATCH.

Review the pages about Chris Evert’s victory in the French Open, which is described as a “classic showdown.” Then, as a class, watch some of the video of the tournament (listed in the audiovisual sources). After watching, have students compare the words and illustrations in the book to the video. They should discuss similarities and differences in content and discuss the strengths of each format in conveying information and emotion.

LET ME ASK YOU THIS

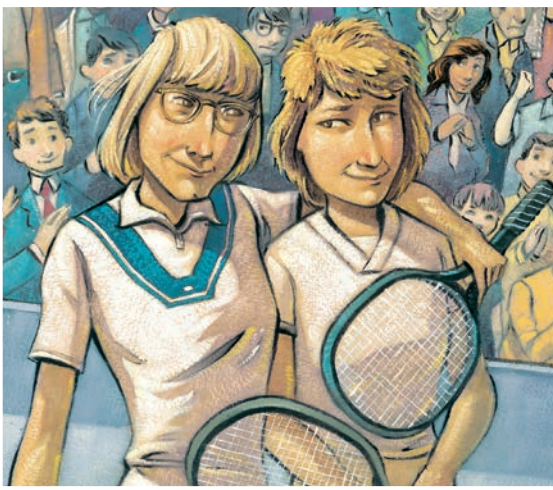
Tennis stars are often interviewed by the press. Have students work in pairs to create a dialogue in which a sportswriter or sportscaster asks either Chrissie or Martina questions. The students should base the questions on material in the book, but they can use their imaginations in writing the players’ answers. Have the pairs perform their interviews for the class.

THE WORLD OF TENNIS

As a class, list the aspects of tennis that the author mentions without explaining in detail, such as scoring, doubles, the different tournaments, and so on. Have pairs or small groups work together to find more information on one of the topics and create an illustrated poster to share with the class.

WANTED: THE BEST COACH

What do coaches do? Have students research what coaches do in a certain sport or other endeavor (for example, a debate team coach or a life coach). The research can include students’ own experiences with coaches or interviews with family or friends about their experiences. Have students use print or online research to expand on any interviews. Then invite students to write a job ad as if they were going to hire a coach, listing important qualities.



DEAR FRIEND & RIVAL

Have students imagine that either Chrissie or Martina has just retired from tennis and is thinking back on her career. Ask them to compose, in that person’s voice, a letter to the other player about what the two have meant to each other as competitors and friends. Make sure the students read the time line “Martina and Chrissie through the Years” to give them more material for their letters.

WOMEN ON THE MOVE

Even though girls and women have had fewer chances to be sports professionals, many have still succeeded. As a class, compile a list of professional female athletes from the past and present, adding to the list through research if needed. Then have every student choose a female athlete to research, using both books and online sources. Invite each student to prepare a short presentation about the athlete chosen, including visual images if possible, to share with the class.

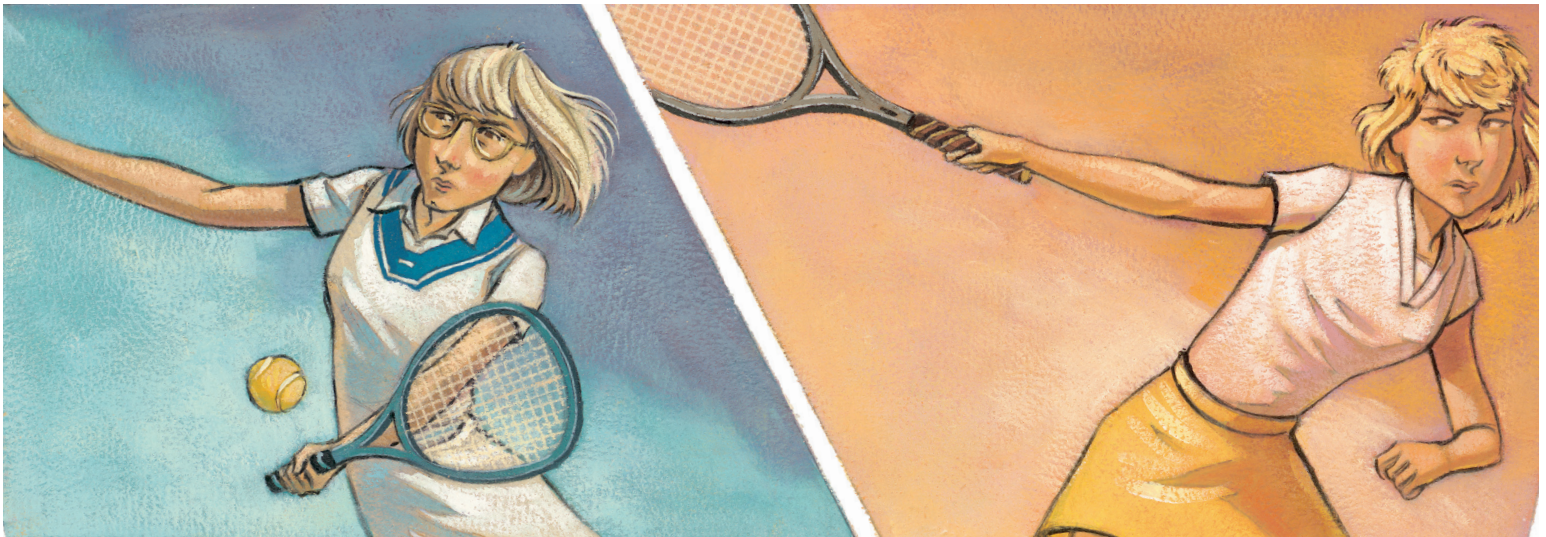
Curriculum Connections (continued)

VIVID VERBS

The author uses vivid verbs to convey action in the story, especially during the tennis games. Have students go through the text and make a list of twelve action verbs that appeal to them. Then have each student write a short story about sports or another topic using those verbs. Have them read the stories to each other in small groups.

MARTINA & CHRISSIE: SIMILAR & DIFFERENT

Have students fill out the Compare and Contrast Chart on the next page with aspects of the two players that are similar and different. The categories of comparison can be about background, their personalities, their approaches to tennis, and so on. For example, they are similar because they were tennis champions, and they are different because they grew up in different places.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Phil Bildner is the award-winning author of picture books, chapter books, and novels, many of them about sports. Previously a lawyer and then a teacher, he now writes full-time and visits schools all over the world. He lives with his husband in Newburgh, New York.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Brett Helquist read comic strips when he was young, which inspired him to become an illustrator. He's illustrated many books and is best known for his pictures in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. If he weren't an illustrator, he'd like to be a rock star. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

This guide was prepared by Kathleen Odean, a school librarian for more than fifteen years who presents workshops on new books for young people, including a workshop that focuses on nonfiction titles and their connections to the Common Core. She served as chairperson of the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and is the author of several guides to children's books, including *Great Books for Girls*, *Great Books for Boys*, and *Great Books About Things Kids Love*.

