

**Wired**

Sigmund Brouwer

Reading level: 2.9

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AR Quiz # 102528

Book Summary

Keegan Bishop, championship skier, is almost injured in a dangerous trap that was set for one of his team-mates. Snowboard tracks leading away from the trap are the only clue as to who might be responsible. Keegan teaches himself to snowboard so he can find the culprit on the snowboarding slopes. When Keegan discovers that someone has been stealing snowboards and skis at Bear Mountain resort, and the girl he has just met is somehow involved, he must face his fears and test his new snowboarding skills in a run for safety.

Author Biography

Sigmund Brouwer is the bestselling author of many books for children and young adults and is an active literacy advocate. Sigmund enjoys the chance to visit schools to talk to students about reading and writing. *Wired* was Sigmund's first book with Orca Book Publishers.

Connecting to the Text*Plot*

Sigmund Brouwer has built suspense using cliff-hangers at the end of each chapter of *Wired*. For example, in the last paragraph of chapter one he writes, "Hitting the wire at that speed would slice me in two." As we read this, we ask, "How is he going to make it?" and "How did the wire get there?" To find out, we must keep reading. Have students work in pairs to complete the exercise below using poster board. Once finished, invite each set of partners to present their posters and share their "most suspenseful last paragraph" with the class.

Option: Have students draw up the chart and complete the exercise on their own, chapter by chapter, as they read the novel.

- With a partner, alternate reading the last paragraph of each chapter aloud.
- For each chapter, discuss the following questions with your partner: How does the last paragraph build suspense? Do you want to keep reading? Why, or why not?

Chapter	How does the last paragraph build suspense?	Do you want to keep reading? (Yes/No)	Why or why not?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

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Chapter	How does the last paragraph build suspense?	Do you want to keep reading? (Yes/No)	Why or why not?
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Language

Similes create pictures by comparing one thing to another, often by using the word like or as. Some early examples in *Wired* are:

- (ch. 1) *I blinked twice. The wind filled my lungs. It filled my ears like the roar of a freight train.*
- (ch. 1) *At this speed, the trees on each side of the slope seemed like flashing fence boards.*

Write the following sentences, which use the novel's skiing context, on the board. Ask students to complete the sentences, either working alone or with a partner.

- The morning air on the mountain was so cold, it was like a _____.
- The snowboarder went by me as fast as a _____.
- I was very afraid. My heart was beating fast, like a _____.
- The forest around me was as thick as a _____.
- When I saw them steal the snowboards, I was as angry as a _____.

The Writer's Craft

Sigmund Brouwer has built suspense in *Wired* with the use of foreshadowing. For example, we learn very early in the novel that Keegan strongly dislikes hospitals and trains and that his family has had some serious problems in the past.

- Divide the class into small groups. Have each group choose one example of foreshadowing from the list below.
- Follow the plotline that has been foreshadowed through the story to see how it takes shape.
- Have students storyboard its development either by making a list, chapter by chapter, or by drawing the events. Students can choose from the following examples or choose their own from the novel:

- (ch. 1) *"Sure," I lied like I always did. I wasn't going to let anyone know I was afraid. Not Keegan Bishop, provincial champion downhill skier. No one was supposed to know my biggest secret.*
- (ch. 4) *I wanted to, but I knew I had to force myself to go to the one place in town that brought back the worst memories of my life.
That would be the hospital.*
- (ch. 4) *The crossing that now has warning lights and cross bars that come down when a train is coming. When I was a kid, there were no warning lights.
I came to a stop at the tracks.
Someone behind me honked, angry that I had stopped for no reason.
Maybe it was no reason to them, but I couldn't help myself.*
- (ch. 4) *I'd barely made it on time. Whenever I was late, my parents panicked. It hurt them most when I was late for supper though, because it reminded them of something that was always hiding beneath the surface of their lives.*

- Once completed, have students present their storyboards or discuss as a group.

Connecting to Curriculum

Language Arts

Different sub-cultures—whether occupational, scholastic or recreational—use jargon which is specific only to their group. Jargon can be confusing (or even meaningless) to outsiders. In *Wired*, we join the culture of skiers and snowboarders.

1. Ask students to complete the following, either in small groups, with partners or individually.

- ◆ Using the novel, take turns finding the definitions for each of the following jargon terms listed below.

boardhead	5-40	goofy
regulars	riding fakie	hitting ollie

Option: Have students split the list, each finding the definitions for half the words. Once they have found their definitions, ask them to take turns describing them to their partner. Ask, is it easier to draw a picture to describe the word or is it easier to describe it in words? Why?

2. As a class, discuss the use of jargon in other contexts. Ask students to brainstorm jargon terms they use.

- ◆ Do you use jargon terms that parents, teachers or others outside your group might not understand? These can be terms that are used in sports, music, movies, email or text messaging, or even just how you talk with your friends. Make a list of at least five jargon terms you use and then write beside each its definition.

Option: Have students share their jargon terms with the class. If there are terms that other students don't understand, invite them to guess the term's meaning. Then, have the students who present the terms share their meanings with the group.

3. If the students use text messaging or email, they may already be familiar with the following jargon. Write these examples of jargon on the board and discuss as a large group. Invite students to contribute their own to the list.

BTW - By The Way	FYI - For Your Information
IMHO - In My Humble/Honest Opinion	RSN - Real Soon Now
RTM - Read The Manual	LOL - Laugh Out Loud

Social Studies

- Using a map, pinpoint the areas where there are skiing and snowboarding facilities near you. Where is the closest mountain to you that has public skiing and snowboarding? Imagine you are going there. How will you get there? Draw the route on a map.
- In *Wired*, Keegan Bishop describes some of his tricks of the trade when he is downhill skiing. For example:

(ch. 2) *To keep my balance, I slapped my hand on the snow.*

(ch. 2) *The best thing to do in a fall is also the hardest thing to do. You have to make yourself go limp like a rag doll. If you are too tense, you can rip your muscles and snap your bones.*

Research skiing and snowboarding. What are some basic skills? What are some safety rules? Imagine you are a ski or snowboard instructor and you are giving a lesson to beginners. What will you tell them first?

Connecting to the Students—Ideas for Exploration

- In chapter six, Keegan sees Sid and Cassie steal the snowboards and put them in Budgie's van. Following this, Keegan says:

The parking lot was jammed, and I could see it was going to take Budgie a while to get to the main road. I saw a possible solution and made a stupid decision.

- Put yourself in Keegan's position at this point. Consider one of the following questions: What could Keegan have done instead? or What would you have done?
 - With that in mind, how would the story in *Wired* have changed? How would it have ended? Invite students to write their 'alternate' story, or have students tell their alternate stories to the class.
- In chapter fifteen, Keegan begins to share his "black secret" with Cassie:

What if there was a person who was once so scared as a kid that he didn't do something in time to save another kid? And what if that person had never told his mom or dad what had really happened?

- Imagine you are a close friend of Keegan's. What advice would you give him? Write a personal letter to Keegan. Tell him your thoughts on his "black secret." What should he do?
- Imagine you are Keegan. Write a journal entry expressing your thoughts about witnessing your brother's death and the secret you have kept all this time.
- Imagine you are Keegan's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Bishop, and Keegan has come to you and shared what really happened the day Keegan's brother was killed. How would you respond to Keegan? In groups of three, act out the scenario.

3. Throughout the story, Keegan often describes himself as “no hero” and a “coward,” although he actually does many brave things.
 - ◆ Have you ever done something that was wrong and you remembered it for a long time? How did that feel? Did you ever tell anyone about it? If so, how did people respond?
 - ◆ If you could talk to Keegan about his “black secret,” what would you tell him?
 - ◆ Write a letter to a friend in which you describe Keegan as a person. Describe his personality. What’s he like?
 - ◆ Is Keegan someone you could be friends with? Why or why not?
 - ◆ Make a list of three courageous things Keegan does in the story. How do these actions affect other people in the story?
4. Antoine Deneriaz from France and Michaela Dorfmeister from Austria were the gold medal winners for downhill skiing at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy. Ted Ligety from the United States won a gold medal for men’s combined alpine skiing, and Jennifer Heil from Canada was the gold medalist in women’s moguls. Find out more about these or other winter sport athletes. How old were they when started? Where do they live and train? What is their daily training regime?
5. Keegan’s friend Joe Hardy is compared to the character Chet Morton from the mystery novel series *The Hardy Boys*. The Hardy Boys series are detective/adventure books written primarily for boys. The first book of the series was published in 1927 and more than 125 titles followed. The Hardy Boys books have been published in more than 25 languages (see: www.hardy-boys.com). Research this popular series, its history, fan clubs, many authors, etc. Look at the long list of Hardy Boys titles. Which ones seem interesting to you? Are they available from your school library?
6. Imagine you are planning to spend a day skiing or snowboarding and that your day has just begun. What do you need to take with you? Make a list. Be sure you are prepared for a full day on the slopes. Consider how you will get there, what you will eat, how you will dress, how you will stay safe and how much money you will need.

Web Resources

World atlas

<http://worldatlas.com>

Worldwide guide to ski resorts and mountain sports

www.goski.com

Various articles on skiing

<http://skicentral.com>

US National Hall of Fame and Ski Museum

www.skihall.com

Canadian Ski Museum

www.skimuseum.ca

ABC's of skiing, skiing tips

<http://skicentral.com/skitips.html>

Official website of the US Olympic Team

www.usoc.org

Official website of the Canadian Olympic Committee

www.olympic.ca

Frequently asked questions on the physics of skiing

www.math.utah.edu/~eyre/rsbfaq/physics.html

Skiing terms, history, snow and weather, safety, health and injuries, videos and images

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skier>

Ski and snow boarding terms

www.cheaptravelinsurance.com/ski-insurance/ski-guide/ski-jargon.htm