

Read

Explore the BIG Question

Tony Hawk

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD¹

When Tony Hawk was nine years old, his brother, Steve, changed his life. Steve was twelve years older than Tony, and he loved surfing. The Hawks lived in San Diego, California, not far from the Pacific Ocean. Most mornings, Steve woke up early to surf before going to school. Because Steve loved surfing, he had tried out "sidewalk surfing." That's what early skateboarding was called. Steve had an old banana board in the garage. He took Tony to a nearby alley, showed him how to balance on the board, and gave him a push. Tony rolled and rolled until he ran into a fence. He couldn't figure out how to turn!

FALLING IN LOVE It was not love at first sight. Slowly, over the next year, though, Tony began skating more and more. One weekend, the mother of one of Tony's friends took the neighborhood kids to a skate park, in San Diego, called Oasis. Skaters whipped around riding the bowls, banks, pools, and other obstacles of the park. He loved it.

After that, Tony wanted to go every weekend. He nagged his parents to drive him there. If his brother or sisters were visiting, he made them take him. Soon he was asking for rides after school. He wanted to go every day.

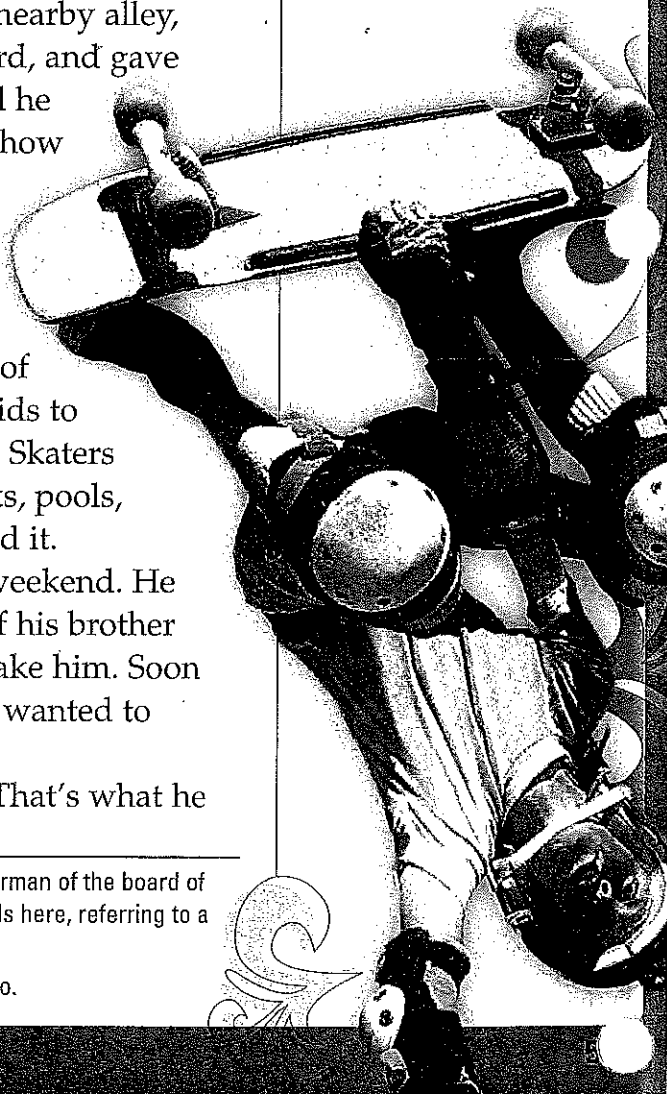
Tony was competitive² with himself. That's what he

Set a Purpose for Reading

Read the excerpt from *Tony Hawk: Chairman of the Board* to learn how Tony became who he wanted to be.

¹ The term **chairman of the board** usually means the chairman of the board of directors of a company. The author is playing with words here, referring to a different kind of board.

² A **competitive** person likes to win and tries hard to do so.



liked about skateboarding: It wasn't a team sport. He didn't like letting his team down. With skateboarding, Tony could only let himself down—and he wasn't about to do that. That's why he would practice a single trick all day long.

FIRST CONTEST Tony was 11 when he competed in his first skateboard contest. There were more than 100 skaters in his age group! Tony was so nervous before the contest that he developed a stomachache. He didn't skate well and fell on easy tricks.

Tony had let himself down, and that was the worst feeling he had ever had. So, after that, Tony got serious about contests. He would skate the park before each competition. He drew a diagram of the pool (competitions were often held in swimming pools). Then he would map out where he would do his tricks and memorize his planned run.

Tony's strategy worked! He did a lot better. By the end of the year, he had won his age class. He also had become a member of the Oasis Skatepark team.

At 11, Tony also got his first sponsor, Dogtown Skateboards. Dogtown went out of business soon, but Tony quickly found another sponsor: Stacy Peralta, who owned part of Powell and Peralta, the hottest skateboard company at the time. Stacy named the Powell group of skaters The Bones Brigade.

TEENAGE PRO Tony's first big, out-of-town contest for Powell was in Jacksonville, Florida. He fell during his run and was so upset that he refused to talk to anybody afterward. But Stacy was a great coach, and with his help and hours of practice, Tony improved even more quickly than before. Before one local skating contest, in 1982, Stacy turned to Tony and asked him if he wanted to turn pro. Tony shrugged and said yes. He skated well and placed third against the best skaters in the world! He was 14.

CIRCUS SKATER Despite his early skateboarding success, Tony had a problem. He was too skinny to

BQ **BIG Question**

What positive actions has Tony taken?

BQ **BIG Question**

Besides Stacy Peralta, what other people have helped Tony so far?

do some of the harder aerial³ tricks. He needed more weight to generate enough momentum⁴ to fly above the ramp. But no matter how much food he ate, Tony couldn't put on weight. So he invented a different way to catch air. Instead of grabbing his board early, like all the other skaters, he ollied (did a no-hand aerial) into the air and then grabbed his board. That way he could use his legs more to launch himself off the lip of the ramp and do more tricks. The new style worked, but it looked a lot different from anybody else's style. Other pros made fun of Tony's skating. Some called him a "cheater" because of his technique.

Tony also invented a lot of tricks in which he would flip his board and then put it back under his feet. Today, every skater does flip tricks, but back then, skaters called him a "circus skater" for doing them.

By 1985, Oasis had closed down. Skateboarding had become less popular. But Tony kept skating with his friends, at Del Mar Skatepark, in San Diego. He kept inventing tricks, innovative⁵ tricks. In a few years, all the skaters who had made fun of Tony were trying to learn from him!

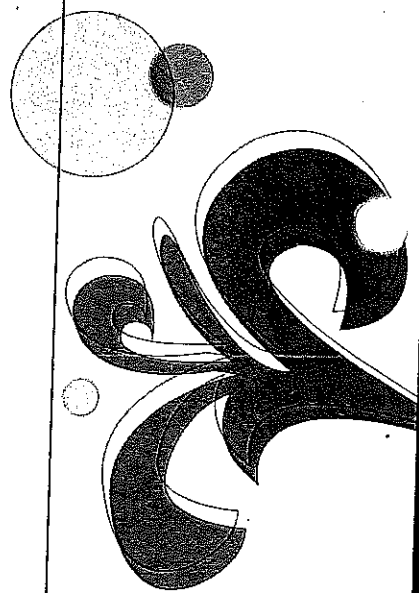
CHAMPION OF THE WORLD After Tony turned pro, it took him awhile to get used to skating against older, more experienced skaters. He bobbed all over the contest results. Sometimes he would win, and sometimes he'd place 10th. When Tony skated poorly, it upset him, and he practiced harder. Soon he began winning a lot. He became the first pro skater to win three vert contests⁶ in a row. In 1983, the National Skateboard Association was founded. It governed the world skateboard ranking. Tony was declared world champion. He was 15.

3 An **aerial** (ār'ē əl) trick is done in the air.

4 **Momentum** is the force of a moving object. This force involves a combination of speed and weight, so Tony's skinniness made him unable to **generate**, or create, the momentum he needed.

5 **Innovative** tricks are new and creative.

6 In **vert contests** a skater flies into the air from a ramp (going "vertical") and lands back on the ramp.



BQ BIG Question

How did Tony become the person he wanted to be?

Question

actions has

Question

Peralta, what
have helped

After You Read

Respond and Think Critically

1. Use your own words to tell the most important events that describe Tony's journey from a "sidewalk surfer" to a skateboard champion. [Summarize]
2. In what way did Tony's brother Steve change Tony's life? [Interpret]
3. Why did other skateboarders make fun of Tony's skating or call him a "cheater"? [Analyze]
4. Does Tony deserve to be called the "chairman of the board"? Why or why not? [Evaluate]



Writing

Write a Summary Write a one-paragraph summary about the selection. You may want to begin your summary with this topic sentence:

This selection is about _____.

Notice that the selection is divided into parts with headings, such as First Contest and Teenage Pro. First write one sentence stating the main idea or event of the first paragraph. Then write a sentence about each part in chronological order. Your summary should also state the meaning of the selection in your own words.

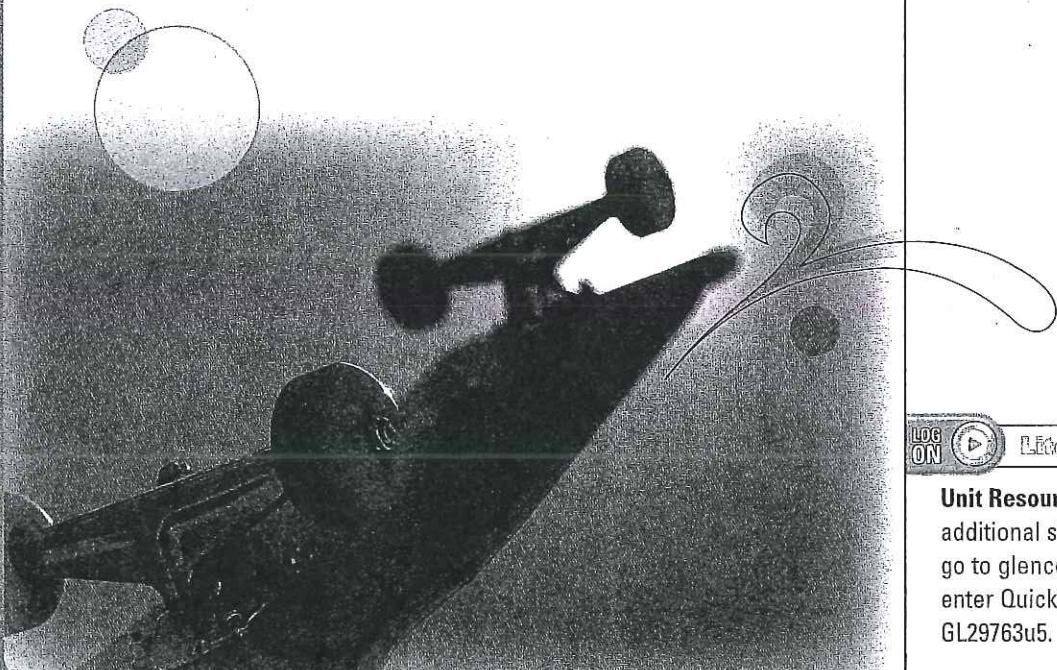
Learning Objectives

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In studying this text, you will focus on the following objective:

Writing: Writing a summary.

Answer 1, 2, 3 & 4.
Complete sentences only!



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