

国标小学英语分级阅读 配合各种小学英语教材的辅助读物



River Runners

漂流而下



北京师范大学出版社



麦格劳-希尔教育出版集团

# River Runners

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# CHAPTER ONE



"Remember, Ben," said the instructor, "lean back, hold the paddle high, and look straight ahead."

"OK," Ben said quietly. He sounded more confident than he really was. His heart was beating fast, and he hoped he didn't look as nervous as he felt!

Ben was sitting in his kayak near the top of the training slide. Water poured past him and rushed down the slide.



Slowly, Ben moved his kayak forward to the top of the slide. He was too afraid to look down, so he stared straight ahead into the distance. He knew that all the other campers as well as the camp instructors were watching him, but he didn't look their way. He forced himself to breathe slowly and deeply, trying to stay calm.

Far below Ben, the river flowed past the bottom of the slide - ready to catch the kayak. It seemed such a long way down! But at this point, what choice did he have?

"Are you ready?" called the instructor. "1...2...3...GO!" he shouted.

Ben pushed the kayak forward, felt it start to tip, and he was on his way down. Water splashed up into his face, so he couldn't see, but he kept his eyes looking straight ahead. All he could do was concentrate on holding his paddle high and staying balanced in the kayak. His ears were filled with the sound of the air rushing past them. After just a few seconds of this, his kayak flew off the end of the slide. Ben closed his eyes, waiting for the kayak to hit the water.



There was a loud **THWACK** as it hit. He thought he might tip over, but the kayak stayed upright and settled quietly on the water.

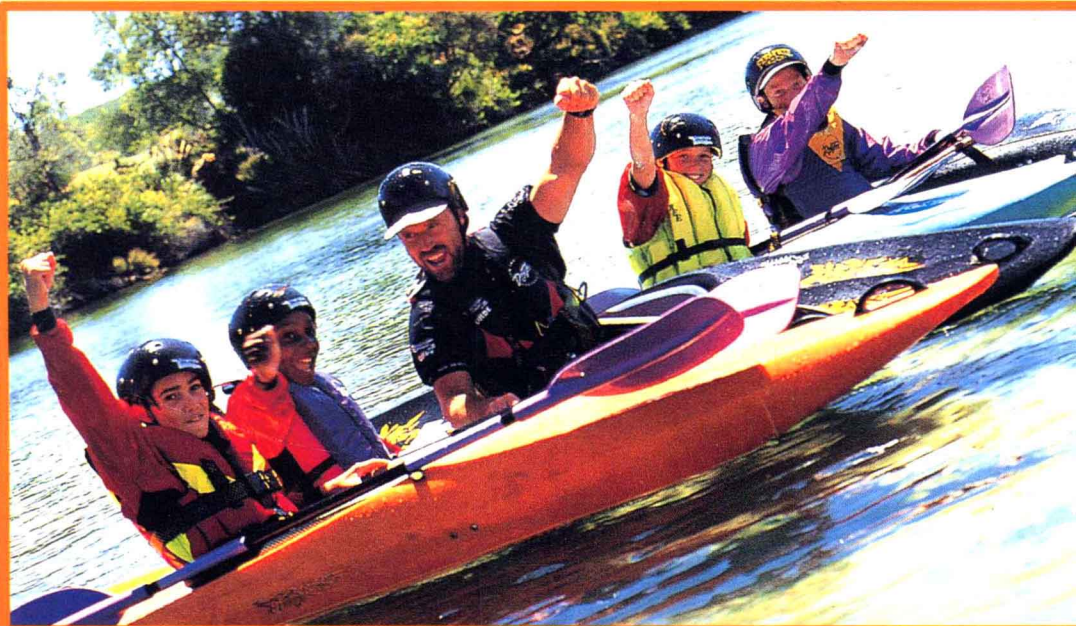
"**YAHOO!** You did it!" called his friends, who were waiting for their turns to try the slide. "**WHOO-EEE!**" "Way to go, Ben!" A smile spread across Ben's face as he listened to their cheering and clapping.

Then Ben heard the words he had been waiting for.

"That was really great, Ben," said his instructor. "If you can go down the training slide, you can do anything in that kayak."

For the rest of the afternoon, Ben watched the others go down the slide. First Danny, who was always confident and loved a challenge, flew down the slide with a wild yell. Next came Amy, her blonde hair flying out behind her. Then it was Kara, with a big smile on her face.

Ben, feeling relaxed and happy, lay back on the grass watching them. He had done it! He would never forget this.





A week had passed since the day Ben's parents brought him to the camp. At the beginning of the week, he had been afraid of even going out on the water. How long ago that seemed! He would be sorry to go home tomorrow and leave his new friends and the river behind.

In the evening, everyone gathered around the campfire, talking and eating. Tonight was their last night. Tomorrow they would be busy packing their things and saying good-bye.

That night, Ben lay in his sleeping bag, wide awake, thinking about the past week.

Suddenly, he heard a sound.

**"PSST, PSST!"** Someone was whispering outside his tent. Ben sat up.



"**PSST!** Ben, are you awake?" It was Danny. "Ben, I've got an idea. Let me in."

Danny crawled into the tent and sat down. "What do you think of this idea: tomorrow morning, we'll get up early, before anyone's awake, and we'll do one last river run. OK? We'll only need a couple of hours. We can be back before the packing starts. What do you think?"

"I don't know, Danny. We're not supposed to go out in the kayaks without an instructor," said Ben. "We could get into trouble."

"Oh, come on, Ben! We can do it. You did great on the training slide today. Remember, Jack said you could do anything in that kayak. It'll be fun!"



A strange light passed by the tent. Moving shadows appeared on the tent wall. Then the shadows disappeared and everything was dark again. "What was that?" whispered Danny.

The boys sat still, not daring to make a sound. Once again, the shadows moved along the side of the tent. Ben's heart was pounding. He felt beads of sweat trickling down his neck.

Suddenly, a small spider dropped from the top of the tent onto Danny's face. He quickly brought up his hand to brush it away, and his elbow hit the tent wall. Outside, somebody started laughing quietly. The two boys put their heads out of the tent and found Amy and Kara laughing. The girls' hands were held tightly pressed against their mouths as they tried not to wake up the rest of the camp with their laughter.

"What are you two doing here?" Danny asked angrily. "We know you're planning something. We want to be part of it!" said Kara.

"Come on, tell us. Don't leave us out," said Amy.

"We're going to make one last river run in the morning," said Danny bravely. "But you're not coming." He hesitated and looked over at Ben. "They aren't, are they?"

Ben made his decision. "One last run - that's what we're going to do. But it's just for Danny and me."

Amy and Kara looked at each other. They didn't want to be left out, and they weren't going to let the boys go without them. Kara began to think of a plan.

"You're not coming with us, so just forget about it!" Danny told them.

"Fine," said Kara. "Don't worry, we've got our own plans. Come on, Amy."

After the girls left, the two excited boys sat in the dark and whispered about the trip they would make down the river in the morning.

## CHAPTER TWO

It seemed only seconds after he had fallen asleep that Ben's watch alarm went off and woke him up. Quietly, he slipped out of his sleeping bag and got dressed. He pulled on his wet suit, jacket, and life jacket, put his helmet on his head, and left the tent. He moved quietly on his way to the place where the kayaks were kept.

Danny had already arrived and was dragging a kayak down to the river. He was dressed like Ben, but he also had water shoes on his feet, and he was wearing a spray skirt.

After choosing a kayak and getting a paddle, Ben put on a spray skirt, too. This would keep water from splashing into the kayak. Without the spray skirt, water could fill the kayak and make it heavy and impossible to manage.

Ben was nervous. His stomach felt full of butterflies.

"OK. This is the plan," Danny said calmly. Ben couldn't hear any sign of nervousness in Danny's voice.



"We'll head down the river. Don't hurry through the Pencil Sharpener or around Potato Rock. Just take your time. Pull into that quiet pool just past the Shotgun, and we'll take a break. I packed some food and drinks for us, so we can have breakfast there. OK?"

Ben still wasn't used to the unusual names given to the rocks and rapids on the river. Some names told something about what kind of conditions a kayaker could expect. For example, he knew that places on the river with names like "the Roller Coaster" and "the Helicopter" would give a kayker a wild ride. Other places got their names because of some river runs that didn't go as planned; for example, the Clean-up, Double Trouble, and the Bad Dream.

"OK," Ben answered.

He asked himself, "Is this one last river run really such a good idea?" But he decided that Danny was a good kayaker, with lots of experience. He knew what he was doing. And Ben also told himself, "If Danny can do it, then so can I." He remembered what their kayak instructor had told them about being afraid. The instructor had repeated a quote from an American president, Franklin D. Roosevelt: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself..."

"Come on," said Danny. "Let's go!"

Ben slid his legs into the nose of the kayak. Then he stretched the spray skirt around the kayak's open cockpit so that it was completely covered. Now the kayak was like a part of his body.

Together, the boys slid their kayaks into the river, its current pushing them along gently. Then they began to paddle.



# CHAPTER THREE

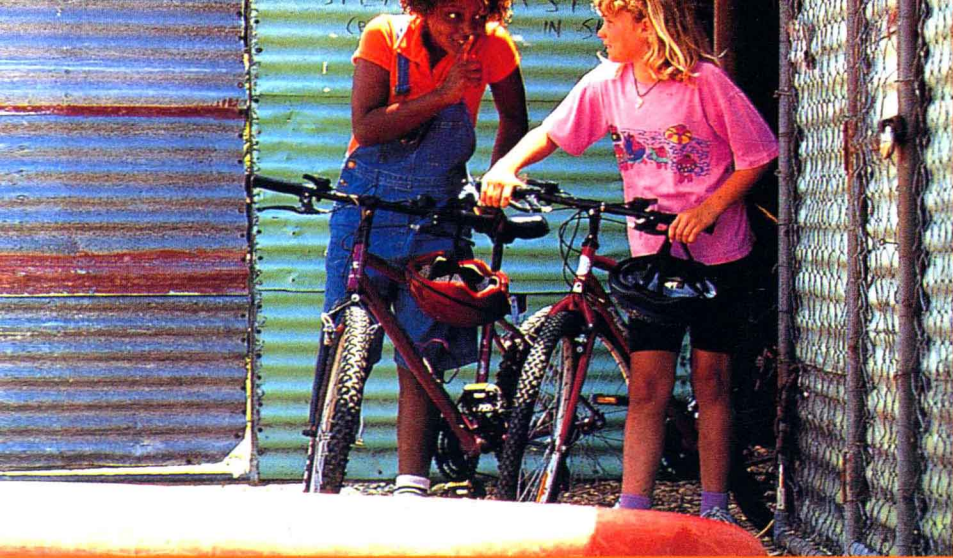


"Amy, come on. The boys have already left," Kara whispered. "We need to be quick if we're going to follow them."

The girls silently got dressed and ran to the bike shed. They found two helmets and then quietly took out two of the bikes. Smiling but not talking, they pushed the bikes to the path that ran along the bank of the river.

Quickly, they jumped on the bikes and started pedaling as fast as they could, wanting to catch up with the two boys.

Meanwhile, Ben was carefully paddling along behind Danny. After a few minutes he began to feel more confident. His strokes with the paddle fell into



a steady rhythm - left, right, left, right. He realized he was starting to relax and enjoy himself. It really was great to be out here on the river all by themselves! Ben began to look around and notice things, like the freshness of the early morning air. He could hear birds calling all around them, and he noticed the way that the tall grass and branches of trees were moving with the breeze.

Just ahead, Ben could see the beginning of the white water, where the river narrowed and the water moved fast. Soon they would enter the first set of rapids. He started paddling a little more quickly as a feeling of excitement rose inside him. All week at camp he had been working on the skills needed to control a kayak in white water. Ahead of him, there was a section of the river where he would have to use all those skills to get safely through.



Danny paddled around and between the rocks in the river, and Ben followed close behind. Then, when the river grew quiet again, he paddled his kayak up next to Danny's.

"Good for you!" said Danny. "You're doing fine. Do you think you're ready for the Pencil Sharpener?"

Ben knew the Pencil Sharpener well. He would never forget the white water that had taken him on a wild, wet ride.