

**Sample Reading Performance Assessment**  
**High School – 2009 – *Finding Strength on the Mat***

**P2**

**Read** the following article carefully and **make notes in the margin** as you read. Your notes should include:

- Comments that show that you **understand** the article. (A summary or statement of the main idea of important sections may serve this purpose.)
- Questions you have that show what you are **wondering** about as you read.
- Notes that differentiate between **fact** and **opinion**.
- Observations about how the **author's craft** (organization, word choice, perspective, support) and **choices** affect the article.

Your **margin notes** are part of your score for this assessment.

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_ **SSID** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class Period** \_\_\_\_\_

**School** \_\_\_\_\_ **School District** \_\_\_\_\_

**FINDING STRENGTH ON THE MAT**

*Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:*



Jacob Hall (left) and Kyle Grahn shake hands before a wrestling match Tuesday. When he was 3 years old, Hall contracted meningitis and lost most of his legs and most of one arm.

Photo by Jamie Francis. Used by permission of [The Oregonian](#).

***A 12-year-old who lost most of his legs and part of an arm is a formidable wrestler***

TROUTDALE – Middle school kids aren't exactly noted for their tact. So you'd expect a few comments from a gym full of pre-teens when a 66-pound boy, missing most of his legs and a good bit of an arm, moves to the center of the wrestling ring.

But as 12-year-old Jacob Hall stares down his opponent and throws himself full-force into the match, the throng of students has focused on a wrestler from another team – "Whoa, a girl is wrestling!" a boy exclaims.

The only one who seems to notice Hall at all is a 4-year-old girl who leans over and says: "Mommy, look at the little guy!"

"Remember," the mom says. "God makes everyone in different ways."

She pauses to look at Hall, who lost parts of his limbs to meningitis nine years ago. He's losing on points but putting up a good fight. His

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strong back muscles are straining now, and he flips his opponent over. After three one-minute rounds, he still hasn't been pinned.

"Whoa," the mom says. "He's good."

Next to the anomaly of a girl wrestling on the boys' team, Jacob Hall may seem like just another competitor. But in the ring, he only reaches the waist of most of his opponents. When he goes for a pin, he has to be creative.

While other boys know without hesitation that they'll grow stronger and bigger, Hall fears next year may be his last chance to wrestle. He worries he'll be too small to fight.

But right now, in the last week of the season, he's a tireless competitor for Walt Morey Middle School's junior varsity wrestling team. He loses many of his matches on points, but he's only been pinned once.

This year, his coach says, he's really hit his stride. He has won four matches and even took home a prize at one tournament. On Friday, he'll wrestle three matches in the Reynolds Middle School tournament.

Such a competitor is rare but not unheard of: In 2004, Kacey McCallister, a legless student at McNary High School in the Salem-Keizer district, won second place in the state wrestling championship.

Hall had never heard of any other wrestlers like him when he joined the Troutdale school's team. Not that it fazed him: His parents say he's been fighting since he was 3 ½ years old.

That's when he developed meningitis, an infection of the spinal fluid. His feet, legs and arms turned black within hours.

Doctors said he would die. When he kept fighting, they said his life would be difficult. His parents didn't care. They had a daughter and had lost another son – a 3 ½ -month-old whose blood pumped backward – eight years before.

"We'll take whatever we can get," his dad, Hoby, remembers saying.

They hadn't expected he'd turn into the handsome, energetic kid he is, a kid who loves cheese and video games and, above everything else, wrestling.

Jacob Hall has a thatch of brown hair and wide brown eyes. He grew up watching professional wrestlers on TV. He loved how they seemed fearless. How nothing seemed to hurt. At night, he used his good hand to mimic matches with small figurines on a miniature wrestling ring.

He wanted to live without limitations like wrestlers seemed to. Everyday activities are still painful. He rarely wears his leg prosthetics – he's on his 10th pair now – because they hurt, he says. He can't ride a bike. And the pain he feels when writing has made his grades suffer.

Last year, he saw a sign advertising tryouts for the school's wrestling team. Perfect, he thought.

"I didn't care if it would be hard or if I could win," he says. "I just wanted to have fun."

Hall's parents never tried to dissuade him. But, his mom, Andrea, admits, she has trouble watching her son get knocked around.

*Notes on my thoughts,  
reactions and questions as I  
read:*

"I think they're going to break him in half," she says. "I know it's silly. But I see his face turn red, and I just think they'll break him." Her son rolls his eyes: "If she watched every match, guaranteed, I would not be wrestling next year."

The pain of wrestling is nothing compared with bone spurs and endless surgeries.

Sometimes, his disability has been an advantage. Bigger, taller wrestlers are temporarily confused, Jacob Hall's teammates say. They seem to be thinking, "Can I touch him?" Traditional wrestling moves – grabbing legs and arms – won't work. While the wrestlers spend seconds disoriented, Hall pounces. As they lose their balance, he smiles.

Of course, his parents say, he's always smiling. He makes the best of what he has. "I caught him out in the backyard once, standing outside a 3-foot hole," his dad says, starting to laugh. "He had used his prosthetic leg to dig that hole."

Jacob Hall erupts into a fit of giggles remembering that. He smiles when he's eating huge spoonfuls of peanut butter. He smiles a big toothy grin when you ask him about girls. He even smiles during wrestling matches when an opponent has knocked him to the ground.

Size is his biggest disadvantage, says his coach, Gary Schuh. At some meets, there's no one small enough to wrestle Hall. Even when someone is in his weight class, around 75 pounds, the boy often outweighs Hall by 10 pounds or more. But Hall's fast. And he's strong.

Maybe that's why Kyle Grahn couldn't pin him. Grahn has wrestled for six years and is on the Sandy varsity middle school team. He pins almost all of his opponents, he says.

On Tuesday, he wrestled Hall. As the two tussled, Hall's dad hollered from the sidelines: "Get him, J! You know what to do! Pit bull! Pit bull!" "I couldn't pin him at all," Grahn said after the match, which Grahn won on points. "He's really good."

It was one of the hardest matches of Hall's life. He was down nearly the whole time. But the timer buzzed, signaling the end of the game, and he hopped up, shook Grahn's hand and went to help clean up the gym, just like the other guys.

*Notes on my thoughts, reactions and questions as I read:*

1. If you were explaining this article to someone who had not read it, what would you say about it? Be sure to include enough details for the person to understand it well.

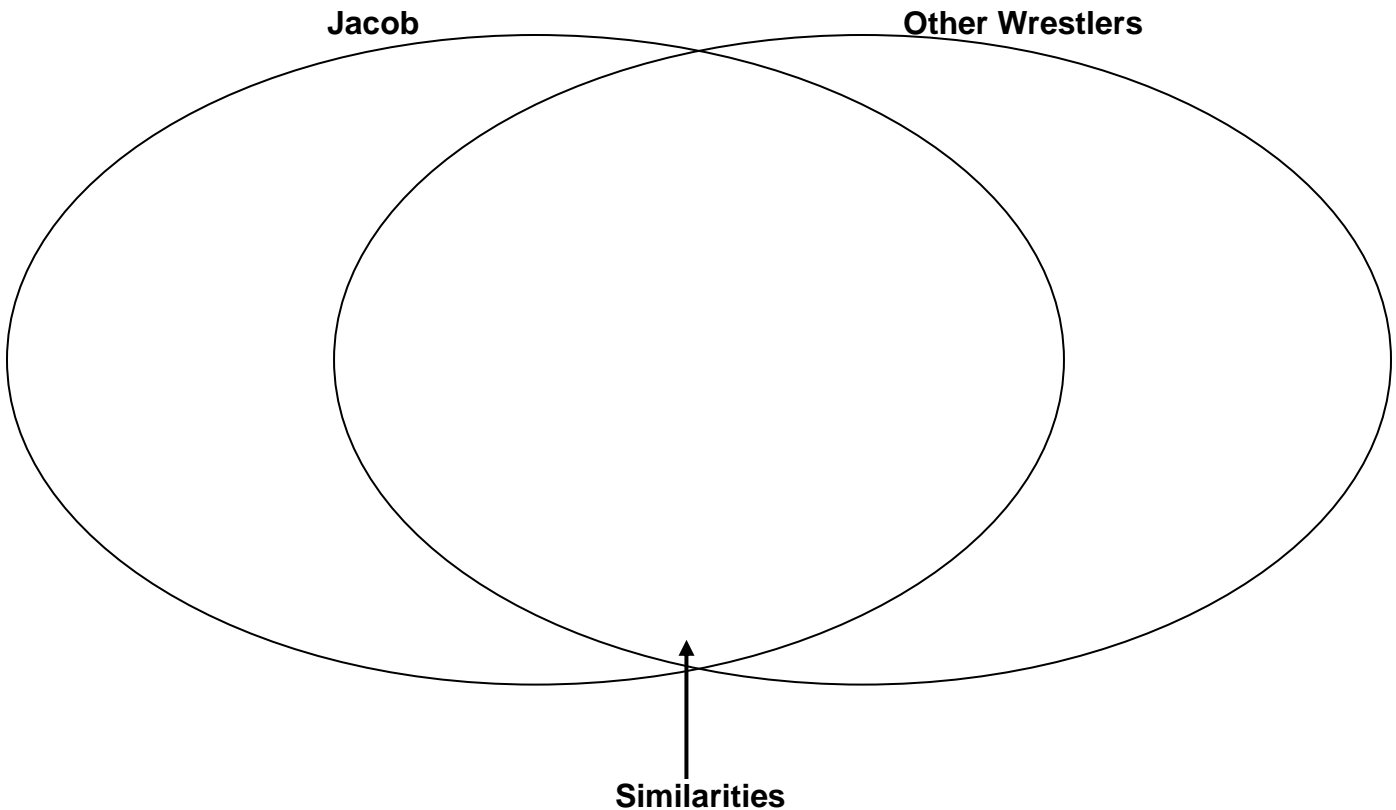
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2. Based on this article, identify three characteristics of Jacob Hall. Use a quote or example from the article to support your answers.

Characteristic	Quote or Example from article
a.	a.
b.	b.
c.	c.

3. Use the Venn diagram below to show how Jacob Hall is similar to and different from other wrestlers his age.



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4. Even though the article doesn't say directly, it gives some clues about how Jacob's mother feels about his wrestling activities. The shape of the head below represents the mind of Jacob's mother. Draw pictures or use words to show her attitude about Jacob's wrestling. You may include direct quotes from the article.

