

Sport – from the inside

When Harry Schiffer was sent to prison for three years at the age of 15, it seemed to him that doors were closing on the future in more than one way. He was an aggressive boy, and had been in trouble several times. It appears he could hardly help getting into a fight if opportunity offered, and many Friday and Saturday nights opportunity certainly did. But three years was a more serious sentence* than he had ever had before, and for the first time it made him think.



He sees those closed doors differently now: instead of going to the pub on Saturdays, in prison he has been given special permission to play rugby for the Wyle Town team, whose ground is near the prison. Playing rugby has shown him that there are more useful ways to be aggressive than hitting people, and Harry thinks he's changing.

Before he arrived in the under-18s prison, he had never even heard of rugby.

But the prison staff noticed that Harry had the right shape for a rugby player, and when they tried to find a way of using his aggression, the coach of the prison rugby team suggested he come and try a training session. Harry took to the game, and soon he was a regular member of the team (known humorously as the Wyle Insiders). The Insiders have played – and once or twice beaten – some quite well-known amateur teams, including big public school sides. The main attraction of the game for the boys is that it gives them something to look forward to. It breaks up the boredom of life inside.

Yet it's not just a way of passing the time. At the prison the staff are trying to change the boys' attitudes and teach them something about self-control. The idea is that, if they learn that, they

don't have to get pulled into a life of crime. Maybe it works, too. The number of long-term offenders from Wyle who repeat their offences is one of the lowest in the country.

Rugby is more suitable than football just because it is less popular – boys don't come with fixed attitudes. They haven't learnt bad behaviour at the football grounds, and anyway rugby is both a better team game

and a game requiring more controlled physical aggression. The most important lessons the boys have to learn are about controlling themselves – and behaving acceptably whether they win or lose. And they lose most of the time because they play good teams. It can be a hard experience for bad boys if they meet opposition that is stronger and tougher than they are – but not criminally so.

There are problems in the policy. Last week, two of the Insiders team tried to climb over a wall to freedom, during a match. Harry, who is so good at rugby that he can now play for an outside team, is not tempted to follow them.

"I'm out of here in six months, and I'm not coming back. I'm going to go on playing for the Town if they'll have me. Rugby's my game now."

* sentence – Urteil

Assignments

1. Read the title, the first sentence and the last three sentences of the story. Then write one sentence and say what you think the text is about.
2. Read the first two paragraphs carefully and write three sentences about Harry, his problem and how he is changing.

Begin: *Harry is an aggressive boy who ...*

3. Read paragraphs 3-5, then answer the following questions. Write one sentence for each question.

1. Are boys in Wyle Prison rugby players when they arrive?
2. Why did the staff think Harry would be good at rugby?
3. Who does the team play against?
4. Do they win all their games?
5. Why do the boys like playing rugby?
6. Why do the staff like the boys to play?
7. Does it work?
8. Why is rugby a good game for the boys?
9. What do the boys have to learn? (two sentences)
10. What are Harry's plans for the future, after prison?

4. Find a heading for each paragraph.

Example: *1. A sentence to make Harry think.*

2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Hilfe

Wenn man, wie bei der *summary* gefordert, Sachverhalte knapp und verständlich wiedergeben will, muss man Sätze mit Hilfe von Konjunktionen (*connectives*) miteinander verbinden können, damit ein zusammenhängender, gut lesbarer Text entsteht. Die folgende Übung zeigt, wie man es anstellen kann. Du solltest dir die Konjunktionen merken - sie können dir auch bei anderen Aufgaben von Nutzen sein!

5. Look at these pairs of sentences. Rewrite the second sentence in each pair, adding one of the words in brackets.

1. Billy is in prison. He's not a violent boy. (moreover / yet / indeed)
2. Rugby is a violent game. I refuse to play it. (so / yet / besides)
3. Harry is aggressive. He's always in trouble. (therefore / however / nevertheless)
4. Harry is learning. He's learning fast. (so / actually / what's more)

5. Some of the boys tried to escape. They're not allowing them to play. (on the other hand / consequently / nevertheless)
6. Wyle Town are good. They're top of the league. (moreover / so / however)
7. I haven't seen him this week. He's here somewhere. (so / nevertheless / besides)
8. Wyle has good parts. Its parish church is one of the best in the country. (indeed / so / therefore)

Hilfe

- Eine *summary* ist die stark gekürzte Fassung eines vorliegenden Textes.
- Die *summary* beschränkt sich auf die Wiedergabe der wichtigsten Fakten.
- Eine *summary* soll die Inhalte eines Textes präzise und in sachlicher Form wiedergeben. Wertungen und Interpretationen gehören nicht in eine *summary*.
- Direkte Rede wird in der *summary* in indirekte Rede umgewandelt.
- Der Einleitungssatz der *summary* hat Überblickcharakter: er soll knapp zusammenfassen, worum es in dem Originaltext geht (das heißt, das Thema des Textes sollte nach Möglichkeit genannt werden).

6. Put together your answers from exercises 1, 2 and 3 to make a continuous summary. Use *connectives* as in exercise 5 to make your text 'flow'.

Additional assignments

7. One of the staff has to explain Wyle's policy about sport to a politician. Can you write his explanation in 5-6 sentences? You say that it doesn't always work, but that it is generally successful.
Begin: *What we try to do is ...*

8. Harry has been out of prison for five years. He still plays rugby, but he is married and has a job with a building company. He thinks about his experience in prison, and tries to describe what it meant to him and what it did for him. Decide whether he thinks it was good, bad or both. Then write 5-6 sentences, summing up his thoughts.

Begin: *When I first arrived in prison, I thought ...*
After a few weeks, ...
Gradually ...
In the end, ...

9. A player from a public school team writes about the Wyle Insiders in a school magazine, after a hard but exciting match with the Insiders has been lost 24-23.

Mention

- who played in the Insider team,
- how good they were,
- how they behaved.

Write about 7-10 sentences. Make some short, some longer.