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Snowboarder Louie Vito is one of hundreds of American athletes hoping to win gold at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. **Page 4**

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Oldest Book**
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Leaning Tower**
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Is It Time for a Raise?

People debate whether to raise the minimum wage

Devonte Yates works part-time at a McDonald's in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he gets paid \$7.25 an hour. Devonte, 21, uses his wages to help pay for college, but he says he doesn't have money left for much else.

"I also need money for food, to put a roof over my head, to keep the lights on in my house, and to enjoy life," he says.

Devonte has joined thousands of other fast-food and retail workers across the country in protests to demand a higher minimum wage. Currently, \$7.25 per hour is the federal minimum wage—the least that a person in most jobs can legally be paid. (Twenty-one states and

Word to Know

economy (ih-KON-uh-mee) *noun.* a country's system of producing, distributing, and consuming goods and services



Washington, D.C. have a minimum wage that is higher than the U.S. government requires.)

If President Barack Obama has his way, Devonte will get a raise. Obama and many members of Congress want to increase the hourly minimum wage to \$10.10.

"This single step would raise the incomes of millions of working families," Obama said last year. "It could mean the

difference between . . . scraping by or finally getting ahead."

But other members of Congress, as well as many business owners, think raising the minimum wage would hurt the **economy**. They argue that if companies had to pay higher wages, they would be forced to hire fewer workers. They also say that prices for many products would go up, which would affect all Americans.

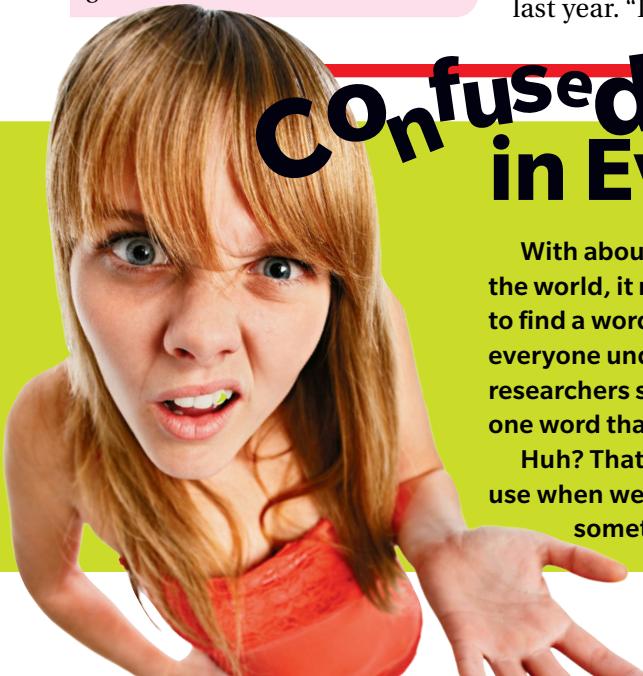
Confused in Every Language

With about 7,000 languages in the world, it may seem impossible to find a word that nearly everyone understands. But researchers say they've found one word that's universal: *Huh*.

Huh? That's right. The word we use when we don't understand something—as in "Huh?"

"What did you say?"—is spoken around the globe.

Researchers in the Netherlands studied 10 languages and found that each one—from Italian to Mandarin Chinese—has a version of *huh*. The way it's pronounced varies, however. For example, in Spanish, it's pronounced "eh."



A Big Book Sale

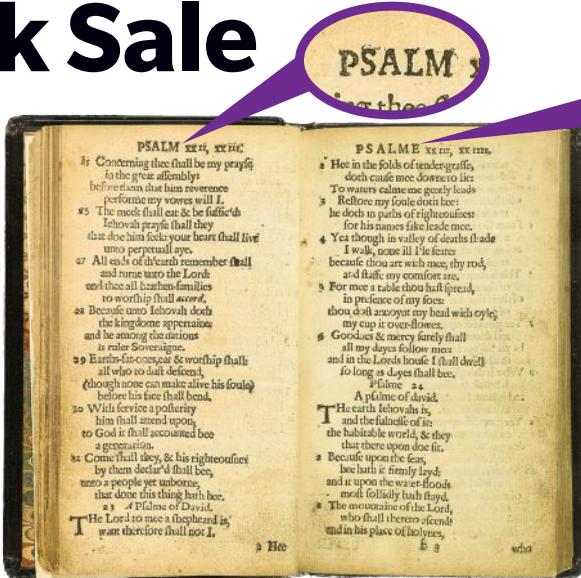
America's first book
printed in English sells
for a record price

How much would you pay for a small, tattered book that's filled with mistakes? How about \$14.2 million? In November, a small book of psalms, or religious poems, sold for that amount—the highest price ever for a book sold at auction. But this is no ordinary book. Known as the Bay Psalm Book, it was the first book in English printed in North America.

The rare book was printed in 1640 by the Puritans of the

Word to Know

philanthropist (fih-LAN-thruhp-ist) *noun.* a wealthy person who gives money and time to help make life better for others



PSALME
the folds of

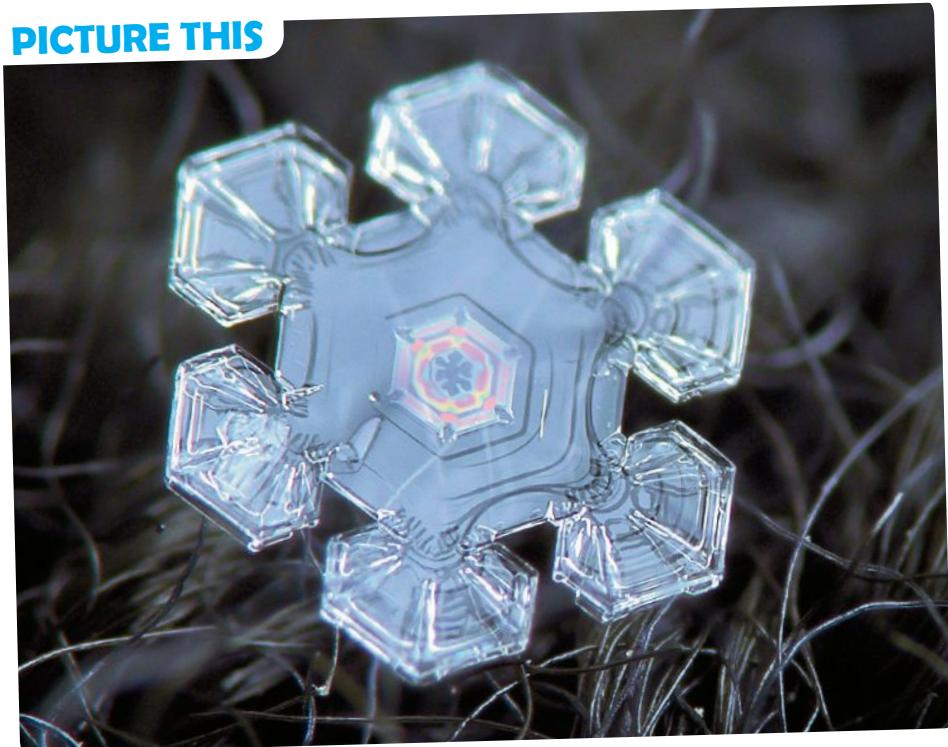
The spelling of
the word *psalm* is
inconsistent
throughout the
book. At the top
of each right-
hand page, it has
an "e" at the end.

Massachusetts Bay Colony, about 10 years after they arrived in the New World from England. At the time, there were no experts at printing books in the colony, so a locksmith operated the printing press. Because he was learning on the job, some pages in the Bay Psalm Book are in the wrong order and others are blank. Also,

the Puritans could have used spell-check, as the book has spelling errors throughout.

Of the 1,700 copies originally printed, only 11 are known to still exist. The buyer of the record-setting copy, a **philanthropist** named David Rubenstein, plans to loan his Bay Psalm Book to libraries across the country.

PICTURE THIS



Snow Show

How would you describe a snowflake? White? Fluffy? Here's what one looks like up close. A photographer from Russia recently took close-up photos of this snowflake and hundreds of others. (This one is lying on wool.) A snowflake is made up of one or more ice crystals that form six-sided shapes. No two flakes are the same, so you'll never see this one again!

Let the Games Begin!

American athletes hope to bring home a lot of gold from the 2014 Winter Olympics

Devin Logan steps into her skis at the top of a snow-covered hill. The 20-year-old from West Dover, Vermont, then speeds down the hill—but this is no ordinary ski slope.

At the bottom is a huge curved ramp called a half-pipe. Logan zooms onto the half-pipe and goes airborne. She does flips, twists, and turns, all while soaring up to 20 feet in the air!

Welcome to the world of ski half-pipe, which will make its **Olympic debut** at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. From February 7 to 23, athletes from more than 80 countries will be going for the gold in



Devin Logan

15 events, including figure skating, hockey, and snowboarding.

Logan hopes to be one of them. She competes in both the ski half-pipe and the ski slopestyle—another new Olympic sport. In slopestyle, skiers do spins and other tricks along railings and over jumps. To qualify for the U.S. Olympic team, Logan has to beat out some of America's best freestyle skiers in a series of competitions held before the Games.

"There's definitely pressure," Logan says. "Representing my country [at the Olympics] is a lifelong dream of mine."

Here's a look at some other U.S. athletes who hope to shine in Sochi.

—by Joe Bubar

Words to Know

debut (day-BYOO) *noun.* first appearance

Communist (KAHM-yuh-nist) *adjective.* describes a system in which the government owns all businesses and land, and personal freedoms are extremely limited



RUSSIA Fast Facts

POPULATION: 143 million

CAPITAL: Moscow

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE: Russian

SIZE: More than 6 million square miles—nearly twice the size of the U.S. Russia is the world's biggest country.

HISTORY: From 1922 to 1991, Russia was part of the Soviet Union, a nation that had a **Communist** government.

After World War II (1939–1945), the U.S. and the Soviet Union were the world's two most powerful nations. They were also big rivals. The long period of tension between the two countries was known as the Cold War.

In 1991, the Soviet Union broke into 15 separate countries. Today, Russia is a more democratic nation, but people there still don't enjoy many of the rights that Americans do. For example, Russians are still sometimes jailed for criticizing their government. The U.S. and other nations worry that the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, is trying to restrict public protests and other democratic rights.

Source: CIA World Factbook

STEVE HOLCOMB

SPORT: Bobsledding

HOMETOWN: Park City, Utah



Steve Holcomb led the U.S. four-man bobsled team to a gold medal at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. That had seemed impossible only two years earlier, because Holcomb was going blind. A rare eye disorder had slowly destroyed his vision. In 2008, he had surgery to fix his eyesight and help get him back into the sled. Now Holcomb has his sights set on a repeat of his 2010 performance, but he knows it won't be easy.

"It's going to be a battle," he says. "It's going to take great equipment and great athletes to bring home the gold."



LOUIE VITO

SPORT: Snowboard Half-pipe

HOMETOWN: Sandy, Utah

Snowboarder Louie Vito is used to appearing on a big stage. He was a member of the 2010 U.S. Olympic team and has competed on the TV show *Dancing With the Stars*. He'll need all the fancy footwork he can muster if he wants to star in Sochi. But Vito isn't feeling pressure to come away from the Games with the gold.

"[My goal is] just putting down a run that I'm happy with," he says, "so I can leave Russia knowing that it was the best run that I can do."



JULIE CHU

SPORT: Ice Hockey

HOMETOWN: Fairfield, Connecticut

Julie Chu knows all about winning Olympic medals. As a forward on the U.S. women's ice hockey team, she won the bronze medal in 2006 and the silver medal twice—in 2002 and 2010. This year, she hopes to finally help lead her team to the gold.

"The last three and a half years, we've worked extremely hard," she says. "Preparation is everything."



Less of a Lean

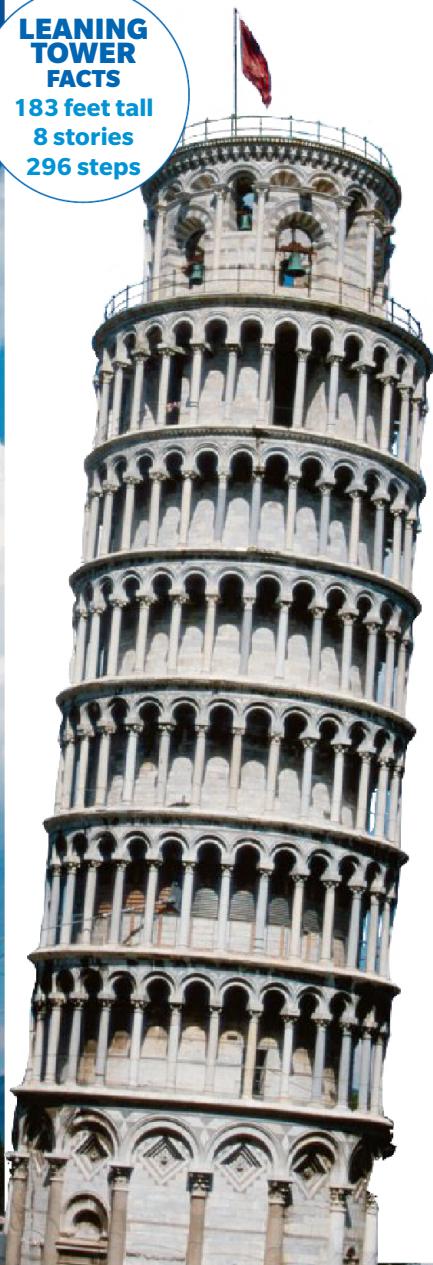
The Leaning Tower of Pisa is standing a little straighter these days

The Leaning Tower of Pisa has never stood straight.

The bell tower in Italy was tilting even as it was being built more than 800 years ago. But

LEANING TOWER FACTS

- 183 feet tall
- 8 stories
- 296 steps



today, the tower is leaning about an inch less than it was just a little over a decade ago. Experts say that's proof that a \$40 million project to save the tower from toppling is working.

A Tilting Tower

Construction of the Leaning Tower of Pisa began in 1173, and it took nearly 200 years to complete. Workers discovered that the soft soil beneath the tower couldn't fully support its weight. As the tower slowly sank into the dirt, it began to lean. Over the years, the marble tower continued to tilt even more.

By 1990, it was leaning more than 14 feet. Many people feared it would collapse. The tower was closed to tourists, and efforts to reduce its lean began. Steel cables were used to **stabilize** it, and workers dug out some of the soil beneath the higher end of the tower to help it slowly level out.

By 2001, the tower had been

Word to Know

stabilize (STEH-buh-lyze) *verb.* to make or hold something steady or secure



straightened by almost 20 inches. It was reopened to the public, and the cables were removed. Engineers hoped that the tower would slowly continue to straighten out on its own as the soil below it settled. Recent measurements show that it's doing just that. It still leans more than 12 feet, but experts say the tower should lean less over time.

To people in Pisa, that's not necessarily a good thing. After all, the tower's lean is what attracts about 500,000 visitors to their city each year.

"The people of Pisa are delighted that the tower has been restored," the city's mayor told reporters, "but not that it has been straightened."

—by Joe Bubar

Setting the Record Straight

The Leaning Tower of Pisa used to lean farther than any tower in the world. But the straightening of the tower has stripped it of its title. The Guinness World Record now belongs to the lesser-known Leaning Tower of Suurhusen in northwest Germany. The bell tower (right) was built in 1450.



DEBATE: Is It OK for Stars to Promote Junk Food?



Peyton Manning is the star quarterback of the Denver Broncos. Off the field, he's the star of ads for foods and drinks. Manning is one of many athletes who endorse products like soda and pizza. Though pro athletes are known for being physically fit, a new study from Yale University found that most of the foods and drinks they promote are unhealthy—high in calories and low in nutrients. Marie Bragg, lead author of the study, says athletes “send the wrong message to kids” by endorsing what many people believe is junk food.

Athletes aren't the only stars who endorse unhealthy foods and drinks. Other celebrities, such as One Direction, do it too. Many people agree with Bragg that this is irresponsible. But others say it's not a celebrity's job to encourage kids to eat right.

Here's what two of our readers think.

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Yes

**Colin Carter,
Wisconsin**

It's OK for stars to promote junk food. People eat unhealthy things all the time, whether or not stars endorse them. Some meals made at home are actually less healthy than some meals you can buy at fast-food restaurants. People should eat junk food in moderation. They should research which foods are good and bad for them, and then make their own decisions about what they eat.

No

**Aacia Sayyed,
Pennsylvania**

Stars shouldn't promote junk food. Celebrities are role models. If children see them eating fast food or drinking soda, they'll want to do it as well. Statistics show that more and more children in the U.S. are obese or have other problems that can come from eating unhealthy food. Plus, celebrities already make millions of dollars. They don't need extra money from endorsing junk food.

STICKY SITUATION



Sarah is planning to play her flute in the upcoming school talent show. Judy, who also plays the flute, asks Sarah to join her in a duet. But Sarah doesn't think Judy is very talented. Sarah is worried that Judy would ruin her performance, but she doesn't want to hurt Judy's feelings.

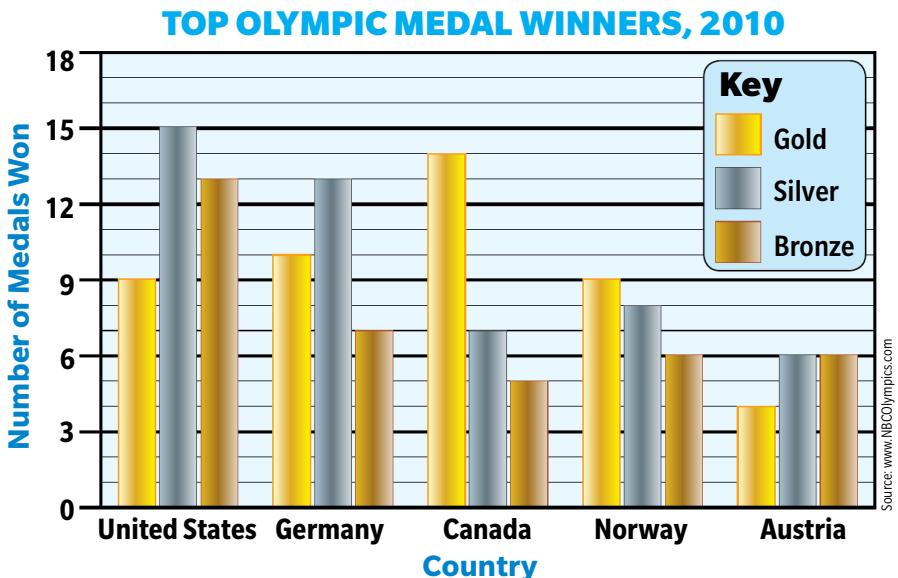
What should Sarah do?

Send us your response! We'll pick some of our favorite entries and publish them online. For details, visit www.scholastic.com/sn56.

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News Graph

The last Winter Olympics took place in Vancouver, Canada, in 2010. The graph below shows the five countries that took home the most medals. Study the graph, and then answer the questions.



1. Which country won the most medals overall? How many did it win?

2. Which countries won more gold medals than silver ones?

3. Which two countries were closest in the total number of medals won? What was the difference in their medal counts?

News IQ: pages 4-5

1. Which of the athletes featured in the article has already won an Olympic gold medal?

- (A) Devin Logan
- (C) Steve Holcomb
- (B) Louie Vito
- (D) Julie Chu

2. From his quote in the article, you can conclude that Louie Vito ____.

- (A) is nervous about competing in the Olympics
- (B) doesn't want to win an Olympic medal
- (C) is mainly concerned with doing his best at the Olympics
- (D) thinks he is the world's best snowboarder

3. Which of the following sports is new to the Olympics this year?

- (A) women's ice hockey
- (C) ski half-pipe
- (B) snowboarding
- (D) bobsledding

4. A Communist government would most likely do which of the following?

- (A) want to host the Olympics
- (B) restrict people's rights
- (C) give land to business owners
- (D) allow people to hold public protests



News IQ: page 6

5. Which of the following details best supports the main idea of the article?

- (A) Construction of the Leaning Tower of Pisa took nearly 200 years to complete.
- (B) The tower attracts about 500,000 visitors each year.
- (C) The tower has never stood up straight.
- (D) Workers dug out soil beneath the higher side of the tower to help level it out.

6. Why are some people in Pisa unhappy that the leaning tower is slowly being straightened?

- (A) They believe it will still fall over.
- (B) They worry that it may no longer attract as many tourists.
- (C) They think the repairs cost too much.
- (D) They don't want tourists to walk inside the tower.

7. According to the article, what caused the Leaning Tower of Pisa to tilt?

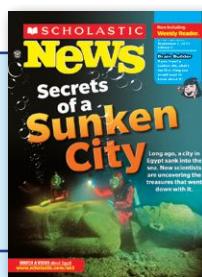
- (A) It was built with too many levels.
- (B) It was built with marble.
- (C) It was built using steel cables.
- (D) It was built on soft soil.

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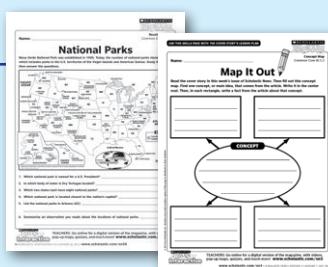
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