

The Final Second

by Miles B., 8th grader

"Miles, back up top in thirty minutes!" shouted Branko, my coach.

I was down in the locker room with my friends Brent, Dillon and Andrew. No one spoke a word. We were all great friends and on the same team. But on race day, not a word is spoken. Even though people want to talk to us, we keep our headphones in and nod our heads yes. For the next thirty minutes, all we could do is sit and wait.



As I got on the chairlift overlooking the course, I knew that it was almost time. I saw each other racer waiting for the opportunity to take me off the podium. In life, people want the worst for the best. I come down toward the pit and I try to keep focused on the task at hand.

The stress. I continue to try and keep the pressure away, but it's nearly impossible, with it breathing down my neck like a stalker in a dark alley. People have expectations, and my biggest fear is not to meet them.

As I sat inside the tent, I could hear the tree-mounted speakers naming off other competitors and their times and current standings. The clock was counting down, and I knew all I had to do was exist between the break of the start beam and crossing through the laser. But for some reason, those sixty seconds always feel like a lifetime.

It was nearing the start. I clicked into my skis and waited outside my tent, anticipating my name to be called to enter the starting shack. As I stood silently, Mark Macay, my Atomic USA representative approached me with another familiar face: Rob Dill, the owner of the company who put his trust in me to put his product on top of the podium after each competition. "Miles, keep it up on two, and we will be waiting for you under the tent at the finish line. Go do what you know we need you to do." Mr. Dill stated this with a stern tone.

This being said, I became more nervous than usual. Then "Miles B., two out, enter the start house!" came out of the speakers. Both racers ahead of me were out, and now all eyes were on me. Thoughts and comments came racing through my head. The gate keeper then spoke, "Racer ready?"

With a firm nod to him, "Here we go," I said to myself.

Where is Miles' Idea Development strongest?

Write a 5 Next to Miles' best Idea Development skill. Write a 1 next to the skill where Miles might improve his I.D. the most. Where will your 2, 3, and 4 go? Discuss your choices with a partner.

- Miles used a balance of showing and telling.
- Miles' details try to paint a picture in the reader's head.
- Miles took a unique approach when writing about this topic.
- Miles stayed on topic throughout the entire writing.
- Miles' theme/message is clear to his reader.

"Three!"

"Stay low, stay quick," I said in my head.

"Two!"

"Everything I've got! Everything!" Now my brain is racing at a pace I can't explain.

"One!"

And with one hard kick, I break the wand and everything disappears. It's me and the snow. My thighs start to burn, and I keep saying to myself, "Stay strong! Stay strong!" And as the finish corral nears, I charge harder and harder until I make one last stretch with my hand to stop my time.

"And with a time of 56.327 seconds, Miles B. has taken the lead!"

I make a fist and hold it up to show that I am number one. I look into the tent, and my sponsors just smile and nod yes. They know that I will remain unbeatable. Until the next time, when it all starts over again.

Where is Miles' Organization strongest?

Write a 5 Next to Miles' best Organization skill. Write a 1 next to the skill where Miles might improve his Organization the most. Where will your 2, 3, and 4 go? Discuss your choices with a partner.

- ___ Miles' introduction grabs the reader's attention.
- ___ Miles' conclusion links back to my introduction.
- ___ Miles used transition words to move from idea to idea.
- ___ Miles' paragraphs show where his sub-topics begin & end.
- ___ Miles' title stands for his entire draft, not just a part of it.

Based on your Idea Development and Organization rankings, what three revision goals would you suggest to Miles?