



Wilma Rudolph

Children learn about a determined athlete who went the distance for Olympic gold.

Facts to Share

From the moment of her premature birth, Wilma Rudolph had to fight to overcome health problems. Then, at age 4, she contracted polio and had to wear leg braces. At nine years old, she was able to take off her braces and walk! From then on, she enjoyed running, jumping, and especially playing basketball. During the summers of her high school years, she trained with a college track team. When she was 16, Rudolph won a bronze medal in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Four years later, she won three gold medals at the 1960 Rome Olympics!

Introducing the Activity

After sharing facts (above and at left) about Wilma Rudolph, draw a large Olympic Rings symbol on the board, leaving space inside the rings for writing. Add the heading "What it takes to be an Olympic athlete." Explain what the symbol represents and then invite children to describe what it takes to become an Olympic athlete. Write their responses inside the rings. After discussing, have them make these booklets about Wilma Rudolph.

What to Do

1. Cut out the booklet backing, cover, pages, title box, and word boxes.
2. Sequence the pages, stack them behind the cover, and staple them to the backing where indicated.
3. Glue the title box to the backing where indicated. Then color the backing and write your name on the line.
4. Read pages 1–6. For each page, find the word that best completes the sentence. Glue that word box to the page where indicated.
(Answers: 1. *child*, 2. *strong*, 3. *ran*, 4. *Olympics*, 5. *races*, 6. *medals*)
5. Read the booklet together. Then form small groups and have children share their booklets with each other.

Taking It Further

Invite children to make gold medals for themselves! First, prepare for each child a large yellow construction paper circle with "(Child's name) is determined to work hard and (description of goal)." Have children complete the sentence with their name and a personal goal, and then decorate their medal with gold glitter. To complete, help them staple a red or blue crepe paper "ribbon" to the top.

Book Break

Wilma Unlimited: How Wilma Rudolph Became the World's Fastest Woman by Kathleen Krull (Voyager Books, 2000). Bright, bold illustrations highlight this book about Rudolph's childhood and her road to the Olympics.

Materials

For each child:

- ★ booklet patterns (pages 85–87)
- ★ scissors
- ★ glue
- ★ crayons

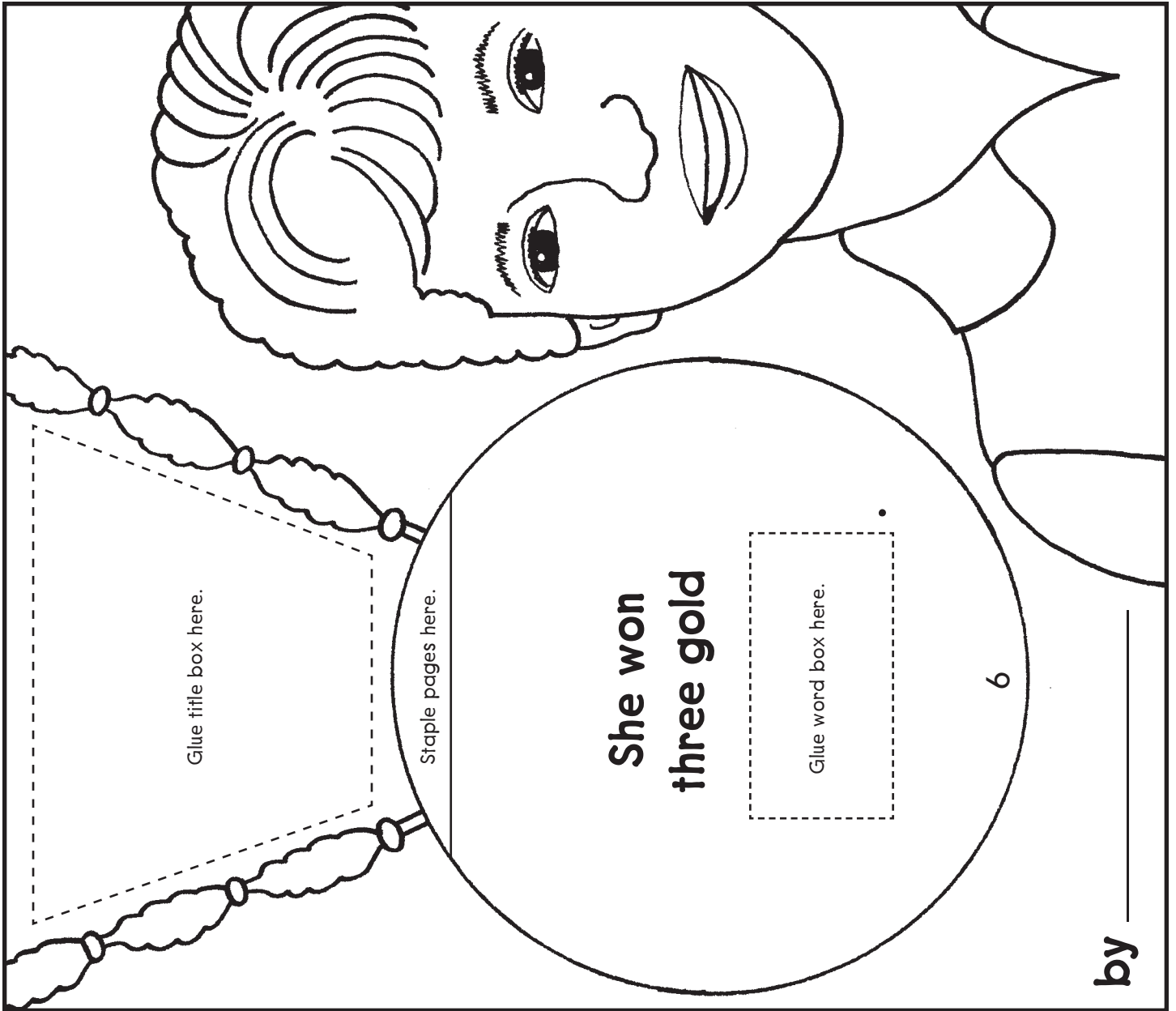
To share:

- ★ stapler

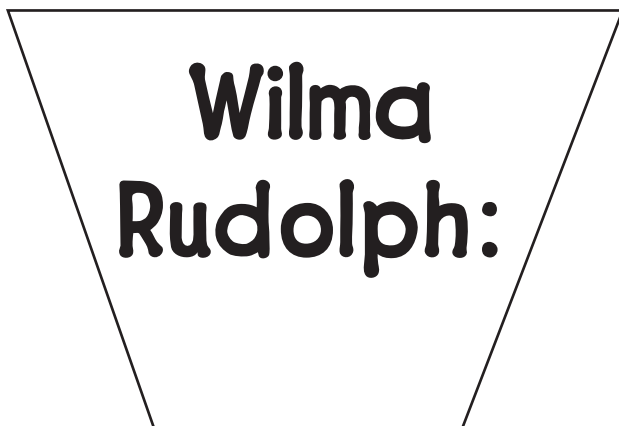
More Facts About . . . Wilma Rudolph

(1940–1994)

- She was nicknamed "Skeeter" for being little, fast, and in the way!
- She set a state high school basketball record for scoring the most points in one game.
- After retiring from competition, she returned to college and became a teacher and athletic coach.
- She created The Wilma Rudolph Foundation to help young athletes.
- She was inducted into the U.S. Olympic Hall of Fame in 1983.
- In 2004, the U.S. Postal Service issued a postage stamp in recognition of her accomplishments.



booklet backing



title box

child	strong
ran	Olympics
races	medals

word boxes

cover

Sprinting Star

by

When
Wilma was a

Glue word box here.

,
she wore
leg braces.

|

She
worked hard to
make her legs

Glue word box here.

.

2

**She
started playing
basketball.**

She

Glue word box here.

in races.

3

**Wilma Rudolph
went to
the 1960**

Glue word box here.

4

**She
ran in
three**

Glue word box here.

5