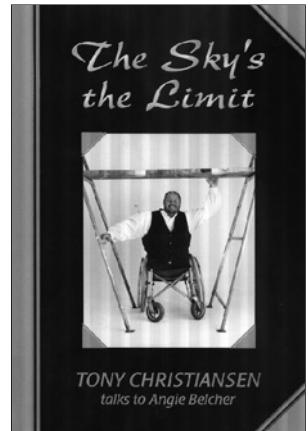


# The Sky's the Limit

**Tony Christiansen**  
**talks to Angie Belcher**



## Book Summary

Tony Christiansen talks to Angie Belcher about his remarkable life. His many achievements are all the more remarkable because he lost both of his legs in an accident at an early age. Tony's quiet determination and positive attitude shine through the text and the photographs.

## Features of the Book

- A biography based on an interview
- The inspirational story line
- Photograph-album format
- Labels that provide clues to chapter contents
- The nonlinear story line
- Design features – photo corners, items such as the hospital tag and medal
- The humor of the main character – life's too short ... like me!

## Purpose

*The Sky's the Limit* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** identifying the author's intention;
- S** discussing layout and text features;
- S** understanding the emotions of the characters;
- S** creating a time line;
- S** formulating questions for further study;
- S** comparing events in the story with students' own experiences.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Identifying the author's intention
- S** Discussing layout and text features
- S** Understanding the emotions of the characters

## Introducing the text

Write the phrase "the sky's the limit" on the board and ask the students whether they have heard this expression before.

- *What do you think this might mean? (Nothing is impossible.)*

Show the group the cover of the book and discuss the photograph.

- *What do you notice about this person?*
- *Why would a person in a wheelchair be photographed with ladders?*

Read the blurb on the back cover together and discuss the further information that it provides.

- *What do you think about the two things that Tony Christiansen says here?*

Discuss the photograph on the title page and how it differs from the photograph on the cover. Tony is working his way up the ladder, and this concept ties in with the meaning of the title.

Look at the photograph on page 3 together and read the text.

- *Why do you think it says that this was the last time he would ever do these things?*
- *What might happen?*

## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read to the end of page 7. Encourage them to think about the following questions:

- How do you think Tony will deal with the huge changes in his life?
- Will he be treated any differently by his parents and friends?

Discuss what happens in the accident and ask for the students' responses to the photographs:

- How do the photographs make you feel about what happened to Tony?

Reread the last sentence on page 7.

- How do you think Tony felt about what he was going to do?

Ask the students to think about the ways that Tony's life will change – at school and at home. They should record their ideas to refer to after they have finished reading the book.

The students can now read the rest of the book independently. As they read, they can think about the following questions:

- What do you notice about the story on page thirteen? (It goes back in time.)

Ask them to keep a mental note of all the different activities that Tony tried and succeeded with and of how he managed to do all of them with no legs.

- How did Tony deal with losing both legs?
- How did other people treat him? Find evidence from the text and photographs to support your responses.

Ask the group to note that Tony's certificates, newspaper cuttings, and medals have been included in the photographs.

- What does this tell you about how Tony thinks about himself and his achievements?

After the students have finished reading the text, you could focus on one of the following questions:

- How would you describe Tony to someone?
- What words would you use to describe him?
- What do you think his motto for life would be?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book?

## Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

### S Creating a time line

With the students, review the main events in the story and place them on a time line. The story goes backward and forward in time, so this may involve doing several drafts before the group is happy with the sequence. Work with the group to come up with some suitable headings to separate the periods covered in the book into meaningful segments, for example, childhood, teenage years and adult life.

 The students could use the blackline master on page 85 to draw up their time line. Encourage them to share their work and to review and edit the sequences where necessary.

### S Formulating questions for further study

This book provides a lot of information about Tony Christiansen's life. However, there may be other aspects that students would like to know about. Ask them to write some "I want to know" questions that they would like to ask Tony, for example:

- I would like to know more about how Tony competes in tae kwon do.
- I would like to know more about Tony's daily life.
- How can you find out this information?

### S Comparing events in the story with students' own experiences

The students may have similar experiences to share as a result of events in their own lives or those of friends and family. Sensitive discussion of these experiences will allow the students to compare and contrast them with the events written about in Tony's biography. The focus could be on the strength of Tony's character and how people with his kind of attitude can inspire others.