

## Women of Nigerian bobsled team get ready for the Winter Olympics (Fifth and Sixth Periods)

Required Annotations		Student-Created Annotations		Summary / Questions / Reflection	
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It was November 15, 2017, and Seun Adigun was about to qualify for the Olympics. She **crouched** slightly as she stared down the bobsled track.

What was going through her mind? Perhaps she was picturing the twisting and turning course she was about to sled down at an average speed of about 90 miles per hour. Or maybe she was thinking about the history she was about to make.

She flipped her face guard down and waited for the starting signal. And with that, she was off.

### "This Is A Huge Milestone"

That night, Adigun and her teammates completed the fifth and final qualifying race for the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea. When it was all over, they became Nigeria's first Olympic women's bobsled team. In fact, they will be the first bobsled team from the entire continent of Africa to compete.

"This is a huge milestone for sports in Nigeria," she told **KweséESPN** a few days after the last race. She felt proud that she could help to create "opportunities for winter sports to take place in Nigeria," she added.

"Our **objective** now is to be the best representation of Africa that the Winter Olympics have ever witnessed," Adigun said.

### Nothing Fancy

Getting here was no easy task, especially since Adigun was a newcomer to the sport of bobsledding. She used to be a sprinter. She even competed for Nigeria in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

She started her transition to bobsledding from scratch last year and convinced two other Nigerian sprinters, Ngozi Onwumere and Akuoma Omeoga, to join her. Like Adigun, Onwumere and Omeoga also live in the United States.

With little funding or equipment, the trio began practicing. Like the famous men's Jamaican bobsled team that made history at the Olympics in 1988, they started with a **makeshift** wooden sled. Adigun built it herself.

"I just went for two or three days straight, just hammering and drilling and sawing this wooden sled together," Adigun recalled. She said that the comparisons between her team and the Jamaican bobsled team that made history in 1988 were "honorable."

### Bobsledding Gets Its Recognition

Adigun's team ended up funding much of their efforts through an online crowdfunding campaign. It raised \$75,000, including \$50,000 from one donor who did not reveal his or her name. The money was enough to convince the Nigerian government to start a governing federation for bobsledding, and it allowed the team to start practicing in a real bobsled on ice.

The team got better and better. Adigun was always in the driver's seat, and she was backed up by either Onwumere or Omeoga. They completed races in Utah as well as in Whistler and Calgary in Canada where the final race for the

Olympics took place in November.

"I **commend** the personal dedication and commitment of these women," Nigerian Bobsled and Skeleton Federation President Solomon Ogba told ESPN. "Their hard work was inspiring and I hope Nigerians can appreciate what it took for them to achieve this – the work, the discipline, and the personal sacrifices. They were amazing throughout this journey."

### **Sledding For A Medal**

It would be an amazing accomplishment for the Nigerian women to finish in the top three at the Olympics this year and win medals. No African competitor in any Winter Olympics event has ever done so.

Morocco and Algeria, for example, have entered skiers in several Olympic Games. South Africa, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, Togo, and Zimbabwe have entered athletes in past Winter Olympics events as well. None has ever **fielded** a bobsled team, though.

A Ugandan snowboarder, 24-year-old Brolin Mawejje, was hoping to make history this year, as well. He has been trying to qualify as the first snowboarder to represent any African country in the Olympics. Unfortunately, he was diagnosed with a heart condition last spring and was forced to end his 2018 Olympic dream.

### **Questions**

1. Which option BEST describes the central ideas of the article?
  - a) Seun Adigun and her teammates will try to win the gold medal at the 2018 Winter Olympics. They had to compete in many different races in Utah and Canada to qualify for the Olympic team.
  - b) Seun Adigun and her teammates will try to win the gold medal at the 2018 Winter Olympics. They have been interviewed by many news channels about their preparations and practice, which was much more intensive than that of other teams.
  - c) The Nigerian women's first bobsled team will compete at the 2018 Winter Olympics. Seun Adigun and her teammates are happy to compete for a medal, since a snowboarder from Uganda was also set to compete but was diagnosed with a heart condition.
  - d) The first-ever Nigerian women's bobsled team will compete at the 2018 Winter Olympics. Seun Adigun and her teammates worked hard to qualify and hope to inspire other African athletes by being the first to win a medal at a Winter Olympics.
2. Which statement would be MOST important to include in an objective summary of the article?
  - a) The women on the Nigerian bobsled team have shown a lot of hard work and dedication on their way to the Olympics.
  - b) The government of Nigeria has shown tremendous support for the admirable women of the Nigerian bobsled team.
  - c) It would be an amazing accomplishment if the talented women of the Nigerian bobsled team were to win a medal.
  - d) It took many fundraising efforts for the women of the Nigerian bobsled team to raise enough money to buy their equipment.
3. Read the paragraph from the section "Sledding For A Medal." *Morocco and Algeria, for example, have entered skiers in several Olympic Games. South Africa, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Senegal, Togo, and Zimbabwe have entered athletes in past Winter Olympics events as well. None has ever fielded a bobsled team, though.*  
Why does the author include this paragraph in the article?
  - a) to suggest many African countries have competed just as well as the women's bobsled team
  - b) to show the women's bobsled team is feeling a lot of pressure to succeed at the Olympics
  - c) to provide context for understanding the historic significance of the women's bobsled team
  - d) to prove the women's bobsled team is more talented than those in other Olympic events
4. How does the author convey the importance of Seun Adigun to the Nigerian bobsled team in the article?
  - a) by emphasizing her dedication and her hopes as the founder and leader of the team
  - b) by elaborating on her role in getting the government to provide funding for the team
  - c) by illustrating the way her teammates feel about her asking them to join
  - d) by indicating she has more Olympic competition experience than her teammates