



From **How (Not) To Be Strong** by Alex Scott

Growing up, my bedroom wall was plastered with posters of musicians that I would cut out from American music magazines. Everyone from Aaliyah to 2Pac

was on that wall, but there were no sporting role models. My parents weren't massive sports fans, and we wouldn't sit down together and watch sport on TV. I didn't have any dreams of being a footballer; I certainly didn't see any women footballers. The closest people I had to role models were the Williams sisters. From a young age, I think every Black child saw a reflection of themselves in the Williamses. **They made mainstream news and transcended their sport from the very start because they didn't follow the same path as everyone else in their field; they did it their way and weren't afraid to show the world how and why. I read stories about how the sisters would train in caged tennis courts, with violence going on around them.** They set an example and never relied on 'poor me' narratives; there was always pride in where they came from, and pride in the fact they'd trained so hard and made it. I think it allowed everyone in a similar situation to dream. I was proud of them. Every time I'd tune in to Wimbledon – I wasn't really a tennis fan at the time, but I wanted to watch *them* every year when they came to London. I would sit in front of the TV and dream that one day I'd go and see them play. 'If the Williamses can make it, no matter what, you can find a way to,' I used to tell myself. I imagined sitting in the green stalls of Centre Court, sipping champagne and munching strawberries, just like I saw the rich white folk doing on my TV set.

Literacy Carousel KS3

Session 1.

1. Read the text twice.
2. Highlight anything you do not understand.
3. What type of writing is this?
 - a. Biography
 - b. Autobiography
 - c. Travel writing
4. What is the main theme in this paragraph?
 - a. The importance of tennis players
 - b. The importance of role models
 - c. The importance of having posters on your wall
5. Focus on the underlined passage:
 - a. Highlight verbs
 - b. Highlight adjectives
 - c. Highlight abstract nouns
6. How does the language in the underlined passage make the Williams sisters sound heroic?
7. Which word is repeated towards the end of the paragraph? How does this word emphasise Scott's feelings about the Williams sisters?
8. What is Scott trying to convey to the reader about the importance of role models in this anecdote?