

SCENE: REACTION TIMES IN SPORTS

Setting: Stephanie grabbed her backpack and headed for the bus stop. Her friends Juan and Malik were standing at the corner talking so loudly that she could hear them half a block away.

Juan: I can't believe that game last night. That was crazy! Our new pitcher is amazing.

Malik: No kidding. No one on the other team could hit anything that he threw. It was awesome. We are totally going to win the World Series this year.

Stephanie: Are you guys talking about the baseball game last night? It looked like the other team was asleep every time they got up to bat. They just kept swinging way too late to hit anything.

Malik: Seriously. The batters looked like they were swinging in slow motion.

*All three of them laughed and agreed that the batters on the other team seemed to have really slow **reaction times**.*

Juan: Martinez just throws so fast! I know I wouldn't want to have to bat against him.

Stephanie: No kidding.

Malik: But these guys are supposed to be professionals! They're supposed to be able to hit anything.

Stephanie: Maybe they were just tired. Everybody has a bad day now and then.

Malik: Or maybe their team just stinks.

Juan: I don't know. I bet there are lots of things that **affect** how fast a batter **reacts** to a fastball.

Malik: Maybe. But what I do know is that boys can hit a fastball better than girls.

Stephanie: No way is that true! Look at Venus or Serena Williams hit a tennis serve and tell me girls don't have **reaction times** that are as fast as boys'. Maybe girls have even faster **reaction times**.

Juan: Maybe it has to do with being an athlete and not whether you're a boy or a girl. I think if you play sports a lot you're always improving your **reaction time**. What do you all think?

Malik: But guy athletes play baseball and girl athletes play softball. Softball is definitely a slower game. Girls have to play softball because they have slower **reaction times**. Stephanie just can't admit it.

*Stephanie did not agree with Malik's **hypothesis**. It made her mad that Malik said she just wouldn't admit that boys are faster.*

Stephanie: I won't admit it because it's not true. I'll bet my **reaction time** for returning a fastball is faster than most of the boys in our class.

Juan: Geez, you two. Don't you think there's some way to figure this out?

Malik: Come on Juan. You agree with me, right?

*Juan didn't think Malik was right but didn't want to take sides. Juan thought that maybe he could **identify** other variables that might **affect** a person's **reaction times**.*

Juan: I'm not taking sides. I think there are tons of things that can change how fast your **reaction time** is whether you're a boy or a girl. Like Stephanie said, the other team seemed asleep at the bat. Maybe being tired makes your **reaction time** worse.

Stephanie: Right, but both boys AND girls get tired. So you should be on my side, Juan.

Malik: Even if being tired matters, I bet tired boys are still faster than tired girls. But I do agree with Juan; we need to figure this out. How about a test? Stephanie, are you game?

Stephanie: I'm game! Let's get this done!

*Just then, the bus pulled up and they climbed on, each one wondering how to come up with a plan to measure **reaction times** and to see what might **affect** them.*

CHARACTER PERSPECTIVES:

- Malik says boys have faster **reaction times** than girls because:
 - His brother is the best batter on the school's baseball team.
 - Boys play baseball and girls play softball.
 - Venus and Serena Williams are not as strong as male tennis players.
 - All of his male friends are much better athletes than any female athlete at school.
- What is Juan's response to Malik's claim that boys have faster **reaction times** than girls?
 - Juan's response is to remain neutral because Malik is his friend and he doesn't want to argue with him.
 - Juan's response is to suggest that there are many things that might **affect** a person's **reaction time**.
 - Juan's response is to disagree with Malik because his mother is a great athlete and his dad isn't.
 - Juan's response is to agree with Malik's claim because he knows that Stephanie is not faster than the boys in her class.
- What do Malik and Stephanie finally agree on?
 - Both agree that girls are better at playing baseball than boys.
 - Both agree that Serena and Venus Williams have slow **reaction times**.
 - Both agree that a test is needed to get a better sense of **reaction times**.
 - Both agree that they need to practice hitting fastballs.