

Title: Bouchi

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Level: Elementary to Pre Intermediate

Genre: Games and Sport, Family Expectations

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I.

Shojib is very **excited** today as the **weather** is clear at last, and the playing field is dry. Every **afternoon** after the *Azan* of *Asr*, and as long as they return home on time, he and his big sister *Tumpa* are allowed to play on a nearby field where many of their friends who live nearby wait for them.

Today they are going to play *Bouchi*. In fact, in the last few days, they have been playing the same game, as it is winter, and *Bouchi* demands **a lot of** running. They were defeated yesterday so they had promised the players on the other **team** that they would play them again shortly. Today is that day, so it is a very special day for them. Today they are determined to win.



When he planned a winning team in his mind, *Shojib* decided to **encourage** his sister *Tumpa* to get ready to play, and to take part in the next game. He thought it would be better for them to have *Tumpa* as the *Bou* and the others could then **knock-out** the players on the other side, one by one. *Tumpa* is very smart, and a very good runner. This is important, because in *Bouchi*, it is necessary for the *Bou* to reach 'home'. To do this, she would have to be faster and even more **clever** than all the players on the other side who were not yet out. *Shojib* thinks she can do it. Although in Bengali language the word *Bou* describes somebody **female**, in the **sport** *Bouchi*, anybody can be the *Bou*. It doesn't really matter if the *Bou* is a girl or a boy.

First of all, in this sport, you have to decide how many chances will be given to attack the other side. Usually, it is nine to ten times. All the members of the side that starts the game in the 'toss', have to wait in a square on the field which they mark with a **stick** and name as 'home'.

Far away, on the other side of the field, another smaller square is made. The *Bou* stays there. All the players on the other side are allowed to place themselves around the *Bou*. The members of the side that wins the 'toss' have to run behind the members of the other team, holding their **breath**. If they can touch any of the members of the other team, that player is

out of the game. If a player fails to hold his or her breath, and is touched by any member of the other team, he or she is 'out'. In this way, the game continues.

If all the members of the other team are out of the game, the *Bou* does not need to run at all. In this case, the *Bou* can walk 'home' and the *Bou's* team can win. If most of the members of the other team are not yet out of the game, it becomes more **challenging** for the *Bou* to reach the safety of 'home'. That is why *Shojib* plans to keep his sister *Tumpa* as the *Bou*. Because she is a fast runner, he knows she will somehow **manage** to reach 'home' and defeat the members of the other team, no matter how many of them are left.

When they arrive at the field, *Shojib* and *Tumpa* find most of the players present except *Riaz*, a very good runner from the other team. *Shojib* thinks if *Riaz* fails to come, the possibility of their winning will be stronger. However, at the suggestion of the others, they decide to wait for *Riaz* for a few minutes. In the **meantime**, *Shojib* keeps on encouraging his team members. He is determined that today they will win.

While *Sharmin*, the captain of other team is making plans for what he believes will be yet another victory, *Shojib* is also planning with his team members for the same purpose. Even after waiting for around fifteen minutes, *Riaz* does not appear, so they toss a coin to decide who will have the chance to run first. Fortunately, *Shojib's* team wins the toss and according to *Shojib's* plan, they decide on *Tumpa* as the *Bou*. There are six members in each team (twelve in total, including the *Bou*) and they decide that nine turns will be allowed to try to **knock** the other team's players out of the game.

Tumpa waits in the square made for the *Bou*. The other five team members, including *Shojib*, start to take their turns one by one. Everyone in *Shojib's* team tries with all their heart and soul to knock out all the members of *Sharmin's* team within the nine turns they have been allowed. However, they cannot knock out everyone. In fact, two of their own team members were knocked out by *Sharmin* at the very beginning of the game as they failed to hold their breath. As a result, the remaining three members have to carry on to complete the rest of their turns. It is difficult to hold their breath and run at the same time, behind people who do not have to hold their breaths. The players in the other team are thus in a better position. **Finally**, when all the turns are over, *Tumpa* still has to reach 'home' by defeating the two remaining members of *Sharmin's* team, *Mamun* and *Tina*, who have not yet been knocked out.

According to the usual **custom** of *Bouchi*, *Shojib* marks two points on the field with a stick. Each stick is placed at a distance of half a **yard** behind *Tumpa's* **area**. *Mamun* and *Tina* take their positions on the right and the left respectively. A moment of **extreme tension** has arrived. Each and every member of both teams is waiting with their **fingers** crossed. At this point, everyone seems to be holding their breath. *Tumpa* will start running any moment...

With the memory of yesterday's failure, *Tumpa* starts to run with a **firm** purpose. First, she makes a zigzag turn, *Mamun* and *Tina* run after her. *Tumpa*, is fast, but she is also clever. She looks around her for a chance. **Suddenly**, she sees a space. The way is clear. Now is the time. *Tumpa* **quickly** changes direction and runs as hard as she can, **straight** towards the finish line. She is as fast as the wind. *Mamun* and *Tina* are surprised to find that they have been left far behind. Running as hard as she can, *Tumpa* finally reaches 'home'. *Mamun* and *Tina* are too late!

At last, *Tumpa* is safely back with *Shojib* and her other team members. "Hooray!" they all **cheer**. What an exciting game! *Shojib* is **bursting** with happiness. He will be thinking about their win for a very long time.

II.

But, while celebrating their happy victory, neither *Shojib* and *Tumpa* nor their friends notice that the day is coming to an end. It is already time for the *Magrib* **prayer**. They are all still on the field. They will be late getting home! Oh no!

"*Shojib* we must go home at once," cries *Tumpa*, and she tries hard to pull him away from their friends.

Even though they are so **tired** from their game, they have to make themselves run and run again. How much further away their real home seems to be when they are late! It seems, after all that running, as if they will have no breath left in their bodies at all. When they finally arrive home, it is already half an hour after prayer time. The main gate is already closed. They knock and knock, but it seems that no-one hears them. *Tumpa* is about to cry.

Just as they are about to give up all hope of being heard, their mother appears at the **inside** door. Her face looks very serious. *Tumpa* knows she is about to **remind** them of the 'dusk rule' of their house, and how they are supposed to reach home by the time of the *Magrib* prayer. Hot tears begin to fall from her eyes.

And *Shojib*? He does not appear **upset** at all. In fact, *Shojib* seems completely lost in thought as he relives that last wonderful moment... when *Tumpa*'s **foot** finally touched 'home'.

**Bouchi* is a popular sport of Bangladesh, to be played on a field. More details can be found on page two of the link given here...

<https://cafod.org.uk/content/download/47272/573299/version/1/file/Games%20in%20Bangladesh%20.pdf>

Learning Activities

Vocabulary Lists: learn all of the words from the following two lists...

1. High Frequency Words from the 2nd 1000 General Service Word List

afternoon	female	meantime	tired
breath	fingers	prayer	upset
bursting	firm	quickly	warm
cheer	foot	remind	weather
clever	inside	sport	yard
encourage	knock	stick	
excited	lot (a lot of)	straight	
extreme	manage	suddenly	

2. High Frequency Words from the Academic Word List

area	finally	tension
challenging	team	

Do you know the meaning of the words and expressions below? These are not high frequency, or common, words in English, so **only learn these words and expressions if you already know ALL of the words in the two lists above, very well**

celebrating	relive	zigzag
dusk	toss	

Comprehension Questions

1. **Recall:** How many people were left to play against *Tumpa* in the last part of the game?
2. **Recall:** What does the children's mother plan to remind them of, when they get home?
3. **Recall:** What is the English word used when a team cheers at the end of a game?

4. **Understanding:** Why did *Shojib* ask *Tumpa* to be the *Bou* in the game of *Bouchi*?
5. **Understanding:** What does “bursting with happiness” mean?
6. **Understanding:** Why does *Tumpa* need to be clever (as well as fast)?
7. **Understanding:** Apart from the fact that his team won the game, why doesn't *Shojib* feel upset when he gets home late?
8. **Inferring:** Why does the writer suggest that *bouchi* is a good game to play in winter?

Critical Thinking Questions

1. **Applying:** Do you have rules about when you have to be home? How about when you were younger? Have you ever been late? What happened?
2. **Applying:** Have you ever played *Bouchi*? Did you enjoy it? What position did you play? Can you remember any of the games you played, or the people who played with you?
3. **Analysing:** Why do you think the writer of this story wrote it in the present tense? How does the use of the present tense affect the way you feel as you read the story?
4. **Evaluating:** How important is ‘winning’ at something to you (such as a sports game, or a competition of some kind)? Do you think it is OK to aim to ‘win at all costs’? When might it be better not to win at something?
5. **Evaluating:** How important is it for young people to play sport? Give reasons for your answers. Do you think it is possible to be **too** keen on sport, (to be ‘sports crazy’)?
6. **Creating:** Think of a game or sport that you play or enjoy watching. If you could change the rules, which rules would you change and why?

Extension Activity

- Watch a sports game or a public event. (Choose a sport or event that you enjoy)
- Write a set of notes in English that describes everything important that happened while you were watching. (Use a dictionary to help you with words you don't know well, but try to use as many of the words in the word lists above as you can.)
- Now, use your notes to create a script that describes the most exciting or interesting thing you saw. Imagine you are a TV or radio announcer, and you are explaining to your audience about what is happening
- Practise your script
- Now, record your script. Make sure it sounds exciting!
- Exchange your recording with another person
- Listen, and think of some questions to ask

- Have a discussion in English with the person whose recording you listened to and ask /answer the questions you made