

SERENA WILLIAMS TO RETIRE

August 14th, 2022

WARM-UP QUESTIONS: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s).*

1. Who are some famous female athletes? What sports are they known for?
2. Read the headline above. Have you heard this news story? If so, say what you know. If not, can you guess what it is about?

VOCABULARY: *Match the following vocabulary words with a description. Use a dictionary if you need to.*

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|---------------------------|---|
| 1. Announce | a) this may be true, but some people disagree |
| 2. Focus on | b) a famous person in a particular area |
| 3. Arguably | c) ready to do something |
| 4. Professional | d) to give a lot of attention to something |
| 5. Era | e) investing in new businesses |
| 6. Grand Slam | f) to develop gradually |
| 7. Set | g) a period of time |
| 8. Venture capital | h) to tell people something officially |
| 9. Evolve | i) being paid to do something |
| 10. Great | j) the most important type of competition in tennis |

LISTEN: *Listen to the audio track on eslnewsstories.com or to a reader of the text. Try to fill in the missing words. Then check your answers with the full text (below).*

Tennis player Serena Williams has announced that she will _____ stop playing professional tennis. Williams turns 41 in September, but age is not her reason for retiring. In an _____ published by *Vogue* magazine, Williams said that she wants to keep playing, but that she was choosing to focus on having a second child.

Serena Williams is arguably the greatest tennis _____ of all time. In the professional era (since 1968), she has 23 Grand Slam singles titles. That is one more than Steffi Graf and Rafael Nadal. With her _____, Venus, she also has 14 Grand Slam doubles championships.

The _____ of the tennis-playing sisters and their demanding father, Richard Williams, was recently told in the popular movie, *King Richard*. While the tennis will end, Serena looks set to _____ her story in other areas, including venture capital, with her company, *Serena Ventures*.

In her *Vogue* piece, Williams says she does not like the word, 'retirement.' _____, she prefers to say that she is 'evolving away from tennis.' The U.S. Open at the end of August may be her _____ tournament and another step in the evolution of a tennis great.

WORD FORMS: Fill in different forms for the vocabulary from the article. Use a dictionary if you need to. Where there is an *x*, the word is unimportant for ESL students, has a different meaning, or does not exist. Sometimes there are multiple possible answers, and sometimes the adjective form is a past or present participle.

| VERB | ADJECTIVE | ADVERB | NOUN |
|----------|--------------|----------|------|
| announce | | x | |
| | | arguably | |
| | professional | | |
| evolve | | x | |

FULL STORY:

Tennis player Serena Williams has announced that she will soon stop playing professional tennis. Williams turns 41 in September, but age is not her reason for retiring. In an essay published by *Vogue* magazine, Williams said that she wants to keep playing, but that she was choosing to focus on having a second child.

Serena Williams is arguably the greatest tennis player of all time. In the professional era (since 1968), she has 23 Grand Slam singles titles. That is one more than Steffi Graf and Rafael Nadal. With her sister, Venus, she also has 14 Grand Slam doubles championships.

The story of the tennis-playing sisters and their demanding father, Richard Williams, was recently told in the popular movie, *King Richard*. While the tennis will end, Serena looks set to continue her story in other areas, including venture capital, with her company, *Serena Ventures*.

In her *Vogue* piece, Williams says she does not like the word, 'retirement.' Instead, she prefers to say that she is 'evolving away from tennis.' The U.S. Open at the end of August may be her final tournament and another step in the evolution of a tennis great.

Sources: theguardian.com, apnews.com, vogue.com
 For source links, see the article on ESLNewsStories.com

COMPREHENSION: *Decide if the following are true (T) or false (F), and then discuss your answers with your partner(s).*

1. Serena Williams is nearly 42 years old. (T / F)
2. Serena is tired of playing tennis. (T / F)
3. Serena announced her retirement in *Vogue*. (T / F)
4. Serena won championships by herself and with her sister. (T / F)

COMPLETE: *Re-order the following sentences. Capitalize certain words and add punctuation.*

1. wants / serena / invest / new / in / businesses / to
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2. serve / powerful / was / her / so
-

DISCUSSION: *Discuss the following questions with your partner(s). Try to speak in sentences and ask follow-up questions.*

1. What do you think about tennis? Is it a good sport to play? Is it a good sport to watch?
2. Which sports are you a fan of?
3. Do you think Serena is the greatest tennis player of all time? Why or why not?
4. Can you understand why Serena wants to focus on her family?
5. Did you see *King Richard*? How was it? If not, are you interested in watching it?
6. Venture capitalists look for new businesses to invest in. Can you recognize a good investment opportunity?
7. What is a good age for most people to retire?
8. Why does Serena not like the word 'retirement,' in your opinion?
9. What would you like to evolve away from?
10. Talk about 'a great' in an area that is not tennis. For example, choose a literary great, a scientific great, or a sporting great and say what you know about them.

