**Sam the Athlete**

In the short story “Sam the Athlete”, the protagonist Sam is known to be distressed, determined and courageous throughout the story. The story shows him being distressed when him and his parents go to the shoe store to get new running shoes for school. He takes them out for a test run but ends up running right into a telephone pole. Thinking that his first year at middle school would be better than elementary school, he realizes that it would just be the same. “He had such hope for the running shoes. But the running shoes weren’t going to change anything. He was always going to be running into telephone poles,” (Page 63). Next, the story shows Sam being determined. After trying out for many sports and not doing well at any of them, he discovers field hockey at his school and goes to the tryouts. By the end of the tryouts, he realizes that it is a girl’s field hockey team. He has the thought of leaving in the back of his mind but Sam’s determination to be an athlete prevents him from backing out of the idea to join the team. “And that is why, instead of disappearing quietly as he should have done, instead of ghosting away, Sam went home instead and shaved his legs,” (Page 68). Finally, the story shows Sam being courageous. He decides to wear his outfit with pride instead of being ashamed of having to wear a skirt on his first sports team. “And Sam’s skirt was making him so happy – or more to the point, he was happy when he was wearing his skirt – because, who would have guessed, after all those years, it turned out field hockey was Sam’s game,” (Page 68). Throughout the story, Sam’s attitude changed as he went from being anxious to dedicated and brave.