WHERE CAN YOU FIND A LIVING GODDESS?
WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE WORLD'S CLIMATE?
WHERE IS TIMBUKTU?
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What Is a Marathon?

Answer these questions.

1. What is a marathon race?
2. How and where do you think this race began?
3. Are marathon races held in your country? If so, when and where do they take place?
What Is a Marathon?

1. It is early morning. A thirty-five-year-old doctor puts on her running shoes. A seventy-year-old plumber ties his laces. A nineteen-year-old student puts on her lucky T-shirt. They’re all getting ready to run a marathon. Every year, thousands of people take part in marathons. They’re people of all ages and nationalities. They may be rich or poor. They run along the Great Wall of China and in the streets of Paris. They run in Africa and the Antarctic. The marathon is a great test of endurance. But why is it called a marathon? Where did it begin?

2. The marathon began with a Greek legend. In 490 B.C.E. the Greeks won a battle with the Persians near the town of Marathon. Meanwhile the people of Athens were waiting anxiously for news. A general in the army asked a young soldier named Pheidippides to carry a message to Athens. Pheidippides ran toward the city, about 25 miles away. He didn’t slow down or stop to rest. When he arrived, people gathered around him. Pheidippides gave the news, and then he fell to the ground and died.

3. From then on, the Greeks held a race every year to honor Pheidippides. However, the modern marathon didn’t start until 1896. That year the first international Olympic Games were held in Greece. Someone said they should have a race to honor Pheidippides. The race was 24.85 miles long. It started at Marathon Bridge and ended at the Olympic Stadium in Athens. Everyone was excited when a Greek runner won the race, and the modern marathon was born.

4. Today there are more than 800 marathons worldwide. The five largest and most important are in Boston, New York, Chicago, London, and Berlin. The Boston Marathon, which started in 1897, is the oldest. In 1908, the marathon distance was changed for the Olympic Games in London. That was so the race could end in front of the king’s viewing box. It is for this reason that today’s marathons are 26.2 miles long. In the past, women weren’t allowed to race. However, in 1984, the women’s marathon became an official Olympic event.

5. Marathons are all different. Some run through cities. Others cross mountains. Some are easy; some difficult, and some are quite unusual. There is Norway’s Midnight Sun Marathon and China’s Great Wall of China Marathon, a Big Five Marathon through big game parks in South Africa and a Polar Circle Marathon in Greenland. The lowest marathon takes place at the Dead Sea in Jordan. The highest is at Base Camp on Mount Everest. The coldest is in Siberia. The hottest is the Marathon des Sables in the Sahara Desert. The temperature goes up to 120° F. It is 150 miles long and takes seven days to complete. Runners carry their supplies on their backs. They need clothes and food. They must also have a compass, whistle, knife, and snake venom kit!

(continued)
Running extreme marathons requires amazing strength and endurance. But it’s even difficult for most people to complete a normal marathon. Nevertheless, marathons are extremely popular. Why? There are many reasons why people run marathons. Most don’t run to win. Some just want to finish the race. Others want to achieve personal records. Some people raise money for charity. All want to test their endurance. Marathons appeal to people of all kinds—determination to meet a challenge, to run a race, to get to the finish line.

VOCABULARY

MEANING

Write the correct words in the blanks.

<table>
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<th>appeal</th>
<th>compass</th>
<th>event</th>
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<tr>
<td>charity</td>
<td>endurance</td>
<td>kit</td>
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1. A person whose job it is to repair and connect water pipes, is a _____________.
2. Some runners need to blow a _____________ to make a loud, high sound when they are lost.
3. Runners in the Sahara need to carry a _____________ to know which direction to go if they get lost.
4. Marathon runners must have _____________, or the ability to run for a long time and not stop.
5. Marathons are liked by, or _____________ to, people of all kinds.
6. In one race, runners carry a set of things, or a _____________, to use when a snake bites them.
7. The marathon is an _____________, or a race, in the Olympics.
8. A runner may collect money for a _____________, or an organization that helps poor or sick people.
WORDS THAT GO TOGETHER
Write the correct words in the blanks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>finish line</th>
<th>in common</th>
<th>raise money</th>
<th>take part in</th>
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1. Thousands of people participate in, or ________________, marathons every year.
2. Many runners collect money, or ________________, for an organization that needs it.
3. All the runners want one thing, or they have one thing ________________.
4. They are happy when they get to the line that marks the end of the race, or the ________________.

USE
Work with a partner to answer the questions. Use complete sentences.

1. What charity would you give money to?
2. What activity / sport do you like to take part in?
3. What do you have in common with your best friend?
4. What event did you watch on television recently?
5. Where do people usually have a first-aid kit?
6. What sport appeals to you?

COMPREHENSION
UNDERSTANDING THE READING
Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. The Greeks held a race every year to _______.
   a. celebrate their victory in a battle with the Persians
   b. remember all the soldiers who died on the battlefield
   c. honor a soldier who carried a message from the battlefield
   d. see who was the best and strongest runner among their soldiers
2. Marathons around the world are _______.  
   a. all the same distance  
   b. very different  
   c. held at the same time of year  
   d. mostly held in large cities

3. Most people run marathons to _______.  
   a. raise money for charity  
   b. become famous winners  
   c. meet a personal goal  
   d. break the record of other runners

REMEMBERING DETAILS
Reread the passage and answer the questions.

1. Why did Pheidippides run to Athens from Marathon?
2. Who won the marathon in the first international Olympic Games?
3. Where are the five largest marathons held today?
4. When, where, and why was the marathon’s distance changed from 24.85 miles to 26.2 miles?
5. Where does the highest marathon take place?
6. What supplies do the runners carry in the Marathon des Sables?

MAKING INFERENCES
All of the statements below are true. Some of them are stated directly in the reading. Others can be inferred, or guessed, from the reading. Write S for each stated fact. Write I for each inference.

_____ 1. It is not only athletes who take part in marathons.  
_____ 2. The marathon is a test of endurance for the runners.  
_____ 3. Before 1984, women weren’t allowed to run the marathon in the Olympics.  
_____ 4. The marathon in the Sahara Desert is certainly the most difficult of all the marathons.  
_____ 5. For many people, running a marathon gives them personal satisfaction.
**TELL THE STORY**

Work with a partner or together as a class. Tell the story of the marathon. Use your own words. Your partner or other students can ask questions about the story.

**DISCUSSION**

Discuss the answers to these questions with your classmates.

1. Have you ever run a marathon? If yes, why did you do it and would you do it again? If not, would you like to run one? Why or why not?
2. Which marathon race do you think would be the most fun to do? Which would be the hardest? Why? If you had to run one of the marathon races, which would you choose and why?
3. If you could create a course for a marathon race, what would it be and why?

**CRITICAL THINKING**

Work with a partner. Ask each other the following questions. Discuss your answers.

1. What kind of man was Pheidippides? Was the sacrifice he made worth the price he paid? Why? Is there anything that you would be willing to risk your life for?
2. What are two physical things that you have accomplished—for example, the longest walk you ever took, the highest climb, or the hardest, easiest, hottest, or coldest sports game you ever played? Explain why they were the hardest or longest, etc. Did you enjoy these accomplishments? Why?

**WRITING**

Write six sentences or a short paragraph about the most difficult / exciting / relaxing sport.

**EXAMPLE:** The most exciting sport for me is soccer.

*It is the most popular sport in the world.*

*David Beckham is the most famous soccer player.*
A single adjective made up of two or more words is called a compound adjective. The words in a compound adjective are connected by a hyphen or hyphens to show that they are part of the same adjective.

Many compound adjectives have numbers in them.

*Thirty-five-year-old* is an adjective that describes *doctor.*

*The doctor went on a 25-mile run.* (25-mile is an adjective that describes *run.*)

When we use a number in a compound expression, the noun is singular.

Correct: A *three-hour race.*

Incorrect: A *three hours* race.

A. Rewrite each sentence using a compound noun with hyphen(s).

1. A boy who is sixteen years old ran.

2. He ran a race that is 26 miles.

3. She bought a car that has four doors.

4. My brother who is ten years old came with me.

5. We had a training session for ten days.

6. There was a prize of one thousand dollars.

7. She can do a run for five hours.

8. It is a race that is seven days.

9. You run in temperatures of 100 degrees.

10. It is a race that is twenty-four hours.
B. Write three new sentences about yourself using compound nouns with numbers.

Go to page 142 for the Internet Activity.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Top men Olympic runners can cover the marathon distance in 2 hours and 10 minutes.
- The world’s best long-distance runners who competed for the first time in an Olympic marathon in 1984 covered it in less than 2 hours and 25 minutes.
- The Boston Marathon in the United States, held every year, is the world’s oldest and most prestigious marathon, with about 25,000 runners.