



Nine Gold Medals

A. Lead-in:

What kinds of people usually take part in various sports events- strong or weak ? What do you think about the differently abled people ? Can they take part in such events? When, where and how ?

What do the athletes hope for when they take part in the events ? What should be the sportsman spirit- only to win a medal or something else? Let's read the poem to know what the sportsman spirit of the athletes should be, and what should be the motto of such organisations.

B. The Text:

1. The athletes had come from all over the country
To run for the gold, for the silver and bronze
Many weeks and months of training
All coming down to these games.
2. The spectators gathered around the old field
To cheer on all the young women and men
The final event of the day was approaching
Excitement grew high to begin.
3. The blocks were all lined up for those who would use them
The hundred-yard dash and the race to be run
These were nine resolved athletes in back of the starting line
Poised for the sound of the gun.
4. The signal was given, the pistol exploded
And so did the runners all charging ahead
But the smallest among them, he stumbled and staggered
And fell to the asphalt instead.

5. He gave out a cry in frustration and anguish
His dreams and his efforts all dashed in the dirt
But as sure as I'm standing here telling this story
The same goes for what next occurred.
6. The eight other runners pulled up on their heels
The ones who had trained for so long to compete
One by one they all turned around and went back to help him
And brought the young boy to his feet.
7. Then all the nine runners joined hands and continued
The hundred-yard dash now reduced to a walk
And a banner above that said (Special Olympics)
Could not have been more on the mark.
8. That's how the race ended, with nine gold medals
They came to the finish line holding hands still
And a standing ovation and nine beaming faces
Said more than these words ever will.

David Roth

C. About the Poet:

David Roth was born on 10 October, 1954 in Bloomington, Indiana. He is an American rock vocalist, song composer, author, actor and radio personality.

The present poem is based on an inspiring event of a race in which nine differently abled athletes took part in a "Special Olympic" event. In the race when one runner fell to the ground, all others stopped and returned to help him stand on his feet, and they walked hand-in-hand to finish the race. All of them won and were awarded gold medals for their empathy for each other.

The poem is highly educative in terms of value education in this competitive world. The poet highlights humanity which is high above the personal achievements. It conveys a great message to the humanity that the world now needs no more competition but more love, affection, fellow feeling, cooperation and collaboration.

D. Notes and glossary:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| athlete | : a participant in a group of sports activities |
| spectators | : persons watching an event |
| approaching | : drawing nearer (coming nearer) |
| excitement | : a state of being excited |
| resolved | : determined |
| poised | : here ready |
| blocks | : two starting blocks on the ground that runners push their |
| feet against at | the beginning of a race |
| signal | : a sign to start |
| pistol | : a starting pistol used to signal the start of a race |
| exploded | : sounded |
| stumbled | : hit his foot against something when he began to run and fell |
| straggled | : lost balance |
| frustration | : here hopelessness |
| anguish | : terrible pain |
| ovation | : expression of popular appreciation for their masterly performance. |

E. Let's understand the poem :

Read the poem silently and answer the following questions:

1. What is this poem about ?
2. Who came from all over the country ?
3. Why did they come there ?
4. Who are usually awarded the three medals – gold, silver and bronze ?
5. What was the event for which they had come ?
6. What had they done before they came down to these games ?
7. What did the spectators do around the old field ?
8. Why did they gather around the old field ?
9. Why did their excitement grow high ?
10. What were all lined up? For whom ?
11. What was the event ? (second line, third stanza)
12. How many athletes were there ?
13. Which word (in the third line, third stanza) says that the athletes had taken firm decision to win a medal ?

14. Where were those nine athletes ?
15. What were they poised for ?
16. Why was the pistol exploded ?
17. What did the runners do ?
18. Who among the nine runners was unable to run ?
19. Why was he unable to run ?
20. Where did he fall ?
21. Why did he fall ?
22. Who does “he” in the fifth stanza stand for ?
23. Why did the boy cry out in frustration and anguish ?
24. What dashed in the dirt? What makes the poet say so ?
25. What did the other runners do ?
26. How do you feel about their stopping here ? Should athletes do like this ?
27. Who does “him” stand for in the sixth stanza ?
28. What had they done for the boy to complete the race ?
29. Why did they go back to him ?
30. What did they do first ?
31. What did they do next ?
32. What happened to the hundred-yard dash ?
33. What did they carry with them ?
34. What did the banner say ?
35. What did the race end with ?
36. How did they come to the finish line ?
37. What do you mean by “a standing ovation” ?
38. How were their faces then ? Were they all happy ? Why ?
39. What do you learn from such type of help of the athletes ?

F. Let's appreciate the poem:

1. What message does the poet convey in “Nine Gold Medals ?”
2. What is important – winning a medal or helping a fellow brother in trouble ?
3. What is necessary for a person – to understand the emotions of others or to become self-centred ?
4. Explain –” He gave out a cry in frustration and anguish
His dreams and efforts all dashed in the dirt.”
5. What do you mean by “nine beaming faces said more than these words ever will ?”

G. Let's do the activities:

1. Let's recite the poem :
 - The teacher divides the class into five groups.
 - S/he reads aloud the poem two times with proper word stress and intonation.
 - S/he reads the poem aloud line by line and students repeat after him/her.
 - Students read the first line and the teacher reads aloud the second line and so on till the whole poem is complete.
 - Each group reads a stanza and the rest of the groups repeat after them and so on.
 - Finally each group reads a stanza and other groups listen to them.
 - The teacher invites some students to recite the poem individually.
2. Let's match the stanzas with their themes.

Match column “A” with column “B”. “A” contains the stanza numbers and “B” contains the themes. Write the stanza numbers in the last column. One is done for you.

| Stanza Numbers | Themes of the stanzas | |
|-----------------------|--|----------|
| 1 | nine resolved athletes at the back of the starting line– ready for the event | |
| 2 | athletes from all over the country – to run for the medals– attended long trainings | |
| 3 | pistol exploded – signal given – running ahead- the smallest one lost control- fell down | |
| 4 | spectators gathered- cheer – final event- highly excited | 2 |
| 5 | the other runners – came back – helped him stand | |
| 6 | nine runners – joined hands – walked instead of running– banner–Special Olympic | |
| 7 | end of the race- nine gold medals – faces- looked happy | |
| 8 | cried in frustration and terrible pain – thought his dream shattered | |

3. Let's arrange the jumbled sentences to get the summary of the poem. The first and the last sentences are already in order. Write the number of the sentence in the box provided for each.

- Nine athletes came from all over the country to take part in a running race. ☐
- The pistol was exploded to signal a start. ☐
- All of them were running ahead. ☐
- They had already received training before coming there. ☐
- But the youngest of them lost control and fell down. ☐
- The blocks were all lined up for the running race and they were in back of the starting line. ☐
- Being frustrated, he cried in severe pain. ☐
- They all joined hands and walked together to the end line holding a banner. ☐
- The other runners, instead of running, came to him and helped him stand. ☐
- They were all happy to help the youngest runner and all were awarded gold medals. ☐

H. Let's write :

Write a paragraph for each stanza of the poem. Go through the above matching activity before you begin to write. One paragraph is written to help you.

The poem "Nine Gold Medals" has eight stanzas. The first stanza is about how athletes from all over the country came to take part in a running race. They had to run for medals. There were three kinds of medals- gold, silver and bronze. They had attended long trainings before this event.

