

SECTION A: COMPREHENSION**QUESTION 1: READING FOR MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING**

Read TEXTS A and B below and answer the questions set.

TEXT A**Biography of Usain Bolt, Mutant.**

- 1 In just two years, he has demolished the 100-meter dash world records with times that are superhuman. So what if the greatest athlete alive decided to actually get serious?
- 2 The low snap of a single gunshot bursts from eight speakers at once. Each speaker is positioned behind a single man, and each man is positioned more or less identically in a sprinter's crouch: his feet in the starting blocks, his legs slightly bent, his rear end higher than his shoulders, his fingers splayed on but not beyond the white chalk of the starting line. The color schemes of their Lycra uniforms are different, but otherwise, with their heads down, their faces invisible, and their bodies immobile, it is hard to tell the runners apart.
- 3 It is the 100-meter finals of the 2008 Olympics, and the first man off the blocks, is Richard Thompson, of Trinidad and Tobago. Finally, in second to last place, Usain Bolt of Jamaica begins to run.
- 4 He's only been racing this distance for about a year, and the importance of a quick start is one of the things he's still getting used to. His specialty throughout his running career has been the 200 meters, a distance for which the start isn't as crucial. He's had to work to overcome some of his sloppy starting habits too. For example, he has a tendency to brush his left toe along the ground during the explosive burst from the blocks. He does it today, the front of his left shoe scuffing the track as he whips his leg forward to take his second stride. The shoe also happens to be untied, a sloppy mistake, no excuse.
- 5 Within the next few seconds, the so-called drive phase, the heads of the runners begin to come up, and their bodies start to straighten, their spines unfurling as their strides lengthen. Bolt is the biggest man in the pack. He's six feet five inches tall, 210 pounds. That makes him three inches taller and twenty pounds heavier than the second-biggest competitor.
- 6 During the drive phase, Bolt and the rest of the runners are all leaning forward at an unsustainable tilt. They are basically in the act of falling down, face-first, but their legs, racing against gravity, prevent that from happening, and their bodies begin to slowly rise up into a full upright position. Sprinters often describe this phase, when everything happens correctly, as being analogous to lift-off in an airplane.
- 7 By approximately the four-second mark, the drive phase has transitioned into the stage known as "full acceleration." The runners are now truly, in the classic sense, running. And it is at this point that the ultimate difference between Usain Bolt and his competitors reveals itself. It is both a simple difference and one that, when you witness, is hard to fathom
- 8 When the other men reach their limit, Usain Bolt continues to accelerate. By the fifty-meter mark, he has caught up to the leader. By the sixty-meter mark, a noticeable

gap has emerged between him and the rest of the pack. By the seventy-meter mark, he is covering more than twelve meters of ground — about forty feet — every second. Nobody has ever moved this fast before under his own power.

- 9 His top speed is so phenomenal, that many who witness this race, who see Bolt cross the line in 9.69 seconds, breaking his own three-month-old world record, don't notice, until they see the replay, what is perhaps the most salient and frightening thing about his performance: Approximately eighty meters into the race, Bolt stops trying. It happens right after he throws a quick glance toward the lane of his chief rival and the previous record holder, a fellow Jamaican named Asafa Powell.
- 10 Now seeing that Powell is nowhere in sight, that, indeed, no other runner is visible, Bolt lets something like a smile cross his lips. Then his arms stop pumping. He drops them to his sides, pulls his shoulders back, pushes his chest out, and splays his fingers. His legs continue to cycle, but he no longer provides them additional impetus. He coasts. Several meters before he crosses the finish line, a full half second before he wins the 100-meter final by one of the widest margins in Olympic history, he brings his right fist up and thumps his chest.

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Adapted from article in *Esquire*: <http://www.esquire.com/sports/a7058/usain-bolt-bio-0410/>

AND

TEXT B

