

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a brown t-shirt, crawling through a deep, brown mud pit. She is smiling broadly at the camera. Other people are visible in the background, also in the mud. A red banner with white text is partially visible in the bottom left corner.

LEVELED Book • P

Mud Runs

MULTI
level
J•M•P

Written by Keith and Sarah Kortemartin

Mud Runs



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www.readinga-z.com

Focus Question

Why do people participate in mud runs?

Words to Know

adventure
athletes
course

obstacles
themed
zombies

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What's in a Mud Run Course?

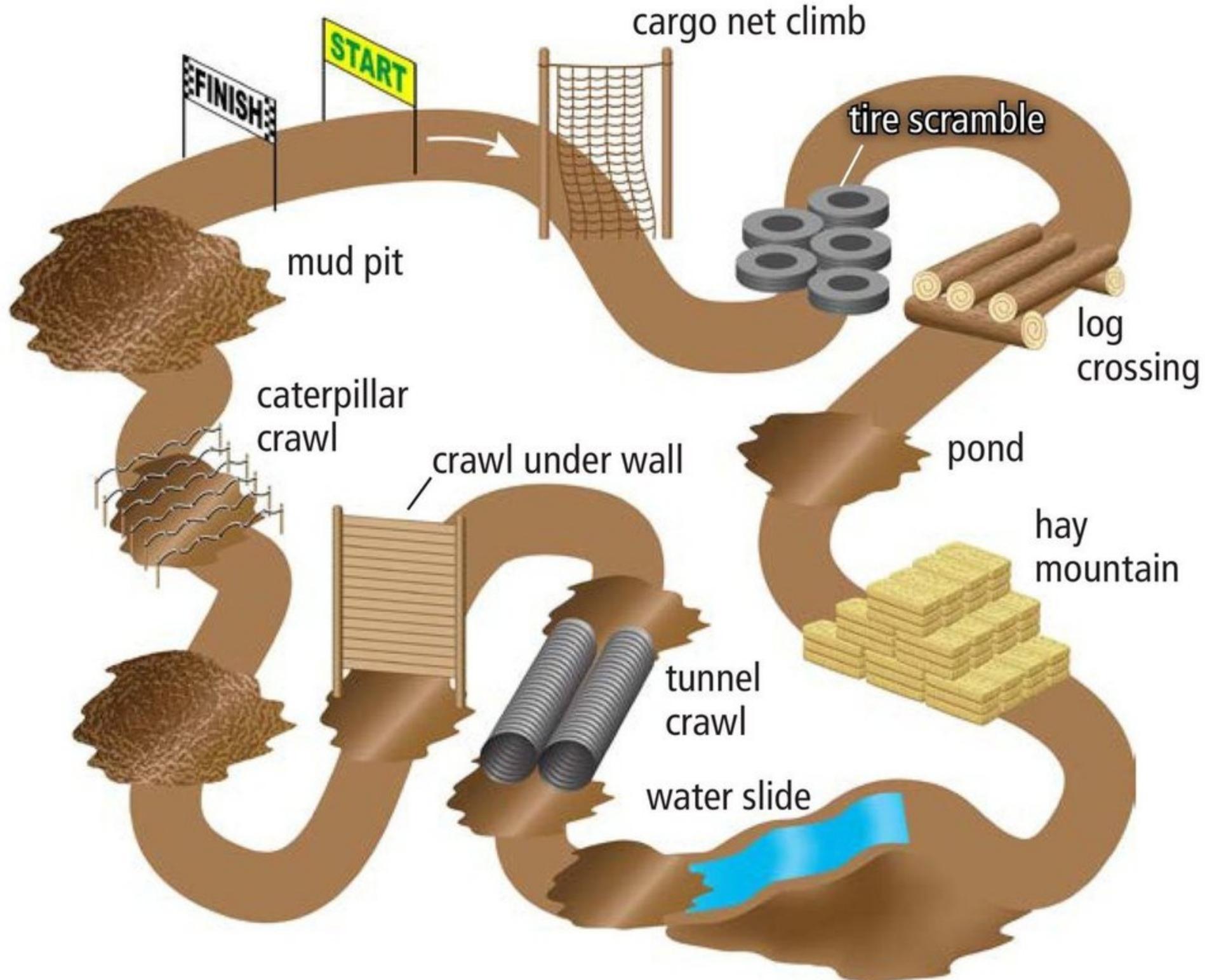


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A Messy Race

Imagine that you're running an outdoor race. Other runners are ahead of you and behind you. Everybody is tired, sweaty, and completely covered in mud. You've spent the whole race crawling, running, and climbing through mud, and you're having the time of your life.

Welcome to the mud run!

Mud runs are exactly what they sound like: races run through mud. People have been running in mud runs for about thirty years in the United States. In recent years, these runs have become incredibly popular with both children and adults.



Kids run in the Mudathlon race in Indiana.

Today, mud runs happen all over the country, and every mud run is a little different. Some are competitive races with professional **athletes**. Others are just for fun. Some are for children only, and others allow whole families to run together. All mud runs have two things in common, though. First, no matter which mud run you choose, you will get great exercise. Second, when you race in a mud run, you will get very, very dirty!



Somebody has to be the first one to fall in the mud.



A woman is covered in mud as she competes in the Dirty Girl Mud Run in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

They Don't Make It Easy

Running through mud isn't easy. The mud sticks to your shoes and slows you down, so you have to work hard to move forward. Race organizers know this, and they use mud to create fitness challenges.

Mud isn't the only challenge racers face, though. In a mud run, you will also need to be strong, brave, and willing to get dirty to deal with certain **obstacles**. You'll need arm strength to scramble over cargo nets and climbing walls. You'll need patience and good attention to get past challenges like the balance beam.



Some of the more difficult courses require racers to hang upside down from ropes or to swing across monkey bars.



There's no way to do crawls without getting muddy.

“Crawls” (like the bear crawl, caterpillar crawl, and crab crawl) will work just about every muscle in your body. You’ll need to get right down into the mud to do the crawls or slither through tunnels. And some obstacles test your bravery. You might slide down a steep hill into water, cross a river, or even jump over fire! For this reason, training for mud runs requires many different kinds of exercise.

Monsters in the Mud

What would happen if you combined mud, obstacles . . . and **zombies**? A “**themed**” mud run might do just that! In a zombie-themed mud run, for example, racers have to outsmart and outrun people dressed as zombies. The zombie-themed race Run for Your Lives gives racers two choices. They can choose to be hunted by zombies or become zombies themselves and chase other racers through the **course**. Which would you rather be?



A racer is surrounded by “zombies” during a Run for Your Lives race held in Massachusetts.



A group of costumed racers jump over a fire obstacle while competing in a Warrior Dash mud run.

Run in a Costume

Not every mud run has a theme, but runners often dress up in costumes just for fun. You might dress up as a nurse, a superhero, or your grandma for your mud run. The only limit is your imagination! Don't forget to pose for pictures before and after the race. The two sets of photos will look very, very different. Costumes get completely covered in mud, and most costumes also get torn or even ruined during the race. It's all part of the fun.

Race as a Team

If you don't want to race alone, you can team up with family members or friends to complete a mud run. Your team members might do a caterpillar crawl or a tunnel slither as a relay. Or you might work together as a team to help each other deal with an obstacle. For example, some races force teams to push and pull each other up and over a wall covered in slippery mud. Mud runs are challenging, and teamwork can help everyone have a good time.



A team of women compete in a women-only race in Georgia.



Racers start off clean (top), but they don't stay that way for long (bottom).

Running for Fun

You don't have to be a professional athlete to race in a mud run. There is a race for every age and fitness level.

Just for Kids

Some mud runs offer courses for children as young as three. The youngest children usually start the race first, followed by older children and then adults. The children's races are shorter, but they have obstacles, mud, and lots of **adventure**, just like the adult courses.

You might climb a kid-sized wall or wiggle through a kid-sized tunnel on your way to the finish.

Whichever run you choose, you're in for a good time! Children sometimes have so much fun on these courses that they run them two or three times.



A young boy goes over an obstacle while running the Dirty Dash in Boise, Idaho.



A man celebrates after finishing the Superhero Scramble in Miami, Florida.

You're near the end of your first mud run. You're running for the finish when—*squelch*—you step into a huge pool of wet, sticky mud. The mud sucks at your shoes and sticks to your clothes, but you power through it. You cross the finish line, and though you're not wearing a costume today, you feel like a superhero.

A Good Racing Costume

If you decide to dress up in a costume for your mud run, remember that some costumes work a lot better for racing than others. Any decorations that stick out from your body (like fairy wings or swords) are likely to get in your way once the race begins.



Top Tips for Mud Runs

- Wear old, comfortable clothes.
- Bring something warm because you WILL get wet and muddy.
- You'll need boots or trail-running shoes, not sneakers, because they grip the mud better. Most races don't allow you to wear cleats, though.
- Try not to wear cotton (jeans or T-shirts), because cotton is very cold when it's wet.
- Try not to wear pants with pockets or any loose-fitting clothing. The mud will get into your clothes and weigh you down.
- Drink lots and lots of water.
- Leave valuables at home.
- Most of all, have fun!

Glossary

adventure (*n.*) an unusual or exciting experience (p. 13)

athletes (*n.*) people trained in sports, games, or other activities that require strength, speed, and skill (p. 5)

course (*n.*) a path made for racers to compete on (p. 9)

obstacles (*n.*) things that get in the way, making moving forward hard (p. 7)

themed (*adj.*) having a style based on a certain subject or idea (p. 9)

zombies (*n.*) imaginary monsters that are dead bodies that move (p. 9)

Mud Runs

A Reading A-Z Level P Leveled Book

Word Count: 752

Connections

Writing and Art

Would you like to participate in a mud run? Why or why not? Write a persuasive essay explaining your point of view. Use details from the book to support your answer.

Math

Create a detailed map of your own mud run course on a poster. Describe the different parts of the course to a partner or your class.

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