

9 Obsessions

Reading and vocabulary In the name of sport

- 1 SPEAKING** Discuss the quotes. Do you agree or disagree with them? Which quote do you like the most? Justify your answers.

'Sports do not build character. They reveal it.'

'You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get.'

'Adversity causes some men to break; others to break records.'

STRATEGY

Questioning to understand and remember

Questions preceding or following a text are designed to facilitate comprehension and enable you to navigate the content. The texts you read for academic purposes are unlikely to be accompanied by questions, so you may find it beneficial to write your own as you read the text for the first time. You should focus on the main idea of each paragraph for your question and use your own words. This will make it much easier for you to understand the text and go on to use the new information it contains.

- 2** Read the strategy. Then read the article and write a question for each paragraph in your notebook. Compare your questions with a partner. Which elicits the most information?

- 3** Study questions 1–8. Two of the questions do not have answers. Try to eliminate them. Then read the article again to check your ideas and answer the remaining six questions in your notebook.

In which paragraph (A–F) does the writer mention ...

- 1 a struggle between athletes and their negative thoughts?
- 2 a trial of endurance where sleep is shunned?
- 3 a technique athletes use to boost their physical endurance?
- 4 the cause of a series of unpleasant symptoms experienced by a particular group of athletes?
- 5 a moment when athletes are on the point of losing the power of conscious thought?
- 6 a legendary prize that is the goal of endurance athletes?
- 7 a show of determination witnessed at a major competition?
- 8 an event which surprises athletes with its severity?

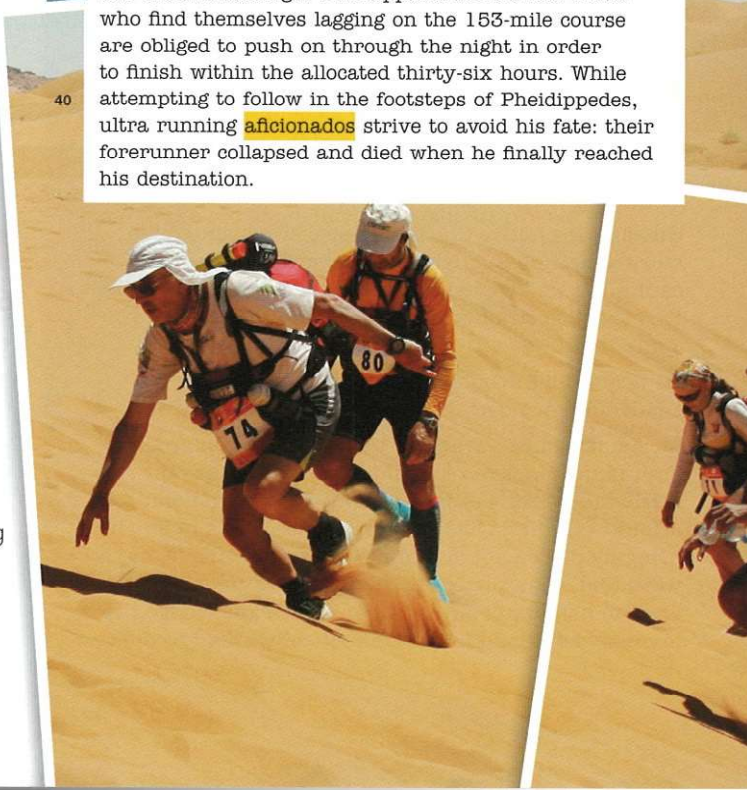
- 4 SPEAKING** Discuss the questions with a partner.

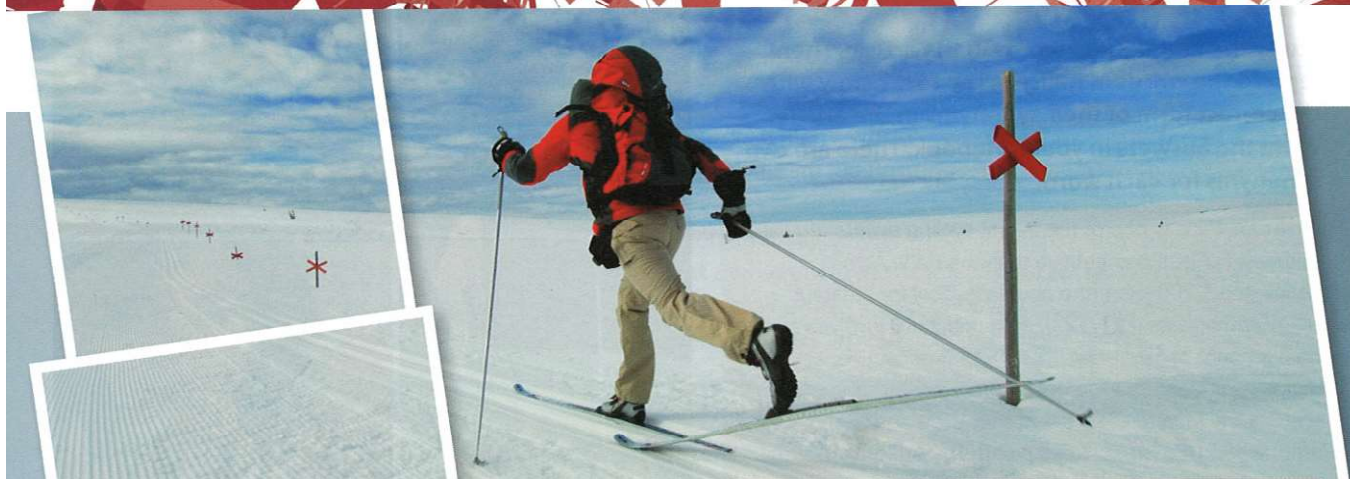
- 1 What reasons are given in the article for participating in endurance sports? Can you think of any others?
- 2 Are you attracted to endurance sports? Why / why not?

TO INFINITY AND BEYOND

A It was not by achieving a record-breaking performance that athlete Gabriele Andersen-Schiess caused a sensation at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, but by actually finishing her race at all. On the day that female marathon runners were finally welcomed at the Games, thirty-six competitors had already crossed the finishing line when the thirty-nine-year-old ski instructor emerged from the tunnel into the main stadium. Suffering from extreme **fatigue**, she lurched from one side of the track to the other, unable to bend her right leg at the knee and with her left arm hanging by her side. Refusing any assistance for fear of being disqualified, she finally overcame the **handicap** to stagger across the line an agonizing five minutes and forty seconds later. Although Andersen-Schiess took the reaction to her effort with a **pinch of salt** once she had recovered ('I didn't think it was that special', she said), her actions ultimately led to a revision of the rules by the International Amateur Athletic Federation, making medical assistance available to runners during the event without being disqualified.

B There is no denying that running a marathon is an admirable feat, but in the world of endurance sports, completing a course measuring a mere 26.2 miles is nothing to write home about. At just under six times the distance, there is more than a **grain of truth** in the assertion that the *Marathon des Sables* (Marathon of the Sands) is the most gruelling foot race on Earth. Participants are expected to cover this 156-mile course in the southern Moroccan desert in only six days, withstanding temperatures of over 37°C. The only thing that offers them a **ray of hope** is the sight of the sun going down over the horizon at the end of the day. Then there is the Spartathlon, a race based on the original marathon allegedly run between Athens and Sparta by the Greek messenger Pheidippides in 490 BC. Those who find themselves lagging on the 153-mile course are obliged to push on through the night in order to finish within the allocated thirty-six hours. While attempting to follow in the footsteps of Pheidippides, ultra running **aficionados** strive to avoid his fate: their forerunner collapsed and died when he finally reached his destination.





C Ultra running is just one of several endurance sports. Others, including ultra cycling and cross-country skiing, each have their own particular trial. For skiers, there is the three-day Arctic Circle Race, traversing nearly a hundred miles of a landscape whose **tranquility** belies the hardships in store. The toughest test for cycling **devotees** is the Race Across America, a non-stop 3,000-mile journey across the US from Oceanside, California, in the west to Annapolis, Maryland, in the east. What may serve as a **crumb of comfort** for all the guilt-ridden couch potatoes among us is the high dropout rate at these events: as many as 50% of Race Across America entrants quit every year due to **exhaustion** or for medical reasons. This suffering begs the question: What motivates endurance athletes to put themselves through such pain?

D The answer seems to have something to do with the euphoria that many competitors feel once they have crossed the finishing line, but before they can do that, at least in the case of endurance runners, there are three important obstacles they may have to overcome. The first is a physiological **hurdle** that often occurs at around mile 20 of a marathon, the point at which an ultra running competition has only just begun. The barrier, commonly known as 'the Wall', marks the near **depletion** of the body's store of glycogen, the form in which carbohydrates are stored to be converted into energy later. This chemical **deficiency** leads to severe cramps, fatigue, twitchiness and fluctuating body temperature – an excruciating combination that has caused misery to many an athlete. Those that manage to cross the Wall subsequently revel in the knowledge that they possess a **fortitude** of which they were previously unaware. For most athletes, this character-building experience is good enough, but not for endurance enthusiasts, who feel the **compulsion** to ascertain what will happen if they push themselves further.

E By the time they have reached the halfway mark, a lot of participants are beginning to regret their decision to continue. Their heads start to fill with a million arguments as to why they should not persevere and they are drawn into a bottomless hole known as 'the Pit'. The runners try and claw their way out, but the inner voices ordering them to give up are as relentless as the fiercest parental rebuke. Like the Wall, however, the Pit is not insurmountable. On the other side lies a state of **serenity**, in which athletes are given a boost once they realize that they themselves were the source of the **torrent of criticism** showered upon them while they were traversing the Pit. More importantly, it was their own **tenacity** that succeeded in stemming the flow. Conquering this barrier is yet another confidence builder, far more intense than the first, and it provides an explanation as to why endurance athletes keep on coming back for more.

F However, the race is not yet over. Beyond the Pit lies the ultimate challenge: 'the Abyss'. This is the name given to the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical **torment** that most endurance athletes face when they have taken themselves frightfully close to their limitations. They find themselves stripped of their judgement and ego and staring into a black void, where they become ignorant of reality and the **lapse of time**. The only thoughts circulating in their heads at this moment are metaphysical questions such as *Who am I?* or *What am I doing here?* The Abyss usually hits in the last twenty kilometres of an endurance race, and to go beyond this **wall of silence** requires almost superhuman strength. As athletes pound along the **strip of land** that leads to the finishing line, many of them experience a kind of ecstasy that makes all the suffering worthwhile. Once they have recovered, however, the majority begin to question their newly gained enlightenment, wondering whether it was a fluke or if it can be repeated. Of course, there is only one way to alleviate this **preoccupation**: to enrol in the next race, and undergo the **anguish** all over again.



V insight Synonyms: endurance sports

- 5** Study the highlighted words in the article. Then replace the words in *italics* in the text below with the correct form of their synonyms in the article. Write the answers in your notebook. There are two synonyms for each word.

Paris–Brest–Paris is one of the oldest cycling events regularly held today. Far less competitive than the Race Across America, the 1,200-kilometre course is ideal for amateur cycling ¹*enthusiasts* (▶▶ / ▶▶), although it still involves a certain amount of ²*suffering* (▶▶ / ▶▶). Prospective participants complete a series of shorter events in the year preceding the race to ensure that they have sufficient ³*determination* (▶▶ / ▶▶) to take part. They also watch their diet and the amount of water they drink to avoid suffering from fluid ⁴*reduction* (▶▶ / ▶▶) on the big day. One of the greatest ⁵*hindrances* (▶▶ / ▶▶) that stop people completing the ride is ⁶*tiredness* (▶▶ / ▶▶), as there is scant time to rest during the ninety hours allotted. In spite of this, the same cyclists often participate time and time again because of the ⁷*calmness* (▶▶ / ▶▶) they feel while cycling through the stunning French countryside. Another reason for their ⁸*obsession* (▶▶ / ▶▶) is the outstanding support they receive from the thousands of spectators that line the streets both day and night.

V insight Quantity phrases with of

- 6** In your notebook, match the underlined phrases in the article to meanings 1–8.

- 1 a little incredulity
- 2 a considerable period
- 3 a small opportunity for success
- 4 a slight satisfaction
- 5 complete absence of sound
- 6 the slightest veracity
- 7 a large number of negative comments
- 8 a long, narrow piece of ground

- 7** In your notebook, complete the sentences with the correct form of the phrases in exercise 6.

- 1 The fact that the leaders lost a match gave the second-placed team a ▶▶.
- 2 The club manager came in for a ▶▶ after he sacked the team's best player.
- 3 The officer met with a ▶▶ when he asked the fans who was responsible for the incident.
- 4 A ▶▶ in the stadium was reserved for the long jump runway and pit.
- 5 The fact that his horse came in third served as a ▶▶ to the jockey.
- 6 There was a ▶▶ between the arrival of the winner and the runner in second place.

- 8 SPEAKING** Work with a partner. Design an endurance event for your area. Consider the points below.

■ sport ■ route ■ duration ■ difficulty ■ length ■ prize

Vocabulary bank Obsessions page 142



- 1 SPEAKING** Look at the photos. How many hours do you think it would take for a novice to master these activities?

- 2** ^{2.17} Listen to a radio programme and compare your ideas.

- 3** ^{2.17} Listen again and decide if the sentences are true (T) or false (F). Write the answers in your notebook.

- 1 The 10,000-hour rule is a theory which was conceived in the 1990s.
- 2 Malcolm Gladwell is the author who popularized the rule in a book.
- 3 Dan McLaughlin, who is currently testing the rule, used to earn his living with a camera.
- 4 Dan performed exceptionally well on the golf course which the brothers chose.
- 5 Dan, whose experience of golf was limited, had regularly competed in other sports events.
- 6 Dan is currently unemployed, which gives him time to pursue his goal.
- 7 The area where Dan's training began was the furthest from the hole.
- 8 The day when Dan was able to play a whole game came after more than a year's training.

Defining and non-defining relative clauses

- 4** Identify the relative clauses in the sentences in exercise 3 and write them in your notebook. Then answer the questions.

- 1 Which sentences contain a defining relative clause? What is the function of these clauses?
- 2 Which sentences contain a non-defining relative clause? What is the function of these clauses?
- 3 In which sentences could the relative pronoun be replaced with *that*? Why?
- 4 Which relative pronoun do we use to indicate possession?
- 5 What does the relative pronoun in sentence 6 refer to?
- 6 How could *where* and *when* in sentences 7 and 8 be rewritten using the relative pronoun *which*?

5 Write the correct answers in your notebook. In which sentences could the relative pronoun or adverb be omitted? Why?

- 1 Music concerts are sometimes held at Wembley Stadium, **where / that / which** the England national football team plays.
- 2 The judges disqualified the competitors **which / whose / who(m)** they suspected of cheating.
- 3 The Lakers, **that / who / whose** main rivals are the Boston Celtics, play basketball at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.
- 4 The team had never competed internationally before, **which / where / why** was unbelievable.
- 5 Can you tell me the exact date **that / which / when** the next Olympic Games start?
- 6 The new stadium, **that / which / whom** was opened yesterday, holds 50,000 people.
- 7 Do you remember the reason **where / when / why** the penalty was given?

Pronouns and prepositions in relative clauses

6 Identify the relative clauses in sentences a–e and write them in your notebook. Then complete the rules below.

- a ... it may not be relevant to sports in which athletes are required to possess some particular physical attribute to take part.
- b His inspiration came during a visit to his brother, with whom he played a round of golf.
- c The concept dates back to a 1973 study of chess players, and is supported by a study of violin students in 1993, during which researchers made an important discovery.
- d ... he has been competing in amateur events against people who have just started out, like himself.
- e Dan started with a shot that he was very bad at: putting.

We can use prepositions at the beginning or the end of relative clauses.

Preposition at the **1** ><:

- makes the sentence sound more formal
- makes long clauses easier to understand
- we use *which* for things and **2** >< for people
- prepositions such as *after*, *before*, *below*, *besides* and **3** >< are only used in this position

Preposition at the **4** ><:

- makes the sentence sound less formal
- is always used as part of a **5** >< verb
- we usually use **6** >< for both people and things
- we often omit the relative pronoun in such clauses, especially in spoken English

7 In your notebook, complete the text with the clauses below. Use defining or non-defining relative clauses. Determine which relative pronouns to use and the correct position of any prepositions.


- she helped Marion Bartoli to victory in the 2013 singles final besides this
- he was beaten by the Spaniard Rafael Nadal there
- her professional career as a player ranged from 1994 to 2009
- victory at Wimbledon has often proved elusive for him
- they gave Mauresmo the top women's ranking for the first time in 2004
- she has been taken on initially by Murray just for the grass season

A former French Wimbledon Champion has recently become the first woman ever to coach a top male tennis player: Andy Murray. Amélie Mauresmo, **1** ><, was surprised at first by the request but said that she was looking forward to the challenge. The coach, **2** ><, is well known for her powerful one-handed backhand and strong net play. Murray will be looking to assimilate these techniques, **3** ><.

Mauresmo has extensive experience at Wimbledon: she has acted as grass court advisor to former doubles champion Michaël Llodra, **4** ><. Murray, **5** ><, made the historic announcement after his defeat in the semi-finals of the French Open, **6** ><.


8 SPEAKING Work with a partner. If you had 10,000 hours to spare, what new activity would you take up? What level of proficiency do you think you would reach? Why?

2.18

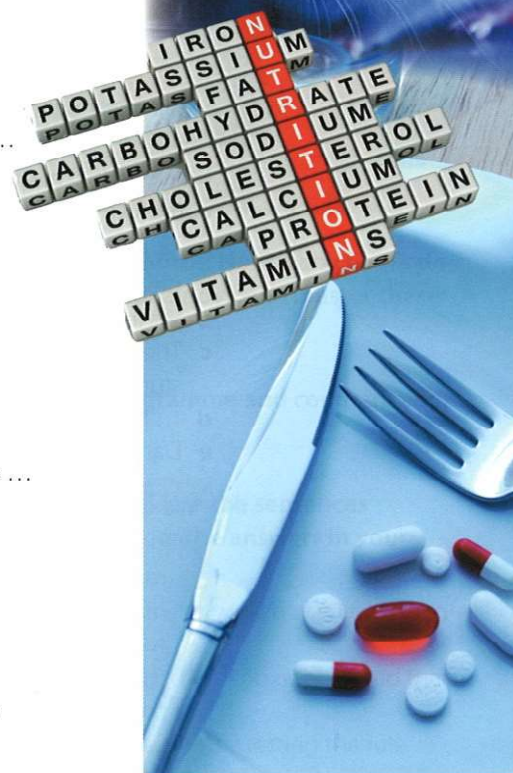
- 1  **SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Discuss the questions. Then listen to a radio programme and compare your ideas.

- 1 What can a person become addicted to?
- 2 What causes an addiction?
- 3 What effects can addictions have on a person's health?

2.18


- 2  Listen again and write the correct answers in your notebook.

- 1 In the study, the rats that put on weight were the ones ...
 - a that didn't consume any junk food.
 - b belonging to the first group.
 - c whose food wasn't restricted.
 - d that were fed on nutritious products.
- 2 Some rats consumed more food than others because ...
 - a they had become addicted to it.
 - b they belonged to a larger species.
 - c they had been given a lot of drugs.
 - d they were offered a more varied diet.
- 3 Snacks that dissolve in the mouth ...
 - a are not as addictive as food that has to be chewed.
 - b do not contain as many calories as you think.
 - c contain more sugar than soft drinks.
 - d are far more fattening than consumers imagine.
- 4 Athletes who become addicted to fitness supplements ...
 - a start to go grey earlier.
 - b speak in a higher tone.
 - c experience changes in their appearance.
 - d lose control of their muscles.
- 5 The twenty-year-old bodybuilder died because ...
 - a he had a massive heart attack.
 - b he consumed an excessive amount of supplements.
 - c he ingested some contaminated food.
 - d he took an overdose on the day of a competition.



V insight Nouns + prepositions: addictions

2.19

- 3  In your notebook, complete the table with the nouns from the news programme. Then listen again and check your answers.

■ insistence ■ restriction ■ susceptibility ■ association ■ dependence ■ obsession ■ addiction

reliance, ><, ><, ><	on
aversion, menace, ><, ><	to
conformity, fixation, ><, ><	with

- 4 In your notebook, complete the text with the correct form of six nouns in exercise 3 and their prepositions.

It is clear that performance-enhancing drugs can be a ¹>< athletes' health, especially when they are taken in excess. For this reason, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) imposes strict ²>< the drugs that athletes can consume. To emphasize their ³>< a zero-tolerance policy, WADA have recently increased the ban for a first-time major offence from two years to four years. One of the biggest names to have a(n) ⁴>< doping has been the American cyclist Lance Armstrong. His ⁵>< winning the Tour de France led him to consume banned substances on several occasions. This ⁶>< employing performance-enhancing drugs has had disastrous results: not only has Armstrong been stripped of all his titles, but he has also been banned from professional sport for life.

- 5 **SPEAKING** Do you think the benefits of sports supplements outweigh the dangers? Why / why not?

Vocabulary bank Medical metaphors page 142

Planning a week's menu for an athlete

- 2.19
6 **SPEAKING** In your notebook, match the food items to food groups A–E below. Some of the items can belong to more than one group. Then listen to a radio programme and compare your answers.

■ olive oil ■ peas ■ chicken ■ carrots ■ semi-skimmed milk ■ wholemeal bread ■ potatoes ■ rice
■ cereal ■ bananas ■ broccoli ■ lentils ■ pasta ■ eggs ■ fish ■ turkey

A carbohydrates B fibre C healthy fats D protein E vitamins

- 2.20
7 Four students have been asked to plan a nutritious breakfast for an athlete as part of a PE project. Listen to their discussion. Which foods do they suggest?

Question tags and echo tags

- 8 Study the highlighted question tags and echo tags in the extracts from the discussion. In your notebook, match extracts a–f to rules 1–6. Then complete the rules.

- a Let's start, **shall we?**
b Athletes need a lot of carbohydrates, **don't they?**
c Nobody can exercise on an empty stomach, **can they?**
d A Apparently, they aren't supposed to drink whole milk.
B Oh, **aren't they?** Why's that?
e A Breakfast is meant to be the most important meal of the day.
B It isn't, **is it?** I've never heard that before.
f A Bananas are a good source of energy.
B Yes, **aren't they?**

We use question tags to check information or ask for confirmation or agreement.

- Positive statements usually have negative question tags and vice versa, but we always use a(n) >> tag with *they* after *no one* or *nobody*.
- Auxiliary verbs in the statement are repeated in the question tag. Where there is no auxiliary verb, we use a form of >>.
- We use >> verbs in tags after imperatives for requests or proposals.

We use echo tags in a conversation to show that we are paying attention.

- To agree with a positive statement, we use a(n) >> echo tag.
- To show interest, we reply to a positive statement with a(n) >> tag and to a negative statement with a negative tag.
- To show surprise or disbelief, first we negate the statement, and then we add an echo tag. We reply to a positive statement with a positive tag and a negative statement with a(n) >> tag.

- 9 In your notebook, complete the dialogue with suitable question tags and echo tags.

- A Nobody's mentioned what to drink yet, ¹ >> ?
B Good point. Let's talk about that now, ² >> ?
A Yes, why not? Um, what about coffee? That's the best way to start the day.
B Yes, ³ >> ? But I'm not sure about coffee.
A Oh, ⁴ >> ? Why's that?
B It's a stimulant. Athletes would be better off with tea.
A But tea contains caffeine, too.
B It doesn't, ⁵ >> ?
A Yes, I'm afraid so. Don't forget about water, ⁶ >> ?
B No, I guess water is the best option.
A Yes, I think it might be.

- 10 **SPEAKING** Work in groups of four. Imagine that you are nutritionists. In your notebook, write a seven-day meal plan for one of your clients, who is an athlete. Bear in mind that your client will need to eat five meals per day: breakfast, lunch and dinner, and two small snacks, mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Ensure that your plan includes a variety of dishes, so that no meal is repeated.