

## 1 Check these words/phrases in the Word List.

- territory • endurance event
- bitterly cold • torture • ultimate thrill
- requirements • entire • finishing line
- willpower • soar • plunge • ration
- hardship • push your boundaries
- unpredictable • battle • blisters
- deprivation • deepen understanding

## 2 The pictures show some endurance events. Why do you think people enjoy participating in them?

🔊 Listen and read to find out.

## 3 Read the magazine article about athletes who compete in some of the world's extreme endurance races. For questions 1-10, choose from the people (A-D). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person says:

there was a time limit to the race they competed in?

 1

they did not win a medal?

 2

the rules stipulated they could only have a certain amount of something?

 3

the choice of when (and if) to rest was left to them?

 4

they lacked previous experience of the event?

 5

they experienced extreme fluctuations in temperature whilst competing?

 6

they had to be totally self-sufficient during their race?

 7

they had the challenge of running under a sun that never set?

 8

they have prior experience in the event?

 9

they were responsible for their own medical needs during the race?

 10

# Pushed to the limit

We asked four sportsmen who compete in extreme endurance races in some of the most hostile environments on the planet about their experiences.

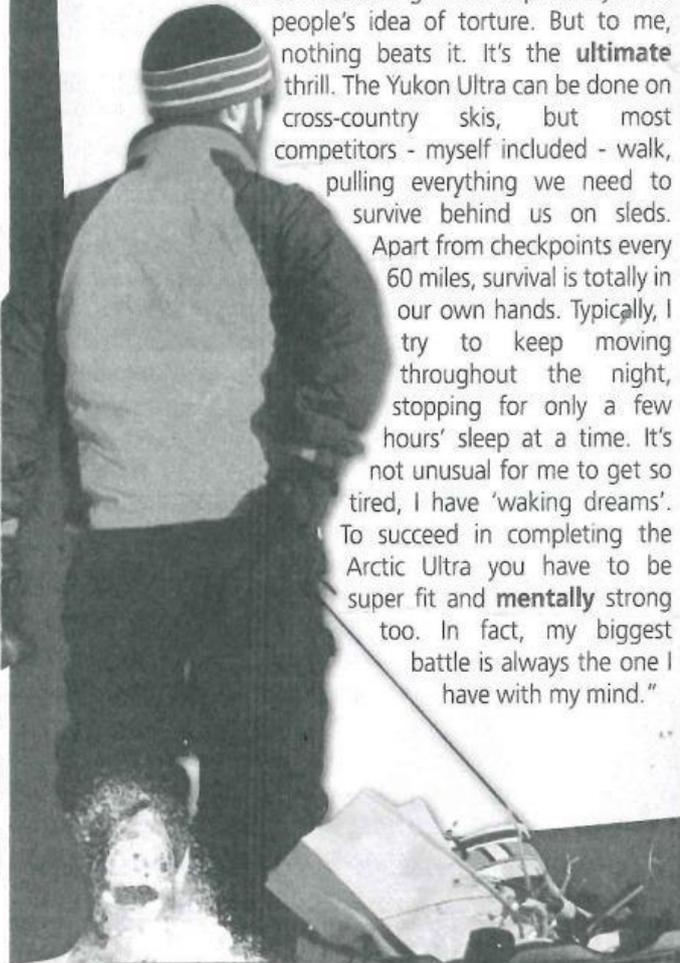
## A Chris

"The Yukon Arctic Ultra is a 430-mile race across Canada's beautiful snow-covered Yukon territory and the endurance event I most **look forward to** during the year. Trekking hundreds of miles across the bitterly cold Canadian wilderness during winter is probably most

people's idea of torture. But to me, nothing beats it. It's the **ultimate** thrill. The Yukon Ultra can be done on cross-country skis, but most competitors - myself included - walk, pulling everything we need to survive behind us on sleds.

Apart from checkpoints every 60 miles, survival is totally in our own hands. Typically, I try to keep moving throughout the night, stopping for only a few hours' sleep at a time. It's not unusual for me to get so tired, I have 'waking dreams'.

To succeed in completing the Arctic Ultra you have to be super fit and **mentally** strong too. In fact, my biggest battle is always the one I have with my mind."



## STUDY SKILLS

### Multiple matching

Read the questions and underline the key words. Scan the text for the information you need. As you are reading, underline the parts related to the questions. Read the questions again and answer them one by one, referring to the texts. Some information may be paraphrased. Remember the texts contain similarities.

## B Carl

"The Badwater Ultramarathon describes itself as 'the world's toughest foot race' and in my opinion that's not far from the truth. Badwater is, without question, the most difficult endurance event I've ever taken part in. Psychologically and physically, it's extremely **challenging**. About 90 of the world's elite ultra-endurance athletes compete in Badwater each year. Entrance is by invitation and every applicant must satisfy certain requirements in order to apply. The race, which is 215 km in length, starts 85 m below sea level in the Badwater Basin in California's Death Valley and finishes 2,548 m above sea level on Mount Whitney. It takes place in July when weather conditions are at their most extreme and temperatures reach 49°C – even in the shade. The course must be completed in no more than 48 hours. Very few athletes end up crossing the finishing line, it's so **tough**. I did. But it took all my willpower."



## Check these words

- territory • endurance event • bitterly cold
- torture • mentally strong • battle • willpower
- ration • endurance • plunge • addictive
- boundary • blisters • deprivation • deepen

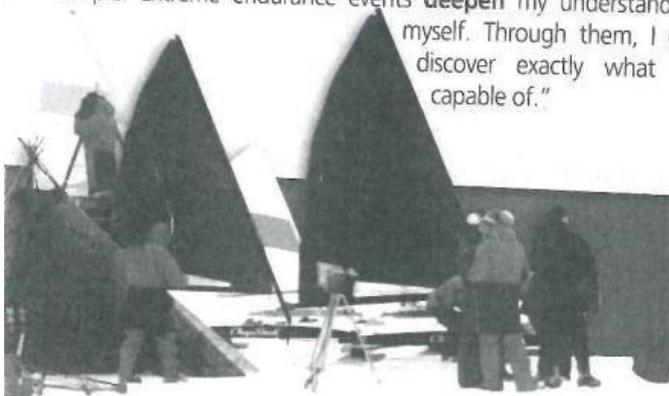
## C Miguel

"The Marathon des Sables (Marathon of the Sands) is a six-day, 254 km ultramarathon held every year in the Sahara Desert in southern Morocco. I've run the race five times now and it never gets any easier. The route covers terrain **ranging** from uneven rocky ground to huge sand dunes. During the day, temperatures in the desert soar to 49°C. At night, they plunge to freezing. A strict rule of the race is competitors must carry everything they need (food, clothing, compass, anti-snake venom, etc) as only water and tents are supplied along the way. Water, however, is strictly rationed throughout the race. Even on the longest stage of the race (the non-stop overnight stage which lasts 91 km) we're allowed no more than 22.5 litres of water over the two days. This stage is definitely the hardest part of the race for me. I just keep thinking: '91 km! How am I going to run 91 km in 24 hours?' Despite the **hardships**, it is addictive. It tests your limits, pushes your boundaries ... it makes you feel alive!"



## D Ricardo

"This summer was my first time competing in the Bigice Race, an event for teams or solo racers that takes place on the Greenland ice cap, just above the Arctic Circle. Unfortunately, I didn't place. But being new to the event, I was more than satisfied just to finish. The Bigice Race is one of the toughest endurance races. Weather conditions in the Arctic are **unpredictable** at the best of times and during the race I had to battle snow blizzards and temperatures of -35°C in exposed wilderness and 24hr daylight. Finishing the Bigice Race is one of my proudest sporting achievements, not least because I did so in **considerable** pain: I had terrible blisters before the first day was even over. People often ask me what I get out of endurance racing; why I 'enjoy' such hardship and deprivation. The answer is simple. Extreme endurance events **deepen** my understanding of myself. Through them, I get to discover exactly what I am capable of."



## 4 Match the words in bold to their synonyms.

- difficulties • demanding
- psychologically • great • anticipate
- varying • strengthen • greatest
- difficult • changeable

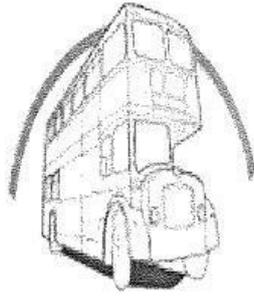
## Speaking

Make notes under the headings:  
**Name of race - Place - Time - Description.** Use your notes to give the class a summary of the text.



## Writing

**THINK!** Would you take part in one of these races? Why/Why not? In three minutes write a few sentences. Tell the class.



# ΑΝΔΡΙΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

## ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΞΕΝΩΝ ΓΛΩΣΣΩΝ

### Unit 7a

1. territory:
2. endurance:
3. look forward to:
4. bitterly cold:
5. ultimate thrill:
6. competitors:
7. apart from:
8. super fit:
9. mentally strong:
10. without question:
11. take part in:
12. ultra-endurance:
13. applicant:
14. requirements:
15. take place:
16. in the shade:
17. tough:
18. willpower:
19. ranging from:
20. uneven rocky ground to:
21. plunge to:
22. strict:
23. venom:
24. compass:
25. rationed:
26. despite the hardships:
27. addictive:
28. test your limits:
29. pushes your boundaries:
30. unpredictable:
31. battle:
32. in exposed:

33. achievements:
34. considerable pain:
35. hardship and deprivation:
36. deepen my understanding:
37. capable of: