Part 5

You are going to read an article about a long-distance motor race called the Dakar Rally. For questions **31–36**, choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

My ambition: taking part in the Dakar Rally

By Amber Watts, 15 years old

Motorsports are my passion, and one day I'd love to challenge myself by taking part in the Dakar Rally. The rally is a long-distance off-road race, which runs for 15 days across varied terrain, with drivers having to cope with desert, mud and rocks. So tough is definitely the word you'd use to describe it. I think that's what appeals to me so much about it. Dad and I follow the race every year on TV, so I've got quite a good knowledge of it now. We're really into engineering and adapting vehicles – Dad's got this old jeep that we've been working on, making it suitable for tricky off-road driving.

In the Dakar Rally, you can drive any vehicle – motorbike, two- or four-wheel drives, even trucks! They're heavily adapted, so you need a lot of experience as a mechanic. They have to *line 19* be modified in order to be able to withstand the journey – you couldn't do it in an ordinary car because it would just fall apart! You don't need to be a professional rally driver to take part, but it helps having experience driving in difficult conditions. As well as all of that, it's a case of saving up a lot of money because the whole thing is *really* expensive, from investing in spare parts for the vehicle, to buying a two-week supply of fuel and other supplies.

I first became interested in the rally after being lucky enough to catch the launch of the race one year when I was on holiday. There was a definite tension in the air the day before the race. From where we were standing we could see the area where the teams – drivers and their mechanics – were making repairs and preparations which could only be done at the last minute. All I could see was a mechanic's legs sticking out from under each vehicle and everyone getting on quietly with the task at hand, helping each other out, despite the pressure.

Next day, we headed down to the starting line. I'd expected the vehicles to set off all at once, and when they left one by one, I really didn't know what was going on. Then I overheard someone saying that it was what's known as a time trial. Every vehicle, whether it's a motorbike or a lorry, is timed, and the fastest to complete the route is the winner in each category. Off they went in turn, in a cloud of dust and their engines revving at an incredible volume. I'd never seen anything like it and, before I knew it, the cars had disappeared from sight.

That experience encouraged me to find out more about this amazing race. The route is around 10,000 kilometres long, depending on which country it takes place in, so there's a lot of driving involved. You mustn't lose concentration for a minute and that's what really puts the drivers to the test. You also can't possibly imagine what you're going to encounter ahead – meeting obstacles, skidding on loose stones, crossing rivers, breaking down, you name it. It must be exhausting and thrilling at the same time. But you can't just go full speed ahead like you would on a race-track or you'd tire yourself out on the first day and it'd be really hard to keep going.

The competitors are given a map and have to find their way themselves. Comprehensive instructions are included on this map; however, given the fact that there are few landmarks along the way, this must be really demanding when you're unfamiliar with the territory. Some people get lost, and end up in the wrong place, but they just have to find their way back to the route again. Each day, the drivers aim to complete a particular stage. If they encounter setbacks which mean they don't make it, they spend an uncomfortable night with whatever hazards that might involve. Finishing the race is, therefore, a major achievement.

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31 Amber is attracted to the idea of participating in the Dakar Rally because she

A enjoys taking part in motorsports events.
B likes the idea of doing something so difficult.
C has been involved in preparing a vehicle for it.
D has learned a lot about it from her father.

32 What does 'able to withstand' in line 19 mean?

A economical enough to run throughout
B strong enough to endure
C large enough to cope with
D advanced enough to be successful at

33 What made an impression on Amber when she saw teams preparing for a race?

A how late some of them had left it
B how excited everyone seemed to be
C how well they were working together
D how many people were involved

34 How does Amber say she felt as she stood at the starting line?

A grateful to another spectator
B concerned by the noise
C interested to learn about the vehicles
D surprised at what happened

35 In the fifth paragraph, what does Amber say is especially challenging about driving?

A coping with its effects on the body
B staying focused for long periods of time
C being able to keep up the required pace
D trying to predict what is coming next

36 What does Amber say about the guidance drivers are given?

A It provides a high level of detail.
B It can be interpreted in different ways.
C It is straightforward to follow.
D It highlights possible dangers.

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