1 Culture and traditions



Lessons 13–14 **Camel racing**

- Look at the photos. Describe what you can see. Have you ever been to a horse race or a camel race? What do you know about them? How are they the same or different?



_____[1] People are already leaving the race track after two hours of watching some of the fastest camels in the region and before the desert temperatures begin to soar.

_____[2] Some people watch the events on their TVs. But many people don't know that the camels taking part in the races have actually been ridden by robots! And how long do you think this has been going on? Well, … for the last ten years, at least!

_____[3] Instead of human jockeys controlling the animals – using whips and their voices – a dummy (robot) jockey is used, operated by a remote control. And what has been activating this remote control? The trainer's voice has been activating it – a voice that the camel recognises – so this device 'drives' the camels. So, when we have watched cars driving along the side of the race track, what have we been watching? Well, we can be quite sure that we have been watching the trainers. They have been following the race and 'talking' to their camels as they go. The camels have been responding to their owners' instructions, which are usually telling them to run faster!

_____[4] The camel is fitted with another device controlled by a push-button. This button activates a whip. So, by combining talking to the camel with controlling the whip, the owner is able to fine-tune what they want their camels to do.

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_____[5] These child-jockeys were light and enabled the camel to run faster. But the racing wasn't safe for the children, so a new law was introduced that banned anyone under 16 from racing. Another issue with human jockeys was the tendency to whip the camels hard to get them to run faster. This often resulted in injuring the camels and leaving them with scars. So what could they do …?

_____[6] And through designing these, they found that the camels responded very quickly to the push-button whip. This meant the animals were hit less and not so forcefully by the human jockeys, and the camels would finish the race free from injuries or scars.

_____[7] they are much lighter and this usually means that the camels run much faster.

_____[8] Apparently, the robots can be made from almost anything. And some of them have shock absorbers and GPS trackers! But the most important factor is that they are really light.

Task One

Complete the sentences with the correct word.

1. .....starts early in the morning because you will see people leaving the race track before the sun gets too hot.
   a. camel
   b. camel racing
   c. people

2. Many people do not know that there are ..... riding the camels in the race.
   a. human jockeys
   b. robot jockeys
   c. drones

3. The ..... follow the camels in their cars.
   a. trainers
   b. robot jockeys
   c. drones

4. The trainers control the camels with ..... and .....
   a. a remote control device
   b. a laptop
   c. a whip

5. In the past ..... were used in camel racing.
a. human jockeys
b. child jockeys
c. robot jockeys

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