



Name: _____

QUIZ

Points: _____

Reading Explorer 3: Unit 1 Lesson B

DIRECTIONS: Choose the best answer for each question.

What Makes an Olympic Champion?

[A] How does a person become an Olympic champion - someone capable of winning the gold? In reality, a combination of biological, environmental, and psychological factors, as well as training and practice, all go into making a super athlete.

[B] Perhaps the most important factor involved in becoming an elite athlete is genetic. Most Olympic competitors are equipped with certain physical characteristics that differentiate them from the average person. Take an elite athlete's muscles, for example. In most human skeletal muscles (the ones that make your body move), there are fast-twitch fibers and slow-twitch fibers. Fast-twitch fibers help us move quickly. Olympic weightlifters, for example, have a large number of fast-twitch fibers in their muscles - many more than the average person. These allow them to lift hundreds of kilos from the ground and over their heads in seconds. Surprisingly, a large, muscular body is not the main requirement to do well in this sport. It is more important to have a large number of fast-twitch fibers in the muscles.

[C] The legs of an elite marathon runner, on the other hand, might contain up to 90 percent slow-twitch muscle fibers. These generate energy efficiently and enable an athlete to control fatigue and keep moving for a longer period of time. When we exercise long or hard, it's common to experience tiredness, muscle pain, and difficulty breathing. These feelings are caused when the muscles produce high amounts of a substance called lactate and can't remove it quickly enough. Athletes with many slow-twitch muscle fibers seem to be able to clear the lactate from their muscles faster as they move. Thus, the average runner might start to feel discomfort halfway into a race. A trained Olympic athlete, however, might not feel pain until much later in the competition.

[D] For some Olympic competitors, size is important. Most male champion swimmers are 180 cm or taller, allowing them to reach longer and swim faster. For both male and female gymnasts, though, a smaller size and body weight mean they can move with greater ease, and are less likely to suffer damage when landing on the floor from a height of up to 4.5 meters.

[E] Some athletes' abilities are naturally enhanced by their environment. Those raised at high altitudes in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Morocco have blood that is rich in hemoglobin. Large amounts of hemoglobin carry oxygen around the body faster, enabling these athletes to run better. Cultural factors also help some athletes do well at certain sports. Tegla Loroupe, a young woman from northern Kenya, has won several marathons. She says some of her success is due to her country's altitude (she trains at about 2,400 meters) and some to her cultural background. As a child, she had to run 10 kilometers to school every day. "I'd be punished if I was late," she says.

[F] Although genes, environment, and even culture play a part in becoming an elite athlete, training and practice are needed to succeed. Marathon runners may be able to control fatigue and keep moving for long periods of time, but they must train to reach and maintain their goals. Weightlifters and gymnasts perfect their skills by repeating the same motions again and again until they become automatic. Greg Louganis, winner of four Olympic diving gold medals, says divers must train the same way to be successful: "You have less than three seconds from takeoff until you hit the water, so it has to be reflex. You have to repeat the dives hundreds, maybe thousands, of times." Training this way requires an athlete to be not only physically fit but psychologically healthy as well. "They have to be," says Sean McCann, a sports psychologist at the Olympic Training Center in the United States. "Otherwise, they couldn't handle the training loads we put on them. [Athletes] have to be good at setting goals, generating energy when they need it, and managing anxiety."

[G] How do athletes adjust to such intense pressure? Louganis explains how he learned to control his anxiety during a competition: "Most divers think too much ...," he says. "They're too much in their heads. What worked for me was humor. I remember thinking about what my mother would say if she saw me do a bad dive. She'd probably just compliment me on the beautiful splash."

- _____ 1. Which of these topics is NOT mentioned in the reading?
 - a. good nutrition during training
 - b. the experience of a Kenyan runner
 - c. a high altitude environment
 - d. cultural background
- _____ 2. In paragraph B, which is a *fast-twitch fiber*?
 - a. a part of the muscle that controls fatigue
 - b. a part of the muscle that allows you to move quickly
 - c. a part of the muscle that helps to keep you moving for a long time
 - d. a part of the muscle that makes your body more muscular
- _____ 3. Where would you be most likely to find this article?
 - a. in a psychology textbook
 - b. in a sports magazine
 - c. in the biography of Greg Louganis
 - d. in an introduction of the Olympics
- _____ 4. Which statement is closest to Sean McCann's statement: "*Athletes have to be good at setting goals, generating energy when they need it, and managing anxiety*"?
 - a. Athletes must be willing to practice a move hundreds of times.
 - b. Anyone can make the Olympics if they set the right goals.
 - c. Olympic competitors need to be physically and psychologically healthy.
 - d. Runners who train at high altitudes develop fast-twitch muscle fibers.
- _____ 5. The following sentence would be best placed at the end of which paragraph?

At a recent Olympics, the Chinese champion gymnasts averaged a height of 4 feet, 9 inches (145 centimeters).

- a. Paragraph A
- b. Paragraph B
- c. Paragraph D
- d. Paragraph E

DIRECTIONS: Choose the best answer for each question.

A Living Legend

[A] Ask an American to name a famous swimmer and they will probably say Michael Phelps, Mark Spitz, or Matt Biondi. All three of these great Olympic champions have become immortalized¹ for American and global sports fans. What is truly amazing, however, is the fact that many Americans would not be able to name their country's most successful competitive swimmer. Her name is Trischa Zorn, the most decorated² athlete in the history of the Paralympic Games.

[B] Born with a condition called aniridia - a disorder that leads to the absence of the iris³ in both eyes - Zorn competed in the S12 category of the Paralympic swimming competitions. Within this division, Zorn captured an incredible total of 55 medals (41 gold, nine silver, and five bronze) over the course of her career. Impressively, this is more than the number of medals won by Phelps, Spitz, and Biondi combined. At times, Zorn not only defeated her opponents, but dominated them. From 1980 to 1992, she won every Paralympic race that she participated in and, at one point, even held eight world records.

[C] There are several reasons why Zorn was able to achieve so many victories and world records. First and foremost was her longevity. Zorn participated in seven Paralympic Games, beginning with Arnhem in 1980 and ending with Athens in 2004. As a result of her passion for competitive swimming, Zorn trained incredibly hard to remain at the elite level of the sport for more than 25 years. This is a remarkable achievement in itself, considering many Olympic and Paralympic athletes can only maintain their highest performance levels for two or three Olympic Games.

[D] Another reason for Zorn's success was the wide variety of swimming techniques that she had perfected. Unlike other swimmers who focus on mastering one particular stroke, Zorn was the master of all, frequently winning in freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, and butterfly races. Aside from her natural talent and hard work, many attribute this incredible set of skills to her early involvement with the Mission Viejo Nadadores, a southern California swim club that she joined at the age of 10. Although mostly unknown to those who do not follow the sport, the club is operated by some of the best swimming instructors in the United States, including several previous Olympic champions. The swim club has the distinction of having sent at least one of its swimmers to the Olympics every year since 1976.

[E] After retiring from competitive swimming in 2004, the desire to succeed pushed Zorn to complete a degree in law. She currently does legal work for U.S. army veterans in need of assistance. While many who enter her legal office may not know about the incredible accomplishments of her previous life, those in the American swimming community will never forget. Each year in the United States, the Trischa Zorn Award is presented to one swimmer with a disability who has had an outstanding performance. It can certainly be said then that Trischa Zorn has also now achieved immortality.

1 To be **immortalized** means caused to become famous for a long time.

2 To be **decorated** means to have received many awards.

3 The **iris** is the colored part of the eye around the pupil.

- _____ 6. What is this passage mainly about?
- how the Mission Viejo Nadadores has produced many Olympic champions
 - how Zorn won more Olympic medals than Phelps, Spitz, and Biondi combined
 - how Zorn was able to achieve incredible success as a competitive swimmer
 - how aniridia can affect a swimmer's competitiveness
- _____ 7. In paragraph B, what does the word *dominated* mean?
- had respect for
 - had power or control over
 - embarrassed
 - injured
- _____ 8. In paragraph C, what does the word *longevity* mean?
- the ability to hold your breath
 - the ability to do something for a long time
 - the ability to improve through practice
 - the ability to compete at the highest level of a sports
- _____ 9. In the second sentence of paragraph D, what does the word *all* refer to?
- races
 - swimmers
 - teams
 - strokes
- _____ 10. What does the writer imply in the last sentence of the final paragraph?
- Zorn wants to hide her Olympic accomplishments and focus on law.
 - Zorn became tired of swimming after so many years.
 - Zorn will be remembered forever in the American swimming community.
 - Zorn is one of the few legally blind athletes who became incredibly successful.

DIRECTIONS: Scan for the best answer for each question.

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11. the category of Paralympic swimming Zorn participated in: _____
12. the total number of medals Zorn won at the Paralympic Games: _____
13. the place where Zorn competed in her last Paralympic Games: _____
14. the U.S. state where Zorn received most of her early training: _____
15. the year in which Zorn stopped swimming competitively: _____

DIRECTIONS: Choose the best option (a-j) to complete each sentence.

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| a. adjust | f. enhance |
| b. automatic | g. generated |
| c. champion | h. genetics |
| d. differentiate | i. psychological |
| e. elite | j. require |

- ____ 16. That new movie is really a(n) ____ drama because it is mostly about the emotional state of the characters instead of the plot.
- ____ 17. The team is made up of ____ athletes and has never been defeated.
- ____ 18. The parents had to paint one of the toenails of one of their twin daughters so they could ____ them from each other.
- ____ 19. Sam added solar panels to the roof of his house to collect energy ____ by the sun.
- ____ 20. ____ is a branch of biology that deals with heredity.
- ____ 21. When you slightly change the time on your alarm clock, you ____ it.
- ____ 22. If you added more chocolate to this recipe, it would ____ the flavor and make it taste better.
- ____ 23. We say that a machine that turns itself on and off is ____.
- ____ 24. Schools in this city ____ all student athletes to also do well in their studies. If they do not, they are not allowed to participate in competitions.
- ____ 25. When someone wins a gold medal at the Olympics, they are a(n) ____.

Thanks!