# Noise, speed and danger – the thrill of the Grand Prix

Every year thousands of Formula 1 fans spend hours watching the world's greatest drivers race around Grand Prix circuits at speeds of up to 360 km/hour. Many have spent hundreds of dollars on day-passes to watch the teams or drivers they admire. So what is it that makes the Grand Prix so exciting?

### The circuits

here are Grand Prix circuits all over the world, but probably the most famous track for Formula 1 fans is in Monaco.

his circuit held its first Grand Prix championship race in 1950 and the only things which have changed since then are the pit area and the spectator area, both of which have increased in size. For drivers, the Monaco Grand Prix is a 'must win' race, not just because it is a difficult track, but because the Monaco Grand Prix has always been a very glamorous race. his is because traditionally film stars and royalty have watched the Grand Prix in Monaco.

A much more modern circuit is the *Yas Marina* circuit in Abu Dhabi. It was finished in 2009 and the first race took place in November that year. It has now held seven races and is usually the last race in the Grand Prix calendar. Unlike most Grand Prix tracks, the drivers go in an anti-clockwise direction and when they need a pit stop they use an underground pit lane to get to the garages. *Yas Marina* has also hosted the world's first day-night race. In 2009, the race started at twilight and finished in the dark and throughout the race giant floodlights lit up the track.

### The drivers

he greatest Grand Prix driver is probably Michael Schumacher. He won seven Grand Prix titles with two different teams, Ferrari and Benetton, before he retired in 2012. Drivers to watch now are Sebastian Vettel, who has won four championships so far, and Lewis Hamilton, who has won three, including the 2015 Grand Prix championship.

### The teams

Formula 1 is a very expensive sport and very few teams take part. Every year, cars are redesigned and teams change their tactics to try and create the perfect Formula 1 car. Well-known teams such as Ferrari, Mercedes and Williams have raced cars in many Grands Prix, and have won the most championships, but new teams have joined recently and may become the next champions.

For many fans, the great thing about Formula 1 is that it is a truly international sport; the circuits are in every continent and the drivers and teams are from many countries. Maybe that's why it's so exciting!

**2** Read the article. Are the statements true (T) or false (F)?

1. Formula 1 drivers can reach speeds of over 360 km/hour.
2. The Monaco Grand Prix circuit has been improved many times.
3. Most circuits go in a clockwise direction.
4. Michael Schumacher has stopped driving.
5. New teams are now winning the Grand Prix.