

THE WORLD'S COOLEST MARATHON

If you think running a marathon is difficult enough, you'd be amazed at the brave athletes who complete the North Pole Marathon. Wearing extra-warm clothes, they have to deal with heavy snow and temperatures of -30°C to complete the 49-kilometre race. Although marathons take place all over the world, this particular marathon is the only one that's entirely on 'water'. (1) That is the only time when the whole course becomes solid ice, giving the hopeful runners the best chance of finishing the race.

Since the **annual** event started in 2003, 480 people from around the world have successfully completed the race. Stefanie Pettersson from Brazil is one of the youngest people to achieve this. She was just 16 years and two weeks old on the day of the race. (2) An experienced runner, Anders Pettersson **encouraged** Stefanie not to give up when she felt too cold or exhausted to continue. Another competitor who ran with Stefanie and Anders was Ted Jackson from the UK. He took up running when his father and brother developed health problems. (3) To avoid that situation, he decided to get really fit.

How long does this marathon take? The men's **record** is 3 hours 36 minutes, and the women's is 4 hours 52 minutes. Runners have sometimes said they felt disappointed with their finishing times because they have run much faster in other marathons. But it's never possible to predict how well someone is going to do. (4)

Many of those who run the North Pole Marathon are trying to raise money for various **charities**. They collect money from friends and family by advertising what they plan to do. (5) They are grateful for everything they receive because the **entry fee** alone is £16,000. This does, however, include all flights, accommodation and medical support.

Five sentences have been removed from the text. For each question, choose the correct answer (A–H). There are three extra sentences which you do not need to use.

- A Neither of them actually expected to finish it.
- B He was scared the same thing might happen to him.
- C The difficult conditions meant he never felt relaxed.
- D This could be on the internet or local TV.

- E The darkness made them feel confused and stressed.
- F For obvious reasons, it can only be attempted during winter.
- G Weather conditions vary so much from year to year.
- H Her dad was also one of the competitors.

Match the highlighted words in the article with their meanings.

Annual charities encouraged entry fee record

- 1 the best or fastest ever
- 2 the money you pay to join an organisation, go into a place or take part in something
- 3 happening once a year
- 4 said good things to someone to make them confident about doing something
- 5 official organisations that give money, food or help to people who need it