

UNIT 7: SPORTS AND COMPETITION

READING SKILLS

Exercise 1: Scan for key words to predict content

Read the text.

Australian life

Stories about life, sport and experiences in Australia

How to train your camel

One of my favourite sports is camel racing. I know that this is very big in places like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and so on, where it is hundreds of years old. However, it's also a popular sport here in Australia.

Many people don't even know that there are camels in Australia. However, there are around a million wild camels living here. They arrived in the 19th century from Pakistan and India, and they were used when people wanted to travel across this country's huge spaces. They were important for building the new country. Then, the motor car arrived, and Australia's camels were left alone in the desert.

Australia's first camel race was in the early 1900s. After that, the sport became more and more popular. Now, there are big camel-racing competitions every year across Australia (sometimes with big prize money), with many tourists.

First, the camels and their owners travel for weeks across the Australian desert to get to a camel festival. Wild camels walk more than 30 km a day. They like to be active, and they love running.

The camel riders – or jockeys – practise for a very long time before each race. Some jockeys spend time in places like the UAE to learn how to work with racing camels. It's important that the jockeys really know and understand camels, because they are not like horses. Sometimes, a camel will not move at the start of a race, or will stop in the middle of the race and run the wrong way!

Training a camel takes a long time, because if it doesn't want to do something, then it won't. Camels are large animals and they can be dangerous. Jockeys have to be very careful, and repeat what they say many times before a camel learns what to do.



Many jockeys believe that camels are clever animals, and that they can think. At the beginning of each race, a good jockey will try to understand what their camel is thinking. The riders check where the camel is looking, and try to guess what the camel will do next.

Then, at the end of the race, some jockeys talk to their camel and say 'well done' or 'thank you'. It's important to show that they are happy with the camel's work.

Decide which is the key word in each pair.

- 1 _____ (Camels/Horses)
- 2 _____ (Motor car/Sport)
- 3 _____ (Racing/Travel)
- 4 _____ (India/Australia)
- 5 _____ (Training/Money)
- 6 _____ (Jockey/Tourist)

Exercise 2: Reading for detail

Read the article again. Choose the correct answers.

1 Camel racing started first ...

- ☐ in Australia.
- ☐ in Arab countries.

2 Camels came to Australia ...

- ☐ in the 1800s.
- ☐ in the 1900s.

3 At competitions across Australia, tourists can ...

- ☐ watch camels win races.
- ☐ win a camel.

4 Camels are ...

- ☐ easier to race than horses.
- ☐ more difficult to race than horses.

5 A camel ...

- ☐ might not finish a race.
- ☐ will always finish a race.

6 Some jockeys think that it's important to ...

- ☐ tell the camel that it did a good job.
- ☐ tell the camel to work more.

Exercise 3: Understanding discourse

Read the article. Complete the sentences.

1 'I know that **this** is very big in places like Saudi Arabia, Egypt...'

'This' means (*sports / camel racing*)

2 ' **They** arrived in the 19th century from Pakistan and India ...'

'They' means (*camels / people*)

3 '... people wanted to travel across **this country's** huge spaces.'

'This country' means (*India and Pakistan / Australia*)

4 '... because **they** are not like horses'

'They' means (*camels / jockeys*)

5 '... because if **it** doesn't want to do something, then **it** won't'

'It' means (*training / a camel*)

6 ' **The riders** check where the camel is looking ...'

'The riders' means (*jockeys / camels*)