1 CULTURE Crossing the USA



1 Work in pairs. Try to guess the correct answers to complete the sentences.

1 The shortest distance across the USA is ___.
A 2,800 km B 3,800 km C 5,800 km

2 ___ people try to run across the USA every summer.
A Hundreds of B 50–100 C As many as 20

3 The world record for running coast to coast is ___, six hours and 30 minutes.
A 42 days B 49 days C 55 days

2 Read the first paragraph of the article. Check your answers in Ex 1.



COAST TO COAST

One thing's for sure – whichever route you take across the USA won't be a quick journey. Distances range between 3,800 and 5,600 kilometres, so even if you drove eight hours a day, it would still take six days or more to travel from coast to coast. Up to 20 people every summer make this journey without a car and attempt to run all the way. The fastest time so far is just under 43 days, but this huge physical and mental challenge can take some people several months to complete.



The history of crossing the USA on foot goes back to 1909, when Edward Payson Weston walked from coast to coast. He left New York City on his 70th birthday and reached San Francisco after 104 days' walking – just missing his goal of 100 days. Distance walking, or pedestrianism, was such a popular sport in those days that crowds would gather to cheer Weston on and updates on his progress appeared in *The New York Times*. By the time Weston completed his trans-continental walk, he had become a national sporting celebrity.

Running across the USA didn't start until the 1970s, when running became a big fitness craze. The runners who took on the challenge that decade became increasingly competitive and the record was set and broken four times. American runner Pete Kostelnick ran from San Francisco to New York City in 2016 and set the current record, running a daily average of 115 kilometres. Who knows when that will be broken?

3 Read the article. Are the sentences true (T), false (F) or not given (NG)? Correct the false sentences.

1 Drivers use one main road to cross the USA.
2 Running across the USA is a test of both body and mind.
3 Weston was disappointed not to fulfil his dream of walking across the USA in 100 days.
4 It wasn't easy for people to get up-to-date information about Weston during his walk.
5 Weston's coast-to coast crossing made him famous.
6 Coast-to-coast runners in the 1970s weren't at all interested in their finishing times.

4 1.17 Listen to a podcast about long-distance runner Rob Pope. How many times has he run across the USA?



Rob Pope running the 2018 London Marathon dressed as Forrest Gump.

5 1.17 Listen again and answer the questions.

1 Who is Forrest Gump?
2 What unusual thing does Forrest Gump do?
3 What did Rob Pope do that was different from other people who have run across the USA?
4 What two things did Pope learn from his mother when he was growing up?
5 Who did Pope raise money for by doing his trans-continental run?
6 Since returning to the UK, what proves that Pope still has a strong connection to Forrest Gump?

6 THINK & SHARE Answer the questions.

1 Would you ever consider running a long-distance event? What charity would you raise money for? Why?
2 Before Rob Pope's mother died, she told him to 'do one thing in your life that makes a difference'. If this were you, what would you choose to do? Why?

7 Work in small groups. Research an unusual long-distance sporting event in your country or around the world. Make a presentation to give to the class.

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