

Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap.

THE TOUGHEST RUNNERS



These runners are the ones who have completed every London Marathon (1) _____ the first race in 1981. They are the toughest runners of (2) _____. These athletes, (3) _____ honour of both their mental (4) _____ physical strength, have (5) _____ given a permanent entry in the event (6) _____ the rest of their lives, provided (7) _____ they do not miss a year. Other people have run the race faster or under greater handicaps, but these are athletes (8) _____ a mission. For (9) _____, the annual event is a way (10) _____ life, not just a worthy fund-raising exercise or a single challenge. Bill O'Connor is (11) _____ of these runners. In his case, running (12) _____ a daily ritual which began in New Zealand, where, (13) _____ a youngster, he pounded along the wet sand (14) _____ the edge of the Tasman Sea. Now aged fifty, (15) _____ working as a mathematics teacher at a school in London, (16) _____ retains his fascination with the London Marathon and the activity (17) _____ running. He says, "When the first London Marathon (18) _____ held, I thought to (19) _____ that here was a challenge. I thought that if (20) _____ was only going (21) _____ be one race, I wanted to have run (22) _____ it. But the London Marathon became (23) _____ most impressive success story (24) _____ British sport and Bill O'Connor (25) _____ been a constant part of it. Had he ever felt he would fail (26) _____ finish? "In 1985. It was a beautiful day and I started running much (27) _____ fast for the first mile and got worried. So I slowed down for the next mile. Yet although I expected I would take (28) _____ least four hours, I finished (29) _____ two hours thirty-four minutes and twenty-nine seconds." It is his best time so (30) _____.

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