



THE LONDON MARATHON

Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap (1-7). There is one extra sentence, which you do not need to use.

- A Over the years, I watched the event grow into the biggest of its kind in the world.
- B I enjoy taking part in the atmosphere and sharing my success story with the other athletes.
- C Three weeks later, I received my acceptance letter and was over the moon.
- D The London Marathon is the most challenging marathon in the world.
- E Out of the over 46,000 starters, on average, only 33,000 actually crossed the finishing line.
- F It was the most difficult and the most exciting and rewarding experience of my life.
- G I began walking for a few minutes at a time, increasing my intensity until I was able to walk for 10 minutes a session.
- H The biggest problem would be dehydration, as it would be with all of the competitors.

Michael Scott talks about his success story of going from being a sickly teenager to a London Marathon competitor.

Growing up with a heart defect was difficult. While other kids my age were going to football practice and on beach holidays with their families, I was in and out of hospital. My only involvement in a sporting competition was watching it on the television.

One of my favourite events to watch was the London Marathon. When I was just 14, a man from London, named Chris Brasher, organised the first London Marathon. It was 29 March 1981 and 7,747 people were involved in the race. 1 _____ Now, there are 46,500 participants each year from all corners of the world and of all levels of ability. Many people say the marathon is the ultimate physical challenge. Athletes have to train physically and mentally for each marathon and be prepared for many challenges.

I always found it surprising to see how many well-trained athletes did not complete the course each year. 2 _____ Some dropped out because of injury or illness, but most just 'hit the wall', an infamous experience suffered when their bodies simply ran out of fuel. For many runners, by the time they reached the 30 to 35 km point in the race, they just couldn't go any further. Their muscles would cramp and their heart and lungs could not obtain enough oxygen.

Each year, I tried to imagine what it would be like to line up before all the crowds prepared to run the 42.2 kms along roads, up hills and around some of the most famous sights in London. The race started in Greenwich Park, then competitors would race along the River Thames, towards Big Ben, and eventually ending in front of Buckingham Palace. I decided to talk to my heart specialist and find out if there was any chance that I could train my body to handle running 42.2 kms. At first, he thought I was joking, but soon he realised how important this was to me. 3 _____ At the same time, I started lifting weights to build muscle strength.

Over the course of a year, I progressed from just walking to running. Running became a daily thing for me and I was building more strength and confidence with every step. My doctor was thrilled with my

progress and allowed me to continue forward. Finally, at the age of 19, the time came to apply for the London Marathon. I knew that only a certain number of people would be allowed to enter the race and as much as I wanted to do this, I knew that my chances were slim. 4 _____ I couldn't believe how far I had come and that finally my dream would come true.

My doctor and I worked together to set out a training schedule that would allow me to safely complete the entire 42.2 kms. Physically, I was fit and my heart appeared to be in good condition. 5 _____ On average most of the runners take four to five hours to complete the race and water is essential to all of the competitors. The year before 710,000 bottles of water had been consumed during the race! Soon enough it was race day. My family, as well as various friends were all gathered to watch and support me. 6 _____ I finished the race in less than six hours, which was amazing since just a few years before I was barely able to run across the garden.

Today, I am still running. I have not competed in the London Marathon again but I do volunteer each year to assist the athletes in any way I can throughout the race. 7 _____ I learned that as long as I try my best and have faith in myself I can do almost anything.

