

Task 3

Match the 10 statements to the descriptions of 8 ski runs. Each statement corresponds to only one text, so you will need to use two of the texts more than once.

1. This run is complicated to follow.
2. Here other skiers dangerously get in your way.
3. Here you can treat yourself to some refreshment to celebrate the end of a good day.
4. This run has a lot of curves.
5. This run is a particular favourite with professionals.
6. On this run you can be physically affected due to the height.
7. On this run, both pistes converge on the same place.
8. This run offers the option of taking a more difficult run halfway down.
9. This run is well signposted.
10. This run is recommended for brave, skilled skiers.

Ski runs: a guide to the world's toughest

Overdid it on the mince pies this Christmas? If so, there's nothing better than a good long ski run. Peter Hardy selects eight of the toughest in the world.

A. The Champagne Run, Vaujany, France

This is not for the faint-hearted and is best-suited to experienced skiers. You cover a distance of at least 12km and drop 2,230 vertical metres. By the time you cross the blue piste at the top of Vaujany's own ski area your thighs will be screaming – but incredibly you've got another 1,000 vertical metres still to go. In heavy, wet snow conditions this last section can prove the downfall of even the fittest.

B. Ventina, Cervinia, Italy

It's a clearly-marked, easy trail – well, it would be easy if you allowed yourself a stop or two or three. When taken at speed you get the sensation that you've fallen into a computer ski game with beginner skiers and stationary snowboarders forming hazards as you whiz by them along the way. Doing it once is hard. Iron men and women do consecutive laps.

C. Peak-to-Creek, Whistler, British Columbia

Skirt the top of Whistler Bowl and head off down the shoulder of the mountain. It's a blue intermediate run all the way, but if your legs can bear it you can spice it up with a serious stretch of black (difficult) by turning left halfway down on to Home Run. If that's still not enough extreme entertainment, you can cut down Dusty's Descent or Big Timber.

D. Revelstoke, British Columbia

There's a choice. Beginners can take the serpentine Last Spike logging trail that coils around the front face. But for the real thigh-burner you take one of the fall-line runs. Devil's Club is slightly more difficult, but my favourite is Pitch Black. When we got to the bottom my companion said he'd put in more turns there than in the whole of last winter.

E. Grande Motte, Tignes, France

Strong skiers take the main downhill training run from top. The Glacier run is less demanding and both meet up lower down. Just follow the piste. Exhaustion here is exacerbated by high altitude. You need to consciously remember to breathe on every turn.

F. OK, Val d'Isère, France

If you have secret dreams of being a World Cup downhiller, this is where to fulfil them. OK, still a FIS race course, stands for Oreiller/Killy, two local Olympic champions. Competitors at next month's Ski World Championships will use the OK for training. The race will be on the wicked Face de Belvedere down a course built for the 1992 Olympics. OK starts with a couple of steep pitches that you are not advised to take straight, followed by a long schuss and some more technical stretches. In good snow conditions and when not prepared for racing, none of it is difficult. The only enemies are scraped icy patches on the lower slopes.

G. Küblis and Serneus, Davos, Switzerland

This is a wonderful last run of the day, ending with a hard-earned drink in a wayside pub while you wait for the homeward train. From the top of the Gipfel you wind around the back of the Schwarzhorn and on down to Schifer where the route divides – skier's left to Küblis, right for Serneus.

H. La Saulire-St Bon, Courchevel, France

Take the classic route from the top which starts steep for a few turns and then eases off to a pleasant gradient all the way. Carry on down to 1850, leaving the lift stations on your right, go under the bridge, and cut left onto the Brigues run. Shortly before Le Praz drop off to the right onto the St Bon piste. The main problem, apart from the legs, is finding your way without stopping to consult the map – find a local willing to guide you.