

HOW THE TOUR DE FRANCE BEGAN

Read the text and write in the correct word.

The very first Tour de France, the greatest cycle race (1) _____ the world, was held in 1903. It began when two French journalists, Henri Desgrange and Geo Lefevre, came (2) _____ with the idea of a race right round the country. (3) _____ that had never been tried anywhere before.

Nowadays we might think the aim of (4) _____ an idea would be to bring in lots of television money, or even tourists, but at the beginning of the twentieth century what they wanted to do (5) _____ sell more copies of their newspaper. And they succeeded. Circulation figures, (6) _____ had been 25,000, went to 65,000 within a year, and on to half a million by 1923.

The reporters were in fact quite closely involved in organizing the race, and Desgrange would go (7) _____ to remain Tour Director from 1903 right up to 1939. Even (8) _____, their initial design for the race changed in several important ways before the first one was run. For instance, they had intended (9) _____ to be held over five weeks, but such a long race was just too much for most riders and very (10) _____ wanted to take part.

So it became half (11) _____ length, and it would be run entirely in July (12) _____ than from late May to Early July. As, however, it would still go right round France, the distance travelled each day would be much longer, with cyclists sometimes (9) _____ to ride at night.

