

Reading

- Track and field is a type of athletics that includes running, jumping, and throwing. At a track “meet,” these events are divided into three basic categories: track, field, and **combined**. These sporting events are among the oldest in history, and were part of the first Ancient Olympic Games in Greece. When the modern Olympic Games began in the late 19th century, most of the events were track and field contests.
- Track events typically take place on an **oval** track that is 400 meters long. The track is divided into lanes for the runners. Inside the track is a grassy inner field for stretches, warm-ups, and other events. This is often called the “turf.”
- There are many types of running events in a track and field competition. Most are individual races in which runners compete to have the fastest times. Some are short races called **sprints**. The 100-meter dash is an example. Others are long-distance races, such as the 5,000-meter race. The marathon is a 40-kilometer road race.
- Another type of track event is the **relay** race. In this event, a team of four runners works together to finish a race. Each member of the relay team runs one quarter of the race. After completing one **leg** of the race, a team member passes the **baton** to the next runner. The final runner, known as the “anchor,” has to be an excellent sprinter. The hurdles is another form of running race. Runners have to jump over wood or metal **obstacles** as they race to the finish line.
- Jumping events include the long jump, the high jump, the pole vault, and the triple jump. The long jump and triple jump take place in sand pits. In the long jump, contestants have to run to a marker and jump as far as they can into a sand pit. In the triple jump, contestants have to run and jump on **alternate** feet before landing on both feet. In the high jump and pole vault, jumpers must **clear** a cross bar. The pole vault gives jumpers an extra **boost**, so they have to jump much higher.
- Throwing events include shot put, discus, javelin, and hammer throw. A shot put is a heavy ball, while a hammer is a ball and chain. A discus is shaped like a plate, and a javelin is a **spear**. Each throwing object requires a different kind of skill or strength.
- Some track events combine more than one sport. For example, the **decathlon** is a combination of ten track and field events, including running, jumping, and throwing events.

Comprehension

Read the statements below. Write T if the statement is true. Write F if the statement is false, and correct the information in your notebook. Write NM if the fact is not mentioned.

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|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| _____ 1. A track and field event is called a “greet.” | _____ 4. In a relay race, runners pass a baton. |
| _____ 2. A running track usually has an oval shape. | _____ 5. The hurdles are a throwing event in a track and field competition. |
| _____ 3. A 40-kilometer race is an example of a sprint. | _____ 6. The pole vault is another way of saying “high jump.” |

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.
You may need to change the word forms.

1. You have to jump on _____ feet for the triple jump event.
2. I wonder if this jumper will be able to _____ the cross bar.
3. The _____ includes running, jumping, and throwing competitions.
4. We started slow, but made up our time in the last _____ of the race.
5. These runners have to jump over _____ called hurdles.

B. Verb Forms

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. I enjoy _____ the relay race.
(watch)
2. My neighbor is _____ in the decathlon.
(compete)
3. I'm interested in _____ about the Ancient Olympic track and field events.
(learn)
4. The goal of pole vaulters is _____ the cross bar.
(clear)
5. I'm good at _____ .
(sprint)
6. He was trying _____ the baton quickly, but he tripped.
(pass)

Research

JAMAICA'S RUNNERS

It's no secret that some of the fastest runners in the world are from Jamaica. Do a little research about this interesting fact. Share your findings with your class.

1. What is "genes theory"?
2. How early do Jamaicans start training?
3. How many 100-meter gold medalists have come from Jamaica?
4. What is "Champs"?

Discussion

1. How does competitive running compare to swimming?
Which do you think is more difficult, and why?
2. What physical benefits can athletes gain from training for track and field?
3. What mental benefits can be gained from track and field?

Critical Thinking

Discuss the following with a partner:

Usain Bolt of Jamaica has been named the fastest man in history. In 2009, he broke his own world record, completing the 100-meter dash in 9.58 seconds. People seem to be getting faster. Do you think humans will ever be able to complete this race in under 9 seconds?