

## 'Horrendous blisters': Retired UK banker, 65, attempts to run 200 marathons in 200 days

### Level 3: Advanced

**Article summary:** This article discusses how one retired banker from Devon decided to run 200 marathons in 200 days, and how scientists are using him as a case study.

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Presenting

**Language focus:** The Present Perfect

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

8. *blisters*
9. *acclimatised*
10. *itinerary*
11. *steadily*
12. *flare*
13. *pint*
14. *a walk in the park*
15. *Raising money*
16. *Calorie intake*
17. *Found (his) feet*
18. *curveball*

- b. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to complete the sentences using words from the previous activity.

### 1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to get students thinking about the topic of endurance sports. You can brainstorm the different endurance sports as a class. This may also be helpful for the last task, so try to elicit the following names: *marathon running, ultramarathon, Ironman, long-distance / open water swimming, mountaineering, hiking, road cycling / long distance cycling, long distance skiing*. Have students discuss the questions and ask any volunteers to share their experiences with endurance sports.

### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to work individually or in pairs to find the words in the article and then match them to the definitions. Allow a few minutes for students to check answers in pairs or groups before checking answers with the whole class.

**Key:**

1. *Stretching (myself) physically*
2. *in a vice*
3. *Ill-effects*
4. *elite athlete*
5. *Gout*
6. *flat out*
7. *Carving out*

**Key:**

1. *find her feet*
2. *steadily*
3. *raise money*
4. *blister*
5. *a walk in the park*
6. *curveball*
7. *calorie intake*
8. *flat out*
9. *ill-effects*
10. *elite athlete*
11. *itinerary*
12. *flare*
13. *a walk in the park*
14. *carve out*
15. *acclimatise*
16. *pint*
17. *gout*
18. *in a vice*

### 3. Comprehension check

- a. Students can work individually or in pairs. Encourage students to underline the section of the article where they found the answers in the article and to give reasons why the other answers are correct any false answers.

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**Key:**

1. T
2. F – He never gets blisters.
3. T
4. F – He is working his way south.
5. F – He adapts as he goes.
6. F – It's sometimes more and sometimes less.
7. T
8. F – He eats whatever and drinks beer.
9. T
10. F – He listens to music or Welsh lessons.

#### 4. Key language

- a. Students work individually or in pairs, this time to read the sentences carefully. Have them match the sentences to the explanation of the Present Perfect (A-C). Discuss the uses of the Present Perfect. The common issue students have with this tense is that it is called 'Present', but it actually describes past events. This may be confusing, and while students, especially at advanced levels, understand the tense passively, they often don't use it correctly themselves.

**Key:**

1. A. Result / reflection
2. B. Experience
3. B. Experience
4. C. Change over time

- b. Ask students to translate sentences 1-4 from task a. Make sure they understand that the idea is to arrive at a translation that sounds natural and conveys the same meaning, not to copy the English structure into their own language. Students whose first language has a perfect tense, like Spanish, Hindi or German may be tempted to use these tenses in English. However, they rarely correspond. Point this fact out to them. Students who do not have a perfect tense in their first language, for example, Polish, tend to underuse it in English precisely because it translates back to Past Simple in their language. Discuss these differences when students are done. Explain that this is an important exercise, because as second language learners, they are always influenced

by their mother tongue. They need to develop an awareness of how their first language impacts their English.

- c. Have students choose the correct verb and the reason why they use each tense. You can follow up this activity by having students input these sentences into an online translator and see which tenses come up in their own language. Ask them if they think the translator is correct, as they are sometimes mistaken.

**Key:**

1. have run / Experience – talking about life experience up to now
2. completed / Past Simple (specific time: last weekend)
3. has improved / Change over time – emphasizes improvement over a period
4. have tried / Experience – several occasions up to now
5. broke / Past Simple (specific time: last month)
6. have never cycled / Experience – life experience, no specific time
7. has injured / Result / reflection – the focus is on the current result of a past event: he will miss the race
8. has lost / Change over time – weight loss over period until now

#### 5. Discussion

- a. Students discuss the questions in pairs or groups. Ask them to justify their opinions, referring to their own experiences whenever possible.

#### 6. In your own words

- a. This task can be done individually or in pairs. It could also be given as homework. After putting students in pairs, ask them to pick one of the events. Ideally, there should be enough events so that no two groups have the same one. Have them research the event and prepare a presentation following the bullet points given.

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- b. Ask students to share their presentations with the class. You can follow this up with a discussion about the events that were covered. Ask students if any of them sound appealing, what they found surprising about these events, etc.