

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the text carefully. Complete the task on the next page.

How Good Can Athletes Get?

Faster, higher, stronger: the Olympic motto sums up what athletes strive for. To find out what they're capable of when doping restrictions are lifted, a consortium of billionaires wants to launch the "Enhanced Games", an Olympic-level competition where performance-enhancing drugs are allowed. But how fast and high can we go without such drugs?

Have we peaked? It seems logical that the laws of physics and the nature of the human body limit how fast we can run, how high we can jump, and how much weight we can lift. The only question is: when will that limit be reached? World records were broken rapidly during the 20th century, before slowing down in recent years. In many sports, only fractions of seconds, grams, or centimetres are added to or removed from previous world bests, often after several years. Some scientists believe this means that humanity has achieved peak performance, while others think there's still room for improvement.

An article called "Limiting Factors of Exercise Performance" lists the relevant physical, physiological, and psychological factors, "such as motivation, tolerance for pain and shortness of breath, tiredness of mind and body, and the intensity of exercise before lactate levels rise significantly." The author, Dr Peter D. Wagner, from the Department of Medicine at the University of California, San Diego, explains the numerous steps necessary for a high rate of oxygen to be transported from the air to the muscles, and its efficient transformation into energy. No one part of the process holds the key to improved performance, but taken together, the system is essential to athletic excellence.

Are we pushing the limits? Ways of raising the amount of oxygen in the blood, or the rate of delivery to the muscles, already exist – both legal (altitude training or high-pressure chambers) and illegal (blood doping) – but new ways will continue to be developed. Gene doping is seen by many as a promising possibility. It could help to increase the number of mitochondria in the cells, stimulate muscle growth, and boost the number of red blood cells. However, since the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has already banned these performance-enhancing gene therapies, they would be allowed only in the "Enhanced Games". Even when the human body has reached its limits, the athletic equipment, tracking technology, training techniques, diet advice, and medical care available to professionals continue to develop and help to improve their performance. At the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, for example, a performance-boosting rubber track gave competitors a chance to challenge records – and push the limits of athletic achievement just a little further.

Source: *Spotlight* 9/2024, pages 16-17

READING COMPREHENSION – CONTINUATION

Task: Based on what you have read in the article, complete the statements below. You must fill in 1 word or 2 words (the number of missing words is indicated). You have to use the words from the article, or forms derived from them. The statements do not follow in the same order as the information appears in the article.

1. In the recent past, the breaking of world records has had a tendency to
..... (2 words)
2. A medical expert claims that for sportsmen, the process of oxygen
into energy includes several steps. (1 word)
3. There are lots of legal methods and techniques that can enhance sportsmen’s performance, such
as athletic equipment or nutrition (1 word)
4. Some scientists state that humans have already reached their
..... in sports. (2 words)
5. The laws of physics will always impose certain on sportsmen’s
performance. (1 word)
6. Experts consider various physiological and physical aspects of performance and analyse
..... details as well. (1 word)
7. It is predicted that new methods of the volume of oxygen in the blood
will be discovered. (1 word)
8. For many sport disciplines, there have been only tiny of time removed
from a previous record after a couple of years. (2 words)
9. The aim of the “Enhanced Games” is to discover sportsmen’s capacities under new circumstances
in which the banning of illegal substances will be (1 word)
10. Performance-enhancing have been
forbidden by a relevant sport institution. (2 words)

..... / 10 pts

V O C A B U L A R Y

Task 1: Fill in the second word of the following “pair phrases” into the gaps. An example sentence is provided.

0. I am *sick and* **tired** of his critical remarks.
1. There are still a few *odds and* that need to be done before the party tomorrow.
2. We are glad to welcome him, *safe and* , among us.
3. People go *to and* and there is not much supervision of the border.

..... / 3 pts

Task 2: Fill each blank space in the article below with the correct form of the word in capital letters.

Who is Sue Gray?

“Britain’s most powerful woman” – this was how the media often described Keir Starmer’s former chief of staff, Sue Gray. She described herself as a “challenger” and “disrupter”, but others called her the “.....” **(4)**.

INQUISITION

In 2022, Gray entered the public eye while leading the investigation of the Partygate scandal, which ended in Boris Johnson’s **(5)**. In March 2023, she became Starmer’s

RESIGN

chief of staff – his **(6)** and mediator, in charge of hiring and firing. By September 2024, though, it was all over. Gray quit her job after she was again at the centre of a political storm.

FIX

She had been blamed for the **(7)** over

CONTROVERSIAL

Labour’s “freebies” – gifts from Labour Party’s **(8)**, and her salary had been leaked to the press, showing she had earned more than the prime minister. She said it had become clear to her that “intense commentary about my position risked becoming a **(9)**

DONATE

(9) DISTRACT to the government’s **(10)** work of change.” But have we heard the last of Sue Gray?

ESSENCE

..... / 7 pts

..... / 10 pts

G R A M M A R

Task 1: Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one suitable word, which has only a grammatical function in the text.

Is It Possible to Improve My Skills?

EXAMPLE: (0) *over*

After I had fallen (0) for the eighth time in 30 minutes, I realised I (1) not be able to teach myself to ski. I had fallen forwards, backwards and to both sides. I had landed on my wrists, arms, knees, thighs, and shoulders and it seemed (2) were no new ways left, so I was going to be knocked down by someone else. I asked my friend (3) I could do to improve my skills. "Stop crashing (4) things," she said, at (5) point I gave up. I tucked my skis under one arm, dropped them, tucked them under the (6), and stomped home through the snow in my very uncomfortable snow boots. (7) my anger, I booked a lesson with an instructor called Jane who was surprised that a 37-year-old could live life (8) no co-ordination. It was (9) disability that meant my first lesson was wildly unsuccessful. The difference between skiing and sliding out of control down a steep hill is the ability to "snowplough". If you (10) make a snowplough, you simply aren't going to stop. I found (11) impossible to turn my feet to the correct angle, and when I finally (12), it was so wide I could not move (13) of it. Jane was unimpressed.

..... / 13 pts

Task 2: In the following sentences, there are 3 possibilities of grammar structures. Circle the correct structure. Sometimes more than one option is possible. If this is true, circle both.

14. The weather forecast said it might be raining / can be raining / could have rained later, so we'd better to / we ought to / we'd better take an umbrella when we go out.

15. Kevin can have known / must have to know / must have known the brakes on the car weren't working properly. He should have warned / ought to warn / had better have warned me when he sold it to me.

..... / 2 pts

..... / 15 pts

L I S T E N I N G

KIRK GEIGER – ANIMAL RESCUER

You will hear Kirk Geiger talking about his Animal Rescue Centre. Decide if the following statements are true (T), false (F), or the information was not given (NG). Underline the correct letter. You will hear the recording twice.

1. **T / F / NG** Kirk Geiger and his wife Noelle launched their Animal Rescue Centre of California in L.A.
2. **T / F / NG** Kirk's active involvement in helping suffering animals changed his professional plans.
3. **T / F / NG** Kirk and Noelle always take their new animals to an emergency clinic.
4. **T / F / NG** There is a veterinary doctor in the neighbourhood who comes to Kirk and Noelle's house regularly to help with vaccinations.
5. **T / F / NG** For Kirk and Noelle, the major sources of income are state and public subsidies.

..... / 5 pts

Autorka: PhDr. Eva Žitná

Recenzentka: PaedDr. Anna Brisudová

Korektor: Joshua M. Ruggiero

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