

## Traffic Lights and The Wild Bulls

These two poems deal with the same subject, but they are very different in many ways: different in their shape, their rhyme (or lack of it), their rhythm, and what they say about traffic lights.

Before you read

- What is a matador?
- What does a bull do if it sees a matador?

Read these poems

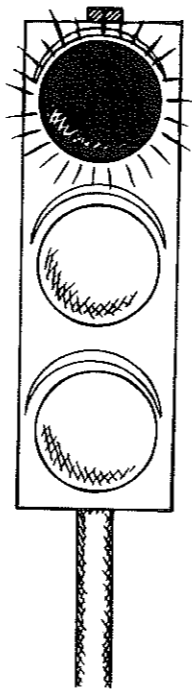
### TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Green eye, yellow eye, red eye,  
Watch at the intersection,  
Never asleep at their post up high,  
So-behave with circumspection.

Green eye, green eye, shining bright,  
That's the 'walk-over-carefully' light.  
Yellow eye shining warns 'beware!'  
Signals the change for red eye to stare.  
Red eye, red eye shining bright,  
That's the 'nobody-walk-across' light.

Green eye, yellow eye, red eye,  
Watch at the intersection.

Gwendda McKay



### THE WILD BULLS



The wild bulls stand  
snorting  
pawing  
the hard earth  
until they leap  
roaring  
towards  
the lonely matador.  
But they stop  
at the red glare  
of his eye...  
Strange for bulls!

Gordon Winch

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Re-read the poems

Answer the following questions.

1. In the poem 'Traffic Lights', what is the colour of the 'nobody-walk-across' light?

2. What warning does the **yellow eye** give? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What does this poet think the three lights look like? \_\_\_\_\_

4. In the poem 'The Wild Bulls', the poet is not talking about a real matador. What do you think this 'matador' really is?

5. What do you think the 'wild bulls' really are? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why does the poet say that stopping at the **red glare of his eye** is strange for bulls?

7. A poem which doesn't rhyme is often called blank verse. Which of these poems is written in blank verse?

8. What does the word **circumspection** mean? \_\_\_\_\_

9. In your opinion which poem provides the better images of traffic lights? Why do you think this? \_\_\_\_\_

More things to do

- Read the two poems out loud. Try to read with expression to suit each poem.
- Learn by heart whichever of the two poems you prefer.
- Draw an illustration for 'The Wild Bulls'.

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## The greatest tightrope walker in the world (1)

This narrative is in three parts. You will read the second and third parts later on.

A narrative is a story that begins by telling the reader where and when things are happening. This introduction is called the orientation. The story continues with a series of events, one of which causes the story to change. This change is called a complication. The story ends when the events are worked out. This is called the resolution.

Before you read

- What is a tightrope and where are you most likely to see a tightrope walker?
- Do you think that walking a tightrope is especially dangerous?

Read this story

### THE GREATEST TIGHTROPE WALKER IN THE WORLD

In June 1859 a man called Blondin decided to walk a tightrope across the churning waters of the famous Niagara Falls. No one believed that this was possible but Blondin was certain that he could do it.

Everybody knew that Blondin was the greatest tightrope walker in the world. He had learned this skill as a boy in France, where he had become known as 'The Boy Wonder'. At the age of five he had worked in a circus, dancing on the tightrope and performing other tricks.

Blondin prepared carefully for his daring attempt. First he tied the tightrope to the strong oak trees that stood on the high cliffs on each side of the river. He pulled the rope till it was taut and then tied smaller ropes at intervals of seven metres along the length of the tightrope. These ropes were tied to other trees, to hold the long rope steady.

On 30th June Blondin was ready. Thousands of people came to watch him, crowding onto the grass on top of the high cliffs. Some of them even climbed trees for a better view. They peered over the sheer rock at the white water thundering far below and wondered – "Is he a brave man or a fool? Will he fall?"

Suddenly, someone on the cliffs yelled, "There he is!" Everyone looked and, sure enough, Blondin was stepping out from the cliff opposite onto the rope, carrying a twelve metre pole that helped him to keep his balance. "Look, he's running!" another person shouted.

People could hardly believe their eyes. Blondin was actually running towards the centre of the rope. Then he stopped and waved. The people laughed and cheered.



Next Blondin began to do tricks. First he did a backflip. Then he hung by one leg. He walked backwards and balanced on one foot. The people loved it, and clapped and cheered until he stepped back safely onto the cliffs on the other side of the Falls.

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Re-read the story

Answer the following questions.

1. Who was Blondin and why was he famous? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where had Blondin learned to be a tightrope walker? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did Blondin carry to help him balance? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was the first surprising thing that Blondin did after he stepped onto the tightrope? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why do you think so many people came to watch Blondin? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What might have happened if Blondin had fallen off the tightrope? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why do you think Blondin took such risks? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Explain the meaning of:  
daring \_\_\_\_\_  
taut \_\_\_\_\_  
at intervals \_\_\_\_\_
9. This is only the first part of the story; what do you think might happen in the next two parts? \_\_\_\_\_

More things to do

Find out about Niagara Falls. Where are they? How high are they?

Continued from p30

# The greatest tightrope walker in the world (2)

A narrative is a story that begins by telling the reader where and when things are happening. This introduction is called the orientation. The story continues with a series of events, one of which causes the story to change. This change is called a complication. The story ends when the events are worked out. This is called the resolution.

Before you read

- Re-read the first part of this story on page 30.
- What would be the hardest stunt you could imagine Blondin doing?

Read this story

## THE GREATEST TIGHTROPE WALKER IN THE WORLD

All through the summer, Blondin walked the tightrope across Niagara Falls. Trains brought people from miles around to watch. "He is sure to fall," people said. "Someday he will lose his balance."

And on 19th August 1859 Blondin almost did fall when he was trying a new trick. For this show Blondin had big signs painted that read, "On this day, I, Blondin, the greatest tightrope walker in the world, will carry a brave man on my back across the tightrope!"

Crowds of people came early that day to see the amazing new feat, but there was one problem. Blondin could not find anyone who was prepared to be carried across the tightrope!

The day wore on. By late afternoon, the people waiting on the cliffs were getting restless, and still Blondin had not found anyone who would cross the tightrope with him.

Finally he turned to his friend, Harry Colcord.

"Harry, you will have to come with me," he said.

Colcord's face turned white.

"I promised the people," Blondin said.

"Maybe you did, but I didn't," said Colcord.

Blondin looked at him long and hard and asked, "Are you my friend? Do you trust me? Have I ever fallen off the tightrope?"

Colcord took a deep breath. He looked at the tightrope. He looked at Blondin. "Very well," he said. "I will go with you."



Continued on P33

Re-read the story

Answer the following questions.

1. On what date did Blondin decide to try a new trick? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What problem did Blondin discover when he tried to perform this new feat? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Where were the crowds waiting? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Who finally agreed to go with Blondin? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why do you think people were still coming to watch Blondin? \_\_\_\_\_
6. If you were Blondin's friend, what would you have done? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you think Blondin planned his new feat properly? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is the complication in this part of the story? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you think it was fair of Blondin to ask his friend to help him? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Why do you think Colcord agreed? \_\_\_\_\_

More things to do

Imagine you read the sign and volunteered to cross the tightrope on Blondin's back. Write a paragraph explaining why you offered.

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## The greatest tightrope walker in the world (3)

A narrative is a story that begins by telling the reader where and when things are happening. This introduction is called the orientation. The story continues with a series of events, one of which causes the story to change. This change is called a complication. The story ends when the events are worked out. This is called the resolution.

**Before you read**

- Re-read the two earlier parts of this story.
- How do you expect the story to end?

**Read this story**

### THE GREATEST TIGHTROPE WALKER IN THE WORLD

Blondin placed a loop of rope over each shoulder. Colcord climbed onto his back, put his legs through the loops and wrapped his arms tightly around Blondin's neck.



"Harry," said Blondin, "don't hang on so tight. I can't breathe. That's better. Now, one more thing. Whatever you do, don't look down."

Blondin picked up his balancing pole and stepped out onto the rope. Colcord closed his eyes. Blondin quickly ran to the centre of the tightrope, but then he stopped. "Harry," he said, "you're too heavy. I'm getting tired. You'll have to get off my back."

Carefully, Colcord took one leg out of the loop. He felt for the tightrope and found it. Then he lifted the other leg out of the rope loop. He stood on the rope, his hands on Blondin's shoulders. His stomach churned. He felt sick. Blondin took a number of deep breaths. Then he said, "All right Harry. Get back on my shoulders."

On the cliffs the crowd watched nervously as Colcord climbed back on to Blondin's back. Some people were too afraid to watch and put their hands over their eyes.

Then Blondin started walking slowly forward, but a little further along he stopped again. He was getting tired. He started to wobble. People gasped and someone yelled, "They're going to fall!"

But they didn't fall. Slowly Blondin regained his balance and walked steadily forward until he stepped off the rope and back on to solid ground. The crowd went wild. Harry slowly got off Blondin's back. Blondin patted his friend on the shoulder. "Harry, you were very brave," he said.

Harry Colcord never stepped onto a tightrope again. Blondin, however, kept on performing all around the world until he was seventy-two years old. Never once did he fall. He died in 1897, not from an accident, but peacefully, at his London home.

Continued on P35

**Re-read the story**

Answer the following questions. (Use the back of the sheet for question 10.)

1. What did Blondin pick up before he stepped onto the tightrope? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did Blondin stop in the middle of the tightrope? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How did Harry feel as he got off Blondin's back and onto the tightrope? \_\_\_\_\_
4. When and where did Blondin die? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why do you think Blondin advised Harry not to look down? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What do you think was going through Harry's mind as Blondin began to wobble and sway? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Are you surprised that Colcord never walked on a tightrope again? Why? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which of the men do you think was braver in performing this feat? Why? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Colcord proved that he was a true friend that Blondin could rely on. Do you think that friends should be prepared to do anything for each other? \_\_\_\_\_
10. This is the final part of the Blondin story. The last paragraph tells the reader what happened to Blondin after that amazing walk. Try writing a different ending that would still make sense for this story.

**More things to do**

Write a short play that tells the story from the time Blondin and Colcord stepped onto the tightrope until they stepped off safely on the other side.

Continued from P34


## A letter from Mozart

A recount tells about an experience that has already happened. This recount, like many others, is a letter. The letter was written in the 18th century by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to his sister, Nannerl, while Mozart was staying in Innsbruck in Austria. Within the family Mozart was called Wolferl, a name that means 'little Wolfgang'. He called his sister Nannerl 'the Horseface'. Nannerl means 'little Annie'.

**Before you read**

- Why is Mozart remembered to this day?
- Why do you think Mozart was writing a letter to his little sister?

**Read this letter**



### A LETTER FROM MOZART

Innsbruck  
15th December 1769

Dear Nannerl,  
How is Mama? And how are you, my dear Horseface? I suppose I should say cara sorella mia. Do you know what that means? Cara is dear, sorella is sister; so it's 'my dear little sister'. You see I've been studying Italian! Papa said we'll be in Italy soon enough, so he practises speaking Italian with me every evening.

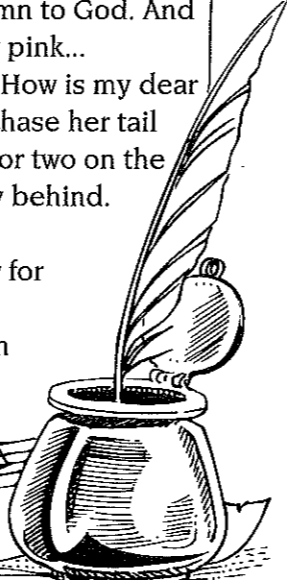
You won't believe it, but ever since we left you and Mama in Salzburg three days ago, I've been wishing both of you could have come with us. I know Papa says travelling is expensive. But I wish Mama and my dear sister, Nannerl-the-Horseface, could have come on our trip anyway.

You should have seen the Alps before we came into Innsbruck this afternoon! They were glittering with ice. And all the branches of the fir trees were bowed down under loads of powdery snow. The Alps, in our Austrian Tyrol, rise up steep – stark white and silver – against a blue, blue sky, like a cathedral organ ready to burst into a hymn to God. And at sunset, everything turns from silver and white to rosy pink...

But I mustn't stop without asking about Miss Bimbles! How is my dear little dog? Does she miss me? Does she still howl and chase her tail when you trill your high B flat? Give that Bimberl a kiss or two on the nose for me. And a wine biscuit. And a pat on her glossy behind. And a scratch behind her ear.

And give Mama 10,000 kisses from me. And save a few for yourself, from...

Your silly little brother with the great big name: Johann Chrysostom Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, more briefly known to his family as,



Wolferl

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**Re-read the letter**

Answer the following questions.

- Where was the letter written from? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- In what year was it written? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the Italian for **my dear little sister**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why were Mozart's mother and sister not travelling with him? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who was Miss Bimbles? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How do we know that Wolfgang loved and missed Bimberl? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How do we know that Mozart's sister used to sing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why do you think Mozart called his sister **Horseface**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you think that Mozart liked his sister? What makes you think this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What sort of country do you think Austria is from the things Mozart notices about it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**More things to do**

- Write Nannerl's reply to her brother.
- Find out when Mozart was born, when he died and some information about his life and family.
- Write down the names of three pieces of music that were composed by Mozart. Ask if it would be possible to listen to some of Mozart's music.

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## How to make a kite

Instructions tell you how something is done. They explain the materials that are needed and the steps you must take. These instructions tell you how to make a kite.

**Before you read**

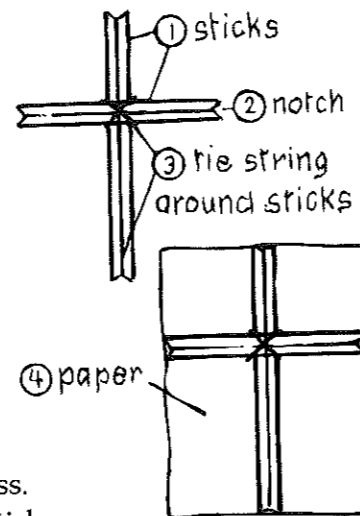
- What would be the best type of day on which to fly a kite?
- Describe the type of place you would need to be in to fly a kite.

**Read these instructions**

### HOW TO MAKE A KITE

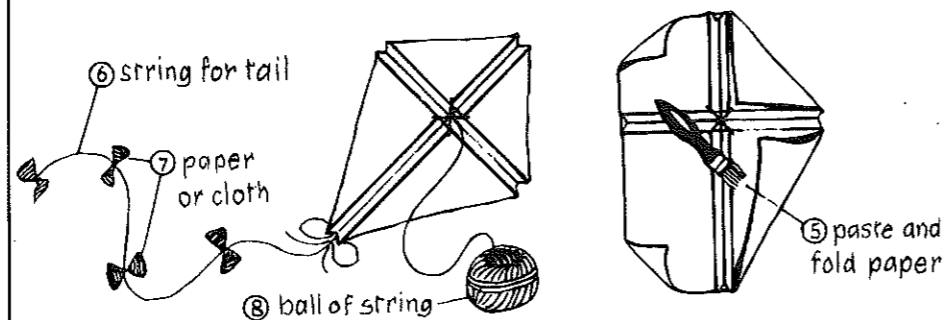
**You will need:**

- two sticks
- knife
- string
- strong brown paper
- glue



**What to do:**

1. Tie the sticks in the shape of a cross.
2. Cut a notch at both ends of each stick.
3. Secure the sticks by looping a string around the notches.
4. Lay the sticks across the paper.
5. Paste and fold the paper.
6. Tie on a string to make the tail.
7. Tie paper or strips of cloth on the string.
8. Tie the end of a big ball of string to the centre of the kite.  
It's ready to fly!



Continued on p55

**Re-read the instructions**

Answer the following questions.

1. In what shape do you tie the two sticks? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where are the four notches cut? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do you tie on the string to complete the tail? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why do you cut notches at the ends of the sticks? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why might you need a tail on the bottom of the kite? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why would you need a big ball of string? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why would you need strong paper? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why would you want to fly a kite? What is the attraction? \_\_\_\_\_
9. If you made a kite and got it to fly, how might you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

**More things to do**

- Make a kite yourself (perhaps an adult might be willing to help you). Fly the kite.
- See if you can arrange a kite-flying day with some friends.

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## Your skeleton

An information report gives you the facts (information) about something. It starts with an opening statement, then presents a number of factual points on the subject.

**Before you read**

- Where or how might you see a picture of the bones that make up your skeleton?
- Why is a skeleton essential in your body?

**Read this report**

### YOUR SKELETON

There are 206 bones in your skeleton – some are big and some are small. The bones in your skeleton are hard because they are made by a chemical called calcium. Some of the hard bones are hollow, and the hollow part is filled with bone marrow. Bone marrow helps to make red blood cells and is therefore very important for the body.

Some parts of your body, such as your nose and ears, are made of cartilage. They bend when you press them and do not form part of your skeleton because they are not bones.

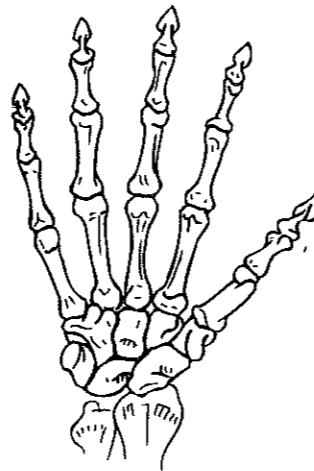
Some bones in your skeleton protect important organs. Your skull protects your brain; your rib cage protects your heart and lungs.

The various bones fit together at the joints. It is these joints that allow you to move and bend. Altogether there are 200 joints in your skeleton, including your knees, ankles and elbows. Joints are held together by ligaments which hold the bones together in their correct place. Ligaments are like strong elastic bands.

Your backbone, which protects your spinal cord, has 34 bones in it. It also has 33 separate joints which allow you to twist and bend in different ways. If you had one solid bone for a backbone, you would not be able to move so freely.

Some quite small parts of the body have exceptionally large numbers of bones and joints, for example there are 64 bones in your two hands and arms and 28 joints in each of your hands.

Your skeleton determines your height and, along with the things that cover it (the muscles, fat and skin), provides the shape of your body.



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**Re-read the report**

Answer the following questions.

1. How many bones do you have in your skeleton? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is bone marrow and why is it important? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is cartilage? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How many joints do you have in each hand? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why would it be important to protect your brain with something hard and bony? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What do you think is the most important bone in your skeleton? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is another name for your backbone? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is protected by your backbone? Why is it important? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What should you do if you think you have broken a bone in your arm? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Why do you think skeletons are associated with ghosts and scary stories? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. Reports often use specialist terms related to the subject of the report. What do the following words mean?

organs \_\_\_\_\_

calcium \_\_\_\_\_

cartilage \_\_\_\_\_

rib cage \_\_\_\_\_

ligaments \_\_\_\_\_

Continued from P62

## How our writing system works

An explanation says how something works. First, there is an overall statement (general statement) about the thing to be explained. Then points are given which provide more detail. An explanation can also tell why something happens, such as why ships float.

**Before you read**

What do you think the letters of the alphabet represent in English? Do they represent pictures of things, sounds in our language or something else?

**Read this explanation**

### HOW OUR WRITING SYSTEM WORKS

#### General statement

Our writing is an alphabetical system in which the symbols (the letters of the alphabet) represent the sounds of speech. The name **alphabet** comes from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet: *alpha* and *beta*.

#### Points that explain

The Phoenicians, who lived on the shores of the Mediterranean, were probably the first to use letters for writing. The diagram below shows how our own modern alphabet evolved.

𐤀 𐤁 𐤂 𐤃 𐤄 𐤅 𐤆 𐤇	PHOENICIAN
A B Δ E K M O T	ANCIENT GREEK
A B D E K M O T	ROMAN
Aa Bb Dd Ee Kk Mm Oo Tt	MODERN ALPHABET

In many other writing systems, symbols represent pictures of things in the world. Our modern form of writing is much more efficient because we can use the letters which represent sounds in all kinds of places. For example, the symbol **b** which represents the /b/ sound in the word **box** can also be used to represent the /b/ sound in **job**. In picture writing, another new picture would have to be drawn.

There are only 26 letters in our alphabet, and there are about 44 different sounds in our speech, so some symbols have to be reused in different combinations. One example would be the word **toe**, where **o** and **e** are used together to make the /oh/ sound. This can make spelling difficult. In addition to this, pronunciation often changes over time. In the word **knight**, for example, the **k** was once pronounced. Although the sound has now been lost, it still remains in the spelling.

In spite of this, and other variations, about 80 per cent of our spelling (and writing) is quite straightforward. Our alphabet is the most used system of writing in the world, and most of us learn to read and write it without any real difficulty.

Continued on p75

**Re-read the explanation**

Answer the following questions.

1. What are the first two letters of the Greek alphabet? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Who were the first people to use letters for writing? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many sounds do we use in our speech? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What percentage of our spelling is quite straightforward? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Suggest two reasons why spelling can sometimes be difficult. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Look at the diagram of different alphabets. At which stage does it become most like our modern alphabet? \_\_\_\_\_
7. This passage gives an example of a word with a silent letter, **knight**. Can you think of three more words which are still written with silent letters? \_\_\_\_\_
8. If you had to draw a picture of everything you wanted to write, would it take longer than writing with our alphabet. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**More things to do**

Read about other writing systems such as the Chinese or Japanese. Make a chart of different writing systems.

Continued from p74

## The Olympic Games has lost its way

An argument starts with the author stating a point of view. This is followed by reasons supporting that particular point of view. An argument ends with the author summing up and coming to a conclusion.

**Before you read**

- How often are the Olympic Games held?
- Do you think that a city would be pleased, or sorry, to host the Olympic Games? Give some reasons for your answer.

**Read this argument**

### THE OLYMPIC GAMES HAS LOST ITS WAY

The modern Olympic Games lost its way as soon as it allowed professional athletes to compete in Olympic events.

Until recently, only amateur athletes were allowed to take part. Competitors were not allowed to accept money or gifts for winning an event. The only prizes they were allowed to win were medals and trophies.

This, however, meant that athletes had to sacrifice a great deal if they were to do the training that was necessary to make them Olympic standard. Many of them had full-time jobs during the day in order to have enough money to live, train and compete when championships were held. They put in all this hard work and made these sacrifices because they believed in the Olympic ideal.

But then, some national teams began to offer various deals to elite athletes so that they could train and compete on a full-time basis without worrying about earning money.

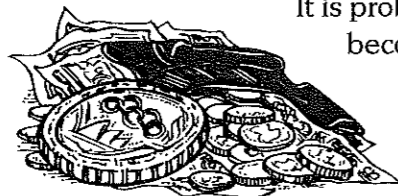
Members of teams from the USSR were often 'in the army', while many athletes from the USA received 'college scholarships'. Both countries encouraged athletes to devote themselves to their sport full-time. This was the start of professional competition.

Soon these full-time athletes were achieving remarkable results. There was no doubt that the standard in all disciplines and sports was rising because the athletes were now able to train full-time. Other countries, trying to compete, started similar schemes until the whole notion of amateurism broke down.

Recently, professional tennis players have been permitted to play in the Olympics. Many of them earn a great deal of money from their sport at times other than at the Olympics. In nearly every sport there are financial rewards if you are successful. It is believed that some teams even offer their athletes cash rewards if they win an Olympic medal.

It is probably only a matter of time before this becomes normal practice.

The ideal of the Olympics has been lost. Athletes no longer compete for the glory of being the best – they are only interested in the money.



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**Re-read the argument**

Answer the following questions.  
(Use the back of the sheet for questions 8 and 9.)

1. What prizes were amateur athletes allowed to win in the past? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What happened that caused standards in most sports to rise? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Which professional athletes are now allowed to take part in the Olympics? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Why would full-time athletes achieve better results? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you think it is a good thing for great athletes to be able to train full-time? Give at least two reasons for your answer.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How important is the title of this piece? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Write an alternative title for this piece. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Try to find out the names of the cities that have held the Olympic Games and the years in which they held them.
9. Have you ever heard of the Paralympic Games? Find out about the athletes who compete in it and the events they take part in.

**More things to do**

- Invite an Olympic or Paralympic athlete to visit your school. Ask about the sacrifices they have to make and how they manage to afford to be athletes. Ask them if, in their sport, they are given any cash payments for winning an event and what their attitude is to such payments.
- Write a report on the visit.

Continued from P80