

Name _____
Date _____

Ultramarathons

A marathon is a long-distance running event. A marathon is officially 26.2 miles long. When a running event is longer than 26.2 miles, it is called an ultramarathon. Over 70,000 people complete ultramarathons every year.

There are two kinds of ultramarathons. In the first kind of ultramarathon, runners have to cover a specific distance—50 miles, for example. In the second kind of ultramarathon, runners have a limited amount of time, such as 24 hours, to cover as much distance as they can.

Some ultramarathons are run as loops around a track or course. Others are run on trails through forests, deserts, or mountains. Many ultramarathons that are run on trails include natural obstacles that a runner will have to overcome, such as rocky paths or bad weather.

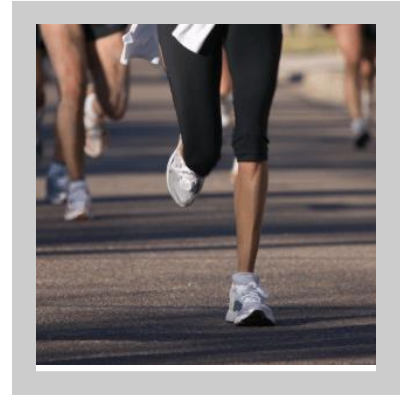
Ultramarathons are run all over the world. There is an ultramarathon on every continent, even Antarctica. Because it is so expensive to travel to Antarctica, those who want to participate in an Antarctic ultramarathon usually have to pay many thousands of dollars. The most famous race across Antarctica is called The Last Desert Race. Runners pay over \$14,000 to compete in this race. They must also buy special equipment to protect themselves against the extreme cold.

People who want to train to run in an ultramarathon should first gain experience running regular marathons. Once you have completed a few marathons, you can add more and more distance every time you run.

Besides practicing, there are a few other things you can do to help you prepare to run an ultramarathon. First, when you start training, you should always pick a location that is close to home. Running on a trail close to home is safer because you will be more familiar with the area. Next, you should make sure to bring a light bag that has snacks, sunscreen, and extra shoes. You should also remember to drink eight ounces of water or a sports drink every 15 to 20 minutes. Your pace is also very important. When you are running an ultramarathon, you should start running more slowly than you do when you run a regular marathon. If you start out running too fast, you may be too tired to complete the race.

Finally, many people who run ultramarathons say that it is easier and more fun to train with friends than it is to train alone. So if you are interested in running an ultramarathon, you should also try to get one of your friends interested in it too. And remember: it is never too early to start saving up for that race across Antarctica!

- 1) The main purpose of this passage is to
- A. help readers train to run an ultramarathon
 - B. provide basic information about ultramarathons
 - C. compare ultramarathons to regular marathons
 - D. share his or her personal experience with ultramarathons



- 2) According to the passage, what is the difference between the two different types of ultramarathons?
- A. One kind of ultramarathon is run indoors. The other kind is run outside in nature.
 - B. One kind of ultramarathon takes place in the cold. The other kind is run in the heat.
 - C. One kind of ultramarathon is 26.2 miles long. The other kind is significantly longer.
 - D. One kind of ultramarathon has a set distance. The other kind has a set time limit.
- 3) In paragraph 3, we learn that "many ultramarathons that are run on trails include natural obstacles". As used in paragraph 3, which of the following also describes a situation that involves an **obstacle**?
- A. Although Blair's pizza is popular, Blair fails to make a profit due to a new regulation that limits the number of slices sold.
 - B. Marty is saving money to buy a house. As a result, he doesn't have very much disposable income.
 - C. Tonya works at the hair salon. Nearly every day, someone comes in to get a haircut. As a result, Tonya does not get much free time.
 - D. Esmeralda finds a key on the playground. She likes the way it looks and puts it in her pocket. One day, she meets a boy who claims that the key is his and wants it back.
- 4) What makes The Last Desert Race so difficult to compete in?
- I. It is very expensive to travel to Antarctica.
 - II. The weather in Antarctica is very cold.
 - III. It is much longer than other ultramarathons.
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III
- 5) The author offers all of the following training tips EXCEPT for which of the following?
- A. Eat plenty of carbohydrates the night before the race.
 - B. Run on a trail that is close to home.
 - C. Bring an extra pair of shoes.
 - D. Do not start off by running too fast.

- 6) According to the author, it is better to train for an ultramarathon with friends than to train alone because
 - A. it is safer to run ultramarathon with friends
 - B. you can split the cost of a trip to Antarctica with a friend
 - C. you typically train harder in the presence of others
 - D. friends make training more enjoyable

7) Why do you think people participate in ultramarathons? What might motivate them?

Answers and Explanations

1) B

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

The author begins by explaining what an ultramarathon is. Then the author talks about the different kinds of ultramarathons. Finally, the author provides some basic tips for ultramarathon training.

Since this is all basic information about ultramarathons, **(B)** is correct.

The author gives only the most basic introduction to training for an ultramarathon, and does so to add to the general discussion about ultramarathons. This means **(A)** is incorrect.

Although the author does make some comparisons between ultramarathons and regular marathons, that is only one small part of the passage, so **(C)** is not the best choice.

The author does not share his or her personal experience with ultramarathons. This rules out **(D)**.

2) D

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

In paragraph 2, the author says, “There are two kinds of ultramarathons. In the first kind of ultramarathon, runners have to cover a specific distance—50 miles, for example. In the second kind of ultramarathon, runners have a limited amount of time, such as 24 hours, to cover as much distance as they can.” Since this information tells us that one type has a set distance and the other type has a set time, **(D)** is correct.

The passage does not mention indoor ultramarathons, so **(A)** is incorrect.

The passage talks about an ultramarathon in Antarctica to illustrate the fact that there are ultramarathons all over the world, not because there are cold ultramarathons and hot ultramarathons. This means **(B)** is incorrect.

A regular marathon is 26.2 miles long and an ultramarathon is any race longer than that. This means **(C)** is also incorrect.

3) A

Core Standard: **Craft and Structure**

obstacle (*noun*): something that obstructs or hinders progress.

In paragraph 3, the author writes that some “ultramarathons that are run on trails include natural obstacles that a runner will have to overcome, such as rocky paths or bad weather.” We know that the runner has the goal of reaching a certain point. If rocks or bad weather stand between the runner and the point he or she wishes to reach, we can understand that these are things that get in the way of, or hinder, the runner's progress. In **(A)**, it can be understood that Blair has the goal of being successful in selling his pizza. If he fails to make a profit because of a new regulation, we can understand that this is something that hinders his progress towards achieving that goal. After all, if you don't make a profit, you don't make any money. So this accurately describes a situation that involves an obstacle, making it the correct choice.

Although Marty does not have very much disposable income, this is for good reason: he is saving for a new house. This means his goal is more likely to buy a new house. So his progress towards achieving that goal is not being hindered. Therefore **(B)** is incorrect.

(C) is incorrect because we can understand that Tonya's goal is to work (and make money) at the hair salon. If she does not have much free time, this must mean that business is good. If business is good, Tonya must be making good progress toward her goal.

(D) is incorrect because this situation does not admit of any discernible goal, or progress toward it. Rather, this describes a conflict, or problem.

4) B

Core Standard: **Integration of Knowledge**

In paragraph 4, the author writes: “Because it is so expensive to travel to Antarctica, those who want to participate in an Antarctic ultramarathon usually have to pay many thousands of dollars.” This supports **option (I)**.

The author also adds that runners who want to participate must “buy special equipment to protect themselves against the extreme cold.” This supports **option (II)**.

Paragraph 4 doesn't say anything about the length of the race. This eliminates **option (III)**.

Therefore **(B)** is correct.

5) A

Core Standard: **Key Ideas and Details**

The author never mentions eating the night before the race. Therefore **(A)** is correct.

In paragraph 6, the author suggests, “you should always pick a location that is close to home.” This eliminates choice **(B)**.