



# Dragon Boat Racing

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Dragon boat racing is one of the oldest competitive water sports in the world, with **origins** that stretch back more than two thousand years in southern China. According to popular legend, the tradition began after the death of Qu Yuan, a respected poet and government official who drowned himself in the Miluo River to protest political corruption. Villagers reportedly raced their boats out to scare away fish and evil spirits that might disturb his body.

Today, the sport has evolved into a highly organized international **discipline** practiced in more than seventy countries. A standard racing boat carries twenty paddlers, one drummer at the bow, and one steersperson at the stern. The drummer's rhythmic beat is essential, as it allows the paddlers to **synchronize** their strokes and maximize the boat's forward momentum across the water.

Competitive racing demands exceptional physical conditioning and mental focus. Paddlers train year-round to build the upper-body strength and cardiovascular **endurance** required to maintain a punishing pace over distances ranging from two hundred to two thousand meters. Even the slightest break in unity can cause a crew to lose precious seconds.

The annual Dragon Boat Festival, observed on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, remains the cultural centerpiece of the sport. Communities across Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and beyond gather along rivers and harbors to watch elaborately decorated boats compete. Spectators also consume zongzi, sticky rice dumplings traditionally thrown into the river to **commemorate** Qu Yuan.

Beyond its festive atmosphere, dragon boat racing has gained recognition as a powerful tool for community building and rehabilitation. Breast cancer survivor teams, in particular, have embraced the sport for its therapeutic benefits, demonstrating how an ancient ritual can be reimagined to address contemporary needs while preserving its profound cultural heritage.

## A. Vocabulary

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|------------------------|--|
| 1. origins ____        | a. traditions, beliefs, and history passed down through generations      |
| 2. discipline ____     | b. in detailed and carefully designed way                                |
| 3. synchronize ____    | c. process of returning to health or normal life after illness or injury |
| 4. endurance ____      | d. cause actions or movements to happen at exactly the same time         |
| 5. commemorate ____    | e. remember and show respect for someone or something important          |
| 6. rhythmic ____       | f. force or speed gained by moving object                                |
| 7. elaborately ____    | g. point or place where something begins or comes from                   |
| 8. rehabilitation ____ | h. branch of knowledge, sport, or activity requiring specific training   |
| 9. heritage ____       | i. ability to keep doing something difficult over a long period          |
| 10. momentum ____      | j. having regular pattern of beats, sounds, or movements                 |

## B. True or False

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|--|---|
| ___ 1. Dragon boat racing originated in southern China more than two thousand years ago. | ___ 2. Qu Yuan was a famous warrior who died in battle. |
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- \_\_\_ 3. A standard racing boat carries twenty paddlers, one drummer, and one steersperson.
- \_\_\_ 4. The drummer sits at the stern of the boat.
- \_\_\_ 5. Dragon boat racing is practiced in more than seventy countries today.
- \_\_\_ 6. Race distances always exceed two thousand meters.
- \_\_\_ 7. The Dragon Boat Festival is held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.
- \_\_\_ 8. Zongzi are sweet pastries eaten only during weddings.
- \_\_\_ 9. Breast cancer survivor teams have adopted the sport for its therapeutic benefits.
- \_\_\_ 10. Modern dragon boat racing has lost all connection to its cultural heritage.

### C. Fill in the Blanks

**Word Bank:** origins, synchronize, endurance, commemorate, momentum, rhythmic, elaborately, heritage

1. Paddlers must \_\_\_\_\_ their strokes to keep the boat moving in a straight line.
2. Long-distance racing requires tremendous physical \_\_\_\_\_ and mental focus.
3. The festival is held each year to \_\_\_\_\_ the death of the poet Qu Yuan.
4. The sport's \_\_\_\_\_ can be traced back more than two thousand years in China.
5. Once the boat builds up \_\_\_\_\_, it becomes easier to maintain a fast pace.



### D. Comprehension Questions

1. According to legend, why did villagers race their boats out onto the Miluo River?
2. What role does the drummer play in a dragon boat race?
3. How has dragon boat racing been adapted for therapeutic purposes?

### E. Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think ancient traditions like dragon boat racing remain popular in modern, technology-driven societies?
2. What are the benefits and drawbacks of turning a cultural or religious ritual into an international competitive sport?



# Answer Key

## Dragon Boat Racing

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**A. Vocabulary:** 1-g, 2-h, 3-d, 4-i, 5-e, 6-j, 7-b, 8-c, 9-a, 10-f

**B. True/False:** 1-T, 2-F, 3-T, 4-F, 5-T, 6-F, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T, 10-F

**C. Fill Blanks:** 1-synchronize, 2-endurance, 3-commemorate, 4-origins, 5-momentum

**D. Comprehension:**

1. They raced out to scare away fish and evil spirits that might disturb the body of the poet Qu Yuan.
2. The drummer's rhythmic beat helps the paddlers synchronize their strokes and maximize the boat's forward momentum.
3. Breast cancer survivor teams have embraced the sport for its rehabilitation and community-building benefits.