



Dragon Boat Racing

Reading Worksheet — Level F | tahricteaches.com

Dragon boat racing is one of the most spectacular and physically demanding water sports in East Asia. Each year, thousands of paddlers gather along rivers and lakes to **commemorate** the ancient poet Qu Yuan, whose tragic death is said to have inspired the festival more than two thousand years ago. The races are not merely athletic events; they are vibrant cultural celebrations that draw enormous crowds and television audiences across the region.

The vessels themselves are long, narrow boats elaborately decorated with carved dragon heads at the bow and ornate tails at the stern. A typical racing crew consists of twenty paddlers, a drummer who sits at the front, and a steerer at the back. The drummer's rhythmic beats are absolutely essential, as they help paddlers **synchronize** their strokes and maintain a punishing pace over distances ranging from two hundred to two thousand metres.

Training for competitive dragon boat racing is remarkably **rigorous**. Crews often practise several times a week for months before a major regatta, focusing on stamina, technique, and team cohesion. Coaches emphasise that even a slight imbalance in timing can significantly reduce the boat's speed, since the propulsion depends entirely on the collective effort of the paddlers working as a unified body.

In recent decades, the sport has experienced a dramatic global **resurgence**. International federations now organise championships on every continent, and recreational clubs have proliferated in cities as diverse as London, Sydney, and Toronto. Breast cancer survivor teams, in particular, have embraced the sport as a means of rehabilitation and empowerment, transforming what was once a regional tradition into a worldwide phenomenon.

Despite its modern popularity, dragon boat racing remains deeply rooted in tradition. Eye-dotting ceremonies, ritual offerings, and the consumption of zongzi rice dumplings continue to **preserve** the spiritual dimension of the festival. For participants and spectators alike, the sport offers a rare combination of intense competition, ancestral heritage, and communal joy that few other athletic traditions can rival.

A. Vocabulary

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|----------------------|--|
| 1. commemorate ____ | a. act of working together as unified, coordinated group |
| 2. synchronize ____ | b. force that drives or pushes something forward |
| 3. rigorous ____ | c. sporting event consisting of series of boat races |
| 4. resurgence ____ | d. extremely thorough, demanding, or strict in nature |
| 5. preserve ____ | e. keep something in its original or existing state |
| 6. vessel ____ | f. increase rapidly in number or spread widely |
| 7. propulsion ____ | g. honour or remember important person or event through ceremony |
| 8. regatta ____ | h. cause two or more actions to happen at exactly same time |
| 9. cohesion ____ | i. increase or revival of activity after period of decline |
| 10. proliferate ____ | j. ship, boat, or other large craft used for water travel |

B. True or False

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___ 1. Dragon boat racing is said to commemorate the ancient poet Qu Yuan. | ___ 2. A typical racing crew is made up of ten paddlers and a drummer. |
|--|--|

- ___ 3. The drummer sits at the back of the boat next to the steerer.
- ___ 4. Races can range from two hundred to two thousand metres in length.
- ___ 5. Crews usually train only a few days before a major regatta.
- ___ 6. Even a small timing imbalance can reduce the boat's speed significantly.
- ___ 7. International dragon boat championships are now held on every continent.
- ___ 8. Breast cancer survivor teams have rejected dragon boat racing as too dangerous.
- ___ 9. Zongzi rice dumplings are traditionally eaten during the festival.
- ___ 10. Eye-dotting ceremonies were abandoned in the modern version of the sport.

C. Fill in the Blanks

Word Bank: commemorate, synchronize, rigorous, resurgence, preserve, vessel, regatta, cohesion

1. The festival was created to _____ the death of the poet Qu Yuan.
2. The drummer's beats help the paddlers _____ their strokes perfectly.
3. Training for competitive racing is _____ and lasts many months.
4. The sport has enjoyed a dramatic global _____ in recent decades.
5. Traditional ceremonies help _____ the spiritual dimension of the festival.



D. Comprehension Questions

1. Why is the drummer considered essential to a dragon boat racing crew?
2. How have breast cancer survivor teams contributed to the global growth of the sport?
3. What traditional elements continue to preserve the spiritual side of the festival?

E. Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think ancient cultural traditions like dragon boat racing continue to attract young people in the modern world?
2. Should traditional sports be modified to appeal to international audiences, or should they be kept exactly as they were originally practised?



Answer Key

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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-F, 4-T, 5-F, 6-T, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T, 10-F

C. Fill Blanks: 1-commemorate, 2-synchronize, 3-rigorous, 4-resurgence, 5-preserve

D. Comprehension:

1. The drummer's rhythmic beats help the paddlers synchronize their strokes and maintain a fast, unified pace throughout the race.
2. They have embraced dragon boat racing as a form of rehabilitation and empowerment, helping transform a regional tradition into a worldwide phenomenon.
3. Eye-dotting ceremonies, ritual offerings, and the consumption of zongzi rice dumplings continue to preserve its spiritual dimension.

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