

Better together

1 Work with a partner. Look at the quotes and answer the questions.

- 1 What do the quotes mean?
- 2 Which one do you agree with? Why?

2a Read the texts about non-traditional sporting events around the world. Give brief descriptions of the three sporting events mentioned.

"Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing."

"It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game."



The first city marathon in Boston in 1897 had fifteen runners; in 2016 there were 27,487 runners, which reflects how running has grown in popularity. However, whereas initially people entered these races to win, nowadays there are more events with an emphasis on raising money for charity and participating in a community event. There are more runners in non-traditional races than marathons, and approximately three quarters of London marathon participants run the race to support a good cause.

The Colour Run

This is not your normal 5k run – it's a much more colourful alternative. It originated in the US in 2011 and is now a worldwide phenomenon. Described as "the happiest 5k on the planet", it is an untimed event in which runners are covered in multi-coloured paint. It's a celebration of health and happiness. People run for all sorts of reasons: recovery from an illness, to remember a friend, or simply to revel in the fact that they can run. After the race there is a festival with music, dancing and colour throws which create some amazing colour combinations. The party is a great opportunity for social interaction and there's a real buzz of happiness as everyone has completed the run. This kind of event is growing in popularity because no special equipment is required, so training and participation is not expensive.



Tough Mudder



This is not an event for the faint-hearted! The course consists of around ten miles of mud and obstacles designed to test your physical and mental strength. It's very team-oriented and the event's tag line is "tougher together", the idea being that a team is much more powerful than a single person. Obstacles include walls, ladders, tunnels and, of course, lots of mud! There is no winner and no race against the clock as the idea is to complete not compete. A lot of the obstacles require teamwork to beat them so there's a great feeling of camaraderie on the course. This event allows people to shake off the conventions of everyday life by getting muddy and testing their tenacity. The first race was held in the US but they now take place around the world.

Dragon-boat racing

Dragon-boat racing originated in China thousands of years ago, but grew into a popular worldwide event following the success of the International Dragon Boat Festival in Hong Kong in the 1970s. The International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) was founded in 1991 with members including China, Canada and Australia. The IDBF estimates there are now around 50 million boat racers in Asia, 300,000 in Europe and 90,000 in Canada and the US. The long, brightly coloured boats have a dragon's head at the bow and a tail at the stern. There are around 20 paddlers in a team, with one steering at the back and one at the front keeping the rowers in rhythm by beating a drum. Teamwork is vital for this event. It has become particularly popular outside of China as it has built on older traditions that had been overlooked. For instance, some towns in Canada used to have regattas and dragon boat-racing has revived this tradition. It is also a chance to combine a competitive event with a spectator sport, and added extras such as fundraising, corporate team-building and advertising help create a colourful community event.



2b What do the statistics refer to? Read and match.

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|---|---------------|-------|---|--|
| 1 | 27,487 | | a | the length of the colour run |
| 2 | 10 miles | | b | the number of runners supporting a charity |
| 3 | 300,000 | | c | the number of paddlers in one boat |
| 4 | $\frac{3}{4}$ | | d | the number of runners in a 2016 marathon |
| 5 | 20 | | e | the average length of a tough mudder. |
| 6 | 5k | | f | the number of boat racers in Europe |

2c Read the article again and choose the best alternative to answer the questions.

- 1 How have running competitions changed over the years?
 - a There are more competitors and they are running faster times.
 - b The general focus of events has shifted from speed to society.
- 2 Why are events like the colour run becoming more popular?
 - a Because it's inexpensive and really easy.
 - b Because it's inexpensive and a great way to socialise.
- 3 What type of person would do a tough mudder?
 - a Someone who is determined and willing to work with others.
 - b Someone who is competitive and keen to succeed on their own terms.
- 4 What does a team need to be successful at dragon-boat racing?
 - a A good leader who can take charge of the team.
 - b A strong team who have trained together.
- 5 Why are non-traditional sporting events becoming popular worldwide?
 - a Because it's an opportunity to celebrate old traditions in local communities.
 - b Because companies mostly see these events as a chance to make money through advertising.

Gateway to culture

3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.

- 1 Have you ever taken part in a sporting event? Do you know anyone who has taken part in one?
- 2 Why did you or your friend do it? How did you or your friend feel afterwards?
- 3 Why do you think non-traditional events are becoming popular in many different countries?

PROJECT

3b You are going to work on a presentation about a non-traditional sporting event that you would like to participate in. Read the questions and prepare your research.

- 1 Work in groups and brainstorm different events.
- 2 Choose an event and find out more about it. Answer the following questions:
 - Where is it, what does it involve, and how much training is required?
 - Where did this event originate? Is it popular in your country? Why/Why not?
 - Why would you like to do this event?
 - Does it involve the local community?

3c In your groups, use your notes to give a presentation to the rest of the class on your event. Your presentation should be around three minutes long.