

INSTRUCTIONS

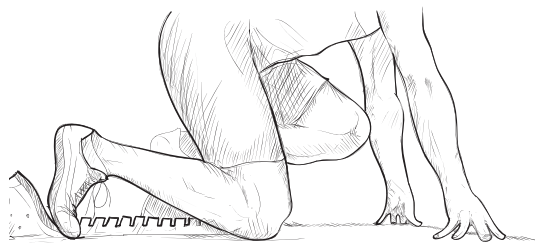
This Learning Packet has two parts: (1) text to read and (2) questions to answer.

The text describes a particular sport or physical activity, and relates its history, rules, playing techniques, scoring and popularity.

The Response Forms (questions and puzzles) check your understanding and appreciation of the sport or physical activity.

INTRODUCTION

Track events are closely related to field events. This packet will deal with five traditional track events: the dash, the steeplechase, the hurdle, the relay race and the distance race. Running as a sport did not become popular in America until 1871, when the first track meet was held in New York City. Eventually, track and field events became so popular that the Intercollegiate Association of Amateur Athletics in America (ICAAAA) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) were organized to govern/oversee these events and the rules that control them.



HISTORY OF FIELD SPORTS

Early human beings were forced by their environment to run. They both ran after animals when hunting for food, and ran from other animals who were themselves hungry. This running consisted of jumping over bushes, fallen trees, ditches and other obstacles. Hunting and gathering techniques were taken into battle as skirmishes between tribes made survival important.

In between hunting parties and wars, running and jumping became leisure-time activities that people chose to do as athletic events. Sometimes the object was to compete against others; at other times, the athlete simply wanted to test himself or herself. Running events were recorded in Greece as early as 776 B.C. They were also part of athletic competition throughout the Middle Ages and on through the Renaissance and into modern times.

Over 2,000 years after the earliest Greek track events, in 1912, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) was founded to function as the governing body for track and field sports all over the world.

Today, as many as 25 events may be included in a track and field meet. The track events at the championship level include the 100, 200, 400, 800, 1500, 5000 and 10,000-meter runs, the 3000-meter steeplechase, the 110- and 400-meter hurdles and the 400 and 1500-meter relays.

HOW DIFFERENT TRACK EVENTS ARE DONE

THE DASH

Dashes, or short runs, are also called sprints. The athlete must attain maximum speed in minimum time in order to compete successfully in these races. Like many field events, dashes are deceptively simple. Almost everyone has run fast at some point in his or her life. But competition-level runners in the dash must develop superior stamina, flexibility and muscular strength. The dash is NOT as simple as it looks! Here's how it's done:

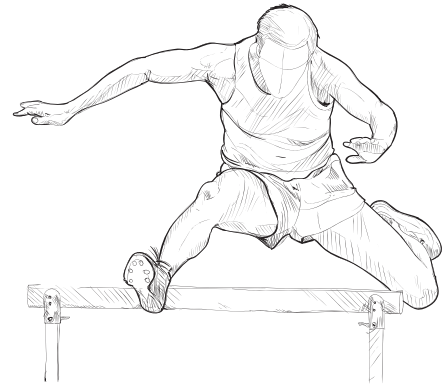


1. Getting off to a good start in short races is crucial. Many races are lost at the starting line! The rules require that you start in a “crouch” position—with both feet and both hands placed on the track with the heels placed against the starting block. These starting blocks are anchored to the ground and are adjustable to runners of every size and height. The block gives you a solid base from which to push off.
2. At the command, “On your mark,” place your feet on the starting block.
3. At the second command, “Set,” lift your body until your back is almost parallel to the ground, with the hips slightly above the level of the shoulders. This is called the “ready position.”
4. As the starting gun is fired, push off from the starting block with explosive force, keeping the body forward and the head low at the beginning of the run.

Both psychological and physical considerations enter into running the dash. Being aware of the competition's strengths and weaknesses is as critical as being a skilled and aggressive runner. Patience and determination are also essential attributes for the competitive runner in this event.

THE HURDLE

Hurdle competition is not running and leaping, but making running leaps over the hurdles. You do not jump over the hurdle. Instead, as you reach the hurdle, you lift your legs and tuck them up so that they barely clear the top of the crosspiece.

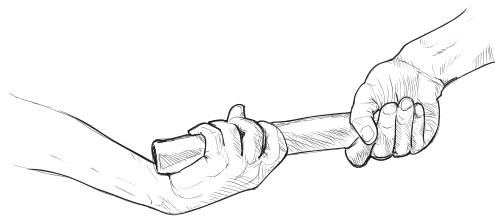


Traditionally, there are two types of hurdle races—the 120-yard (110 meter) high hurdle and the 440-yard (403 meter) intermediate hurdle. The hurdles are 42 inches (1.06 meters) high in the 120-yard event and 36 inches (.91 meters) high in the 440-yard event. The distance from the starting line to the first hurdle is 49 $\frac{1}{4}$ yards (45.03 meters). The ten hurdles are placed at 38 $\frac{1}{4}$ -yard (34.9 meter) intervals across the running lanes. Here's how to do the hurdles:

1. As you cross a hurdle, your body will be leaning forward. The arm opposite the lead leg crosses the hurdle first. If the left leg leads, the right arm crosses the hurdle first.
2. As you cross the hurdle, tuck your legs up so that they barely clear the top of the hurdle.
3. After you have crossed the hurdle, land so that the body's weight will still be forward, in front of the lead leg. Landing with the weight so far forward can throw a careless runner off balance. Thus, it is often recommended that the left leg become the lead leg in order to help the runner maintain a better balance upon landing, especially around curves in the track.
4. Continue running with no interruption of your rhythm to the next hurdle. If you do this maneuver correctly, your upper body will barely move vertically as you cross the hurdle.

RELAY RACING

Relay racing (or teamwork racing) uses a four-person team of sprinters, each of whom runs approximately the same distance. The first person to run is the leadoff, and the last to run, usually the best runner on the team, is called the anchor.



Even a team with four fast runners isn't assured of victory. Relay racing demands not only speed but teamwork. The crux of relay racing is the act of passing a baton or stick to the next team member without dropping it and without losing speed during the pass. If the baton is dropped, the runner who dropped it is disqualified and his/her team finishes last. If speed is lost in the passing of the baton, positions can be lost.

The Visual Pass and the Blind Pass are two types of passes used in relay racing. Here's how these two passes are done:

The Visual Pass

1. The receiver of the baton starts running so that his/her speed will match that of the oncoming runner.
2. As the two runners approach each other, the receiver looks over his/her shoulder and extends the receiving arm back toward the oncoming runner. The receiver has his or her palm up as the pass takes place.
3. The oncoming runner passes the baton to the receiver, who then moves ahead and continues the race.
4. The oncoming runner quickly slows down and leaves the track.

The Blind Pass

1. The receiver starts running as the oncoming runner approaches.
2. As they draw near to each other, the receiver waits for the baton holder to run about seven inches from him/her and then begins to move forward.
3. The receiver, meanwhile, moves with the receiving arm extended back toward the passer. As the pass is made, the receiver pulls the baton from the passer's hand and runs faster as the passer slows down.

LONG DISTANCE RUNNING

Distance running refers to races over 800 meters and longer. Middle distance races are generally designated as those between 800 and 2,000 meters. Long-distance races are those of 3,000 meters or more. Regardless of the actual number of meters involved, however, distance running requires endurance, stamina, tremendous concentration and self-pacing to prevent exhaustion.

A runner in a middle-distance race must learn to relax while using a controlled leg movement. He or she must also master optimum hip rotation and learn to adjust the stride—a shorter stride if the race is slow, a longer one for a faster race.



Each mile in a race can be divided into four segments. The first segment is a brisk run. The second segment is taken at a comfortable stride. The third segment is run at a stride that allows the runner to conserve energy, while the fourth segment starts slowly but ends with a burst of speed. The third segment is often considered the most critical part of the mile because it is the point where many runners are tiring, both physically and mentally.

Long-distance runners need good judgment and a keen eye for assessing the abilities of other runners on the track. They also need to develop a game plan for winning each race.

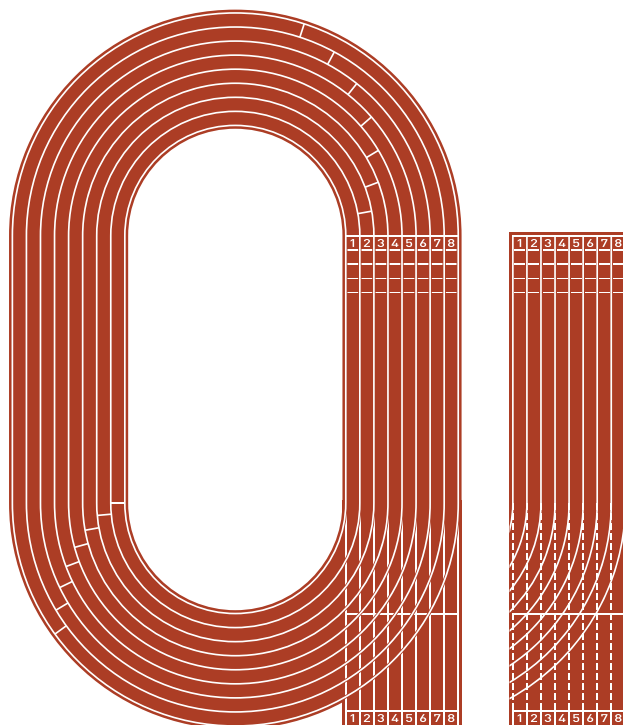
STEEPLECHASE

This event requires that the athlete combine the skills of a hurdler and the endurance of a long-distance runner. The steeplechase is comprised of running and jumping over 28 hurdles and 7 water jumps. In the Olympic Games, this race is approximately 3,280 yards long.

Originally, the name “steeplechase” referred to a country horse race over obstacles. Eventually, English students began to attempt the race on foot and in 1889, the event was introduced into the United States.

EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING

Track clothing is traditionally light in weight and allows complete freedom of movement. This usually means tank tops or sleeveless shirts. The bottom hem of track shorts is well above the knee, and sometimes the shorts have slits up the sides. Shoes are especially important, since different events require different shoe designs. The soles of the shoes are cleated.



TRACK EVENTS NOTES

Track events are competitive at several levels. Most middle and high schools offer both track competitions for both girls and boys. At the college and university level the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sponsors both men and women competitions and championship tournaments.

Track and Field is also an Olympic sport. This competition occurs every four years in the summer, where gold, silver and bronze medals are given to the top men and women teams. Events like the dash, the steeplechase, the hurdle, the relay race and the distance race, are all part of the Olympic Games events. These events make the Games special and give it a touch of uniqueness. Athletes from various nationalities participate in track events.

In the first Olympic Games, only men were allowed to compete in the track events, and just six men's track events were held. It wasn't until 1926 that the International Olympic committee voted to allow women to compete in track events at the 1928 Olympic Games.

USA Track and Field (USATF) is the National Governing Body for track and field in the United States. USATF encompasses the world's oldest organized sports, the most-watched events on Olympic broadcast, the number one high school and junior high school participatory sport.

There are, however, many levels of track and field competition. Most cities and towns offer amateur competition. Some are sponsored by such organizations as YMCA's or local park districts.

Track and field is the second-most popular sport in the world, following soccer. But in America, track and field's loyal fans feel more and more like a niche group, waiting for their red, white and blue brethren to wake up and realize what they're missing. It's a great sport around the world but here in the U.S. we have a tendency to show more interest in football, basketball and baseball.

Check out these websites for more information about Field Events:

www.ncaa.com

www.usatf.org

STUDENT RESPONSE PACKET**TRACK EVENTS**

NAME

DATE

WHAT TO DO

The following questions will help you to have a greater appreciation and understanding of track events. Write your answers in the spaces below the questions. If there is not enough room, write on the backs of these sheets. Be neat, spell correctly, and write in complete sentences.

1. In your opinion, what physical benefits can be gained from participating in track as a sport?

2. What are the five traditional track events?

3. Describe why the starting position is so crucial to the dash or short run.

4. It is often said that both psychological and physical considerations enter into a successful dash. What are these factors and why are they so important?

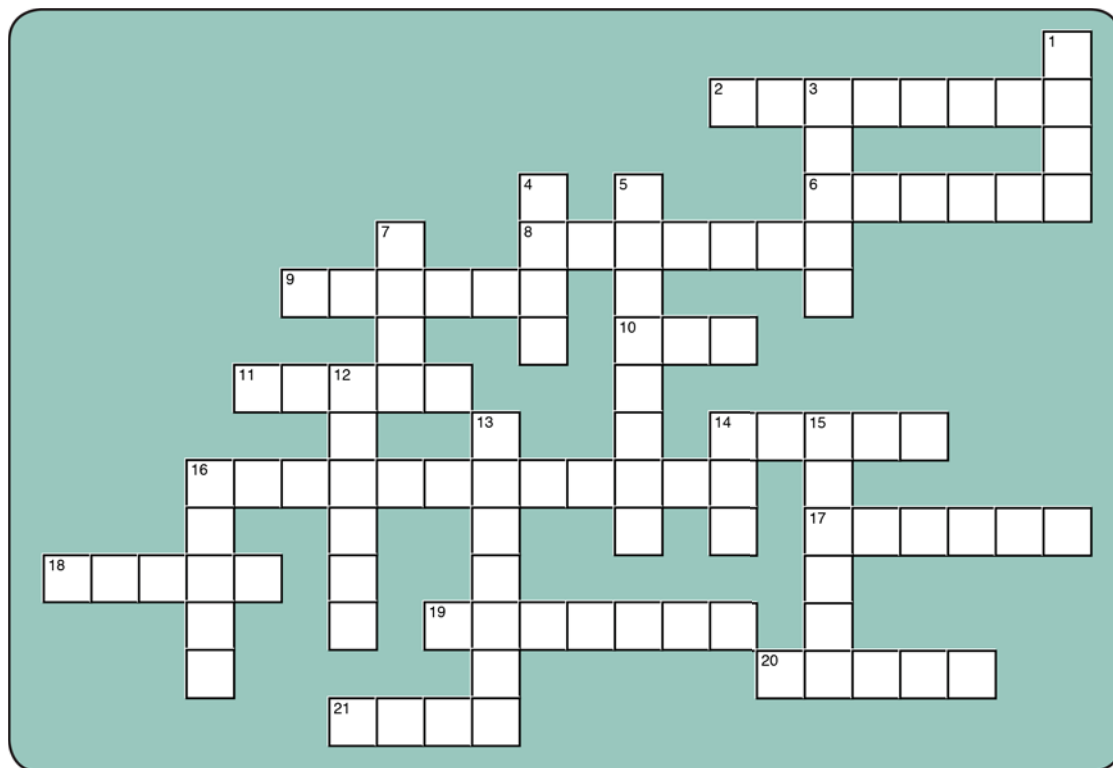
5. What is the hurdle competition and what are the two types of hurdle races?
6. Why is it sometimes recommended that the left leg be used as the lead leg in hurdles?
7. Why does relay racing depend as much on teamwork as on the speed of the individual runners?
8. What is a “visual pass?”

9. What is a “blind pass?”
10. Describe how the receiver should be positioned to receive the baton in the visual pass.

CROSSWORD

TRACK EVENTS

Name: _____ Date: _____



Across:

2. Height in inches of hurdles in 120 yard event
6. The last runner in a relay race
8. The soles of track shoes are this
9. One of the associations that control track events
10. Traditional number of hurdle types
11. Track clothing is usually this
14. Number of water jumps in a steeplechase
16. This race involves water jumps and hurdles
17. Another name for the dash
18. This is passed in a relay race
19. Direction of body weight after crossing hurdle
20. The sprinter puts his or her feet here at the start of the race
21. Federation that controls track all over the world

Down:

1. Number of sprinters on a team for a relay race
3. Position with hips slightly above shoulder level
4. An association of colleges that oversees track events
5. Direction of minimum movement in crossing hurdle
7. One of the five track events covered in this packet
12. Track events held here in 776 BC
13. Name of first sprinter in a relay race
14. Second command when starting the dash
15. Type of relay pass
16. These are an especially important part of the attire of track participants

WORD SEARCH

TRACK EVENTS

Name: _____ Date: _____

P E V L S S T R O H S F B V H Q P P I D
G G E S A H C E L P E E T S M H H I X I
L M A R K F I V R R H W H O L G I W H S
S H O E S P R I N T S K O S F C A U D R
P P T N W D N E D K U V T Y A S R W W J
T H F N I T P C R F B M O A L D V E M F
Y F T U E H A E L F A K A L L N H G E O
L N E R N V R R J L T A O E U I X S X J
P V S S A P K B M Y O A I R I L F W F Q
Z J Q H X C E R P S N V H E E B B I Y E
A P M F M M K O G S H J F J J A W N M P
K E F E D V P I Q U Q N K F Z P F S S L
H Y X W Y P Q H Y W I A A B V G J W V N
Y X S X N D R D V M X S X I A O L N G M
W L R B J F B G D O T J J O G I J M Q C
T E U W V Z K K R E V Q A C F U S Q H D
L Y T P G E J A J U T G G X Z T W J O M
U S J Q N N S E U Y W H O J W G V D M F
X J E D A G Z T H D N D T J H K J F D T
W H X N D L S M N X L Z A L E W J L D S

Find these words in the above puzzle. Circle the words.

Track

ICAAAA

Bushes

IAAF

Sprints

Mark

Set

Hurdle

Blind

Pass

Steeplechase

Shorts

Shoes

Dashes

Relay

Sprinters

Baton

Runners

Receiver

1. Using the internet, give a brief history of the steeplechase as a track event.
2. Trace the early history of track.
3. Who is the current NCAA division 1 champion in the women's 200-meter race?
4. Compare and contrast long distance running with relay racing.