Summer 2 Week 6 Reading Comp

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Tour de France

The Tour de France is the world's most famous (and arguably the hardest) cycling race. It takes place every year and lasts for three weeks, covering more than 3,500km.

History of the Race

During the late 19th century, cycling became a very popular hobby for many people. As time went on, organised bike racing was introduced and professional cycling became very big in France. Sports newspapers such as 'Le Vélo' reported on cycling stories, which helped to promote races.

It was the journalist Géo Lefévre that proposed the idea of organising a big bike race through France. On 6th July 1903, 60 cyclists set off from the Au Reveil Matin Café in the suburbs of Paris. They covered 2,428km in a circular route, through six stages. Eighteen days later, 21 of the original 60 cyclists made it back to the finish line in Paris. The winner was Maurice Garin and Le Tour de France was born. The race has taken place every year since then, except during wartime. As the tour became more and more popular, the course lengthened and more challenging mountain climbs were introduced.

Did you know?

- Over 150 countries broadcast the race all over the world.
- The youngest ever winner was Henri Comet - he was 19 years old.
- It is estimated that around 15 million spectators line the route every year.
- Bradley Wiggins became the first British rider to win the Tour de France in 2012, which was followed by a second British winner, Chris Froome, in 2013.

The Route and Race Today

Each year, the tour begins in a different country, which is known as the Grand Départ. The route of the race also changes every year, but usually finishes at the Champs-Élysées in Paris. Every day is a new stage of the race and winners of each stage are awarded with different coloured jerseys. The white jersey is given to the best rider under 26 years of age, the red polka dot jersey is for the best climber and is referred to as 'King of the Mountains', the green jersey is awarded to the best sprinter and the yellow jersey is for

the leader of the race. The overall winner of the Tour de France is the cyclist that has ridden the full route in the quickest time. During the race, the riders are only given two rest days.

Even though there's only one winner of the race, the Tour de France is a team sport. Every year, there are around 20 teams, each consisting of nine riders. The riders in each team work together, for example, one cyclist from every team is chosen to be the lead rider. At times, other members of the team will ride in front of him in order to block the wind, which helps the rider to set a fast pace.

Questions

Remember to answer in full sentences

1. When was the first ever Tour de France?

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_____

2. How many cyclists made it to the finish line of the first race?

_____

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3. What was the name of the first ever winner of the Tour de France?

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4. What is different about the starting point and route every year?

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5. What is the nickname given to the winner of the red polka dot jersey?

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6. Compare the significance of the green jersey with the white jersey.

7. Why do other members of the team cycle in front of the team lead rider?

8. Why do you think different coloured jerseys are given to the winners of each stage?

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Answers

1. When was the first ever Tour de France?

   The first ever race began on 6th July 1903.

2. How many cyclists made it to the finish line of the first race?

   21 of the original 60 cyclists made it back to the finish line.

3. What was the name of the first ever winner of the Tour de France?

   The first ever winner was Maurice Garin.

4. What is different about the starting point and route every year?

   Each year, the tour begins in a different country. The route of the race also changes every year, but usually finishes at the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

5. What is the nickname given to the winner of the red polka dot jersey?

   The winner of the red polka dot jersey is known as the 'King of the Mountains'.

6. Compare the significance of the green jersey with the white jersey.

   At the end of every stage, the white jersey is given to the best rider under 26 years of age and the green jersey is awarded to the best sprinter.

7. Why do other members of the team cycle in front of the team lead rider?

   At times, other members of the team will ride in front of the team lead rider in order to block the wind, helping him to set a fast pace.

8. Why do you think different coloured jerseys are given to the winners of each stage?

   Own answers may include:
   - **To acknowledge the achievements of the best cyclists at the end of each stage.**
   - **To help spectators (or cyclists) to identify the race leader, best sprinter, best climber or best rider under 26.**