Cycling

When athletes come together from around the world to compete in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, they are fulfilling their dreams and competing at the highest level. Billions of people across the globe join in; watching, listening to and reading about the greatest global celebration of sport. To celebrate the London 2012 Games, the British Council is making a wide range of classroom resources available for learners of English worldwide.

Can you ride a bike? If so, how often do you go cycling? Have you ever seen a bicycle race? There is a lot more to Olympic cycling events than you might think. Olympic cycling consists of BMX, mountain bike, road and track events. Find out more about these different events and learn the vocabulary and language of cycling.
1. Vocabulary

a. Write the correct words in the spaces provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. mountain bike</th>
<th>b. handle bar</th>
<th>c. road race</th>
<th>d. helmet</th>
<th>e. track, velodrome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>f. BMX</td>
<td>g. time trial</td>
<td>h. saddle</td>
<td>i. pedal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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2. The rules of cycling

- There are four different cycling sports on the Olympic programme: track, road, mountain bike and BMX.

- Track cycling is held in an indoors stadium called a velodrome. There are five Olympic track cycling events for men and women: team pursuit, team sprint, individual sprint, keirin and omnium.

- There are two road cycling events for both men and women. In the road race all competitors start together. The first rider to finish wins gold. In the time trial the riders start 90 seconds apart. The winner is the rider with the fastest time.

- There is one mountain bike race each for men and women. The race takes place on an outside course in rough and hilly countryside. All riders start together and must complete a number of laps of the course. The first rider to finish wins the gold.

- There is one BMX race each for men and women. The race takes place on a short outdoor track that includes bumps, jumps and difficult corners. BMX bicycles are different with smaller wheels and only one gear and one brake.

a. Match the words in the table with their definitions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. brake</th>
<th>b. course</th>
<th>c. gear</th>
<th>d. lap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e. rider</td>
<td>f. time trial</td>
<td>g. track</td>
<td>h. velodrome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A complete journey around a race track
2. This controls how much power goes to the wheels of a bicycle. The rider needs to change this if he is going up or downhill.
3. A device which makes a bicycle go slower or stop.
4. Someone who rides a bicycle.
5. A type of path or road, often in the shape of a ring, which has been specially designed and built for sports events, especially racing.
6. A type of race in which the athlete who covers a set distance in the quickest time wins.
7. An area of land or water used for a sports event.
8. An indoor arena with a steep track for bicycle races.

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3. Questions & Answers

I’ve been trying to understand the Olympic track cycling programme – it’s very confusing.

Yes, it does seem complicated – there are five different events.

Five! Why so many?

Simple! They’re all different. There’s the team pursuit, the team sprint, the individual sprint, the keirin and the omnium.

One at a time, please! What’s the team pursuit?

Two teams of four riders each start on opposite sides of the track and try to catch one another or finish in the fastest time.

OK, sounds like what my big brother used to do to me when he found out I’d borrowed his stuff! What about the sprints?

Riders race against each other over three laps of the track.

Right, we used to do that when we were kids, too. And the keirin? That sounds like a Japanese beer.

Well, it did originate in Japan. It’s pronounced ‘kay-rin’. Riders compete in a sprint after riding behind a motorcycle.

Behind a motorbike? Why?

To get them going faster. By the end the cyclists are travelling at more than 50 km/h.

Wow! We certainly didn’t do that when we were kids! Definitely no chasing motorbikes!

I should hope not.

What about the omnium? It sounds like a science fiction movie!

Well, it’s like cycling’s version of the decathlon – except there are six events instead of ten.

My head is hurting again. Are they the same as you explained before?

No, though there is an individual pursuit. There’s also the flying lap, the points race, the elimination race, the scratch race and the time trial.

Hmm. Why don’t I … why don’t I research that by just watching them on TV?

Good idea.
### a. Match the event to the definition.

1. Riders start on opposite sides of the track and try to catch one another or finish in the fastest time.
   - a. Keirin
   - b. Omnium
   - c. Sprint
   - d. Pursuit

2. Riders race against each other over three laps of the track.
   - a. Keirin
   - b. Omnium
   - c. Sprint
   - d. Pursuit

3. Riders compete in a sprint after riding behind a motorcycle.
   - a. Keirin
   - b. Omnium
   - c. Sprint
   - d. Pursuit

4. Riders compete in six different events.
   - a. Keirin
   - b. Omnium
   - c. Sprint
   - d. Pursuit

### b. True or false.

1. One of the people in the dialogue used to chase his brother when he was younger.
   - a. True
   - b. False

2. One speaker used to compete in sprint races when he was younger.
   - a. True
   - b. False

3. One speaker used to chase motorcycles when he was younger.
   - a. True
   - b. False

4. The omnium is exactly the same as the decathlon.
   - a. True
   - b. False
c. Select the correct answer to each question.

1. “Yes, it does seem complicated – there are five different events.”
   What does ‘it’ refer to?
   a. Cycling
   b. The Olympic track cycling programme

2. “… we used to do that when we were kids.”
   What does ‘that’ refer to?
   a. Racing against each other
   b. The keirin

3. “To get them going faster.”
   What does ‘them’ refer to?
   a. The cyclists
   b. The motorbike riders

4. “We certainly didn’t do that when we were kids!”
   What does ‘that’ refer to?
   a. Chasing motorbikes
   b. Riding motorbikes

5. “Are they same as you explained before?”
   What does ‘they’ refer to?
   a. Events
   b. Omniums

6. “… why don’t I research that by just watching them on TV?”
   What does ‘that’ refer to?
   a. My head
   b. The omnium
4. Solution

Exercise 1a
1. b; 2. d; 3. h; 4. i; 5. e; 6. f; 7. g; 8. c; 9. a

Exercise 2a
1. d; 2. c; 3. a; 4. e; 5. g; 6. f; 7. b; 8. h

Exercise 3a
1. d; 2. c; 3. a; 4. b

Exercise 3b
1. False; 2. True; 3. False; 4. False

Exercise 3c
1. b; 2. b; 3. a; 4. a; 5. b; 6. b

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