Sailing

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.

Sailing is simple on one level. It is the art of using the power of wind to move a boat. Throughout history, sailing has been very important for the development of fishing, trade, transport, exploration and war. It has been an Olympic sport since 1900, and has been evolving ever since then with advances in boat design and technology. Have you ever been sailing? Have you ever competed in a race?
1. Vocabulary

a. Write the correct words in the spaces provided.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Sail</td>
<td>b. Hull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Mast</td>
<td>e. Centreboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>Boom</td>
<td>h. Buoy</td>
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</table>

![Diagram with numbered items corresponding to the vocabulary list.](image-url)
2. The rules of Sailing

- There are eight different classes or types of boat used.
  - The classes for men are: Finn; Star; 49er; Laser.
  - The classes for women are: Laser Radial; Elliott 6m.
  - The classes for both men and women are: 470; RS:X.
- All races are held in ‘fleet racing’ format. This means all boats in the class race each other over a set course.
- Each event consists of a series of between 5 and 11 races, depending on the class.
- In each race, points are awarded as follows: 1 point for the winner, 2 points for second, etc.
- Competitors can discard or lose their worst score.
- The final race in the series is called the medal race, and points are doubled: 2 points for the winner, 4 points for second, etc.
- The winner is the competitor who has least points.
- In the event of two competitors having the same number of points after the final, then the winner is the competitor who finishes in the higher placed position in the medal race.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. class</th>
<th>b. discard</th>
<th>c. double</th>
<th>d. fleet race</th>
<th>e. medal race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. All boats competing against each other over the same course</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Lose</td>
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<td>3. The last competition, when the winner is decided</td>
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<td>4. Two times as many</td>
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<td>5. Type</td>
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</table>
3. Questions & Answers

I’d like to try sailing – just me and my boat and the sea and the wind – it seems simple.
In principle, yes, but if you competed in a race you’d have to understand the ‘Racing rules of sailing’, a 157-page document.

Goodness, that’s long!
Yes, long and complicated. Take rule 18.2 (e), for example: “If a boat obtained an inside overlap from clear astern and, from the time the overlap began, the ...”

Stop! I don’t understand a word. Can you explain?
I can but first you have to know that there are many exceptions to rule 18.2 (e). Take Appendix C, article C2.6, for example ...

Forget it! Why is it all so complicated?
Well, one reason is that boats are continually changing. Yacht design and technology is developing quickly so the rules need to cover all that.

Give me an example.
So, at the Olympics, the classes, or types, of boats used have changed many times.

But all the sailors use the same kind of boat, right?
Not always. For the latest Games there are 10 different sailing events and 8 different classes of boats.

OK, let’s move on. Can you tell me something about sailing history?
Well, according to the Greek historian Herodotus, some Phoenician sailors sailed all the way around Africa in about 500 BC.

So Phoenicians are the best sailors? Do they win all the sailing medals at the Olympics?
Actually Phoenicia hasn’t existed for more than 2000 years!

So who does win all the medals?
Well, Great Britain has won 49 medals, including 24 gold. On an individual level, Denmark’s Paul Elvstrom won gold medals at four consecutive Olympic Games and last competed when he was 60.

Wow! I bet he could explain rule 18.2 (e)!
Yes, he probably wrote it!
a. Which phrase does each of the numbers refer to?

1. A complicated instruction  
   a) 8
2. A long time  
   b) 10
3. A number of winners  
   c) 18.2
4. The age of a famous sailor  
   d) 24
5. The length of a text  
   e) 60
6. The number of types of boat competing at the London Olympics  
   f) 157
7. The number of types of race at the London Olympics  
   g) 2000

b. Complete the sentences with the words opposite.

1. The rules are long and ...................  
   a. changed
2. Boats have ................... many times.  
   b. competed
3. Some Phoenician sailors ................... all the way around Africa.  
   c. complicated
4. Phoenicia hasn’t ................... for more than 2000 years.  
   d. existed
5. Paul Elvstrom last ................... when he was 60.  
   e. sailed
4. Solution

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

Exercise 2a
1. d; 2. b; 3. e; 4. c; 5. a

Exercise 3a
1. rule 18.2 (c)
2. 2000 years (g)
3. 24 gold medals (d)
4. 60 years old (e)
5. 157 pages in the document (f)
6. 8 classes of boat (a)
7. 10 sailing events (b)

Exercise 3b
1. c; 2. a; 3. e; 4. d; 5. b;