

Focus on reading 1 *The Boys of Summer, the Men of Fall*

SKILLS PRACTICE

► Predicting

- 1 Read just the title and subtitle from the text opposite, then say in your own words what you think the text will be about.

► EXAM LINK Reading

Always study the title and the subtitle, as well as any pictures or diagrams first. Try and predict what the text will be about and think of anything you know about the subject. This will help you to 'tune in' to the topic and to read more efficiently.

► Skimming

- 2 Read through the text quickly to answer these questions. Before you begin, underline the key words or phrases in each question.

- 1 What three ingredients are needed for excellence in sport?
- 2 Find one sport where sportsmen and women have a long career.
- 3 Find one sport where sportsmen and women have a short career.
- 4 What provides energy for the muscles in sporting events?

► Parallel expressions

- 3 a) Exam questions often use different words from a text. They may use a word with a very similar meaning or they may use a phrase which summarises part of a text. Answer the following questions about 1–4 above.

- 1 Which question has key words which are exactly the same in the text?
- 2 Which question has a key phrase which has a similar meaning to a word in the text?
- 3 Which two questions have key phrases which summarise sections of the text?

- b) Match the words 1–8 with meanings a)–h).

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1 component | a) need |
| 2 crucial | b) speed |
| 3 deteriorate | c) become weaker |
| 4 power | d) depend |
| 5 rate | e) study |
| 6 rely | f) part (of a system) |
| 7 require | g) very important |
| 8 research | h) strength |

EXAM PRACTICE

► Short-answer questions

- 4 Answer the questions below. Write no more than three words or a number for each answer.
 - 1 What is Waneen Spirduso's special field of study?
 - 2 At what age does the oxygen capacity of the lungs become smaller?
 - 3 Which components of the body become less effective between the ages of 20 and 30?

The Boys of Summer, the Men of Fall

Why some athletes improve with age and some don't.

'Ageing is sports-specific,' says **Waneen Spirduso**, a researcher in human movement at the University of Texas, because excellence in any sport depends on three ingredients – power, endurance and good nerves – and these components deteriorate at different rates.

Weightlifting, rowing and wrestling all require short bursts of great strength, the ability least affected by ageing. The muscle cells which make up the tissue responsible for strength die off with the passing years but so slowly as to make little difference until the age of 50 or beyond. Forty-year-old rowers can therefore remain competitive with 25-year-olds.

To fuel muscles for longer events, the body relies on oxygen. The sooner oxygen reaches muscles, the better the performance. But with age, the lungs lose elasticity and take in less oxygen. Beginning at 30, oxygen capacity decreases 5–10% per decade. This makes a major difference to cyclists, swimmers, and runners.

The third of the athletic skills, good nerves, underlies gymnastics and field events, which require perfect balance. Because neurons start to deteriorate in the 20s, you don't see many world-class gymnasts over 25. Nerves are also crucial in sprints, triple jump and hurdles. That's why most track stars are past their prime by their mid-to-late-20s. Ageing takes its biggest toll in the sprints and jumps where you need a quick reaction time.

Adapted from *Newsweek*

► Classification

5 Classify the following sports (1–5) by the skills A–C they require according to the text.

- | | |
|-------------|-------|
| 1 cycling | |
| 2 hurdles | |
| 3 rowing | |
| 4 running | |
| 5 wrestling | |

- | |
|---------------|
| A power |
| B endurance |
| C good nerves |

► True/False/Not Given

6 Do the following statements agree with the information in the text?

Write	TRUE	if the statement agrees with the information
	FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
	NOT GIVEN	if there is no information on this

- The muscle cells responsible for strength begin to die off when we are 50.
- A 40-year-old rower is just as likely to win a race as a younger rower.
- According to research, the best anti-ageing tonic is in the mind.
- The oxygen capacity of the lungs is reduced by 5–10 per cent every year.
- Athletes in sprints and jumps events are worst affected by ageing.