

Crossing the Finish Line

FOCUS QUESTION

How can sports bring out the best in people?

NOTICE AND WONDER

Look at the map of the New York City Marathon route. What do you notice? What do you wonder? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

A marathon is a 26.2-mile (42.2-kilometer) road race in which people compete by running or using a wheelchair. Circle the words you know below. Explain how they could be connected to the topic of marathons.

inspire

goal

___ is related to marathons because ___.

achieve

determination

___ said ___ is related to marathons because ___.

mile 21

mile 18

CENTRAL
PARK

Finish

Team Hoyt

by Angela Brown



QUEENS

mile 13

MANHATTAN

BROOKLYN

NEW YORK CITY
HARBOR**You Can't Stop
Tegla Loroupe!**

by Alice Cary



mile 4

STATEN
ISLAND

Start

VERRAZZANO-
NARROWS BRIDGE**Champion
of Peace**

by Hazel Meador





Finishing Strong

by Jill Korey O'Sullivan




Spectators are an important part of the New York City Marathon.

Stop & Discuss

What is it like to run the New York City Marathon?

Support your ideas with details from the text.

Running the marathon is _____. It helps when _____.

- 1 Running a marathon is very difficult. But people run them anyway. Why? Some of these runners want to achieve a goal they once thought was impossible. Other runners want to build their confidence. If they can run a marathon, they feel like they can do anything.
- 2 Despite their goals, runners sometimes want to give up, especially in the final miles of the race when they are exhausted. But at the New York City Marathon, one thing that keeps these tired runners from quitting is the support of the cheering crowd. In fact, throughout the race, more than one million spectators ring bells, shout words of encouragement, and hold up signs. This support helps push runners to complete the 26.2-mile run.
- 3 The average runner completes the race in about 4 hours and 30 minutes. By late afternoon, most of the marathon's 50,000 racers have crossed the finish line. At 7:25 p.m., well after dark, the official race clock stops. Most of the crowds have disappeared by then, and workers start cleaning up. But for some 100 racers, the finish line is still many miles away. 

4 In the past, continuing the race into the evening hours was a lonely experience. The runners often crossed the finish line with no one to cheer them on. Then, in 2015, after finishing her first marathon, Stephanie Pennington decided that no racers should cross the finish line without a celebration. Beginning the following year, she used social media to bring together crowds for the late-hour finishers. These spectators, inspired by the racers' determination and hard work, are committed to celebrating the success of every racer. Pennington's group, known as Project Finish, stays and cheers wildly until the last runner crosses the finish line. Completing 26.2 miles is a huge accomplishment.



Stephanie Pennington (left);
Hannah Gavios (right, center)

- 5 Project Finish makes all the difference to racers like Hannah Gavios. In 2016, Gavios injured her **spinal cord**. Doctors said she might never walk again. But Gavios didn't give up. She spent two years in **physical therapy**, always challenging herself to get stronger. Finishing the New York City Marathon became her goal.
- 6 In 2018, Gavios did it—she completed the whole marathon on crutches. After crossing the finish line in just over 11 hours, Gavios expressed sincere thanks to the supporters. She said, “[It] just means so much to me that you [all] stayed.”
- 7 The Project Finish supporters share an understanding about the race. It isn't about winning. It's about finishing it. 🖐️

spinal cord = nerve tissue in the spine that sends messages between the brain and body

physical therapy = medical care that helps people recover from injury

Stop & Discuss

How does Project Finish support racers? Why do they do this?

Underline the sentence that tells what they do.



Analyze Information

- As you read about a new topic, ask questions and gather information to help you understand what you read about.
- After reading a text about a new topic, you can read additional texts about that topic to deepen your understanding of it.

Reread/Think

Reread “Finishing Strong.” Look for information that answers the questions below. Write information from the text in the chart.

Questions	Information from “Finishing Strong”
Why do people want to race in marathons?	
Why do people support each other during marathons?	
How do people support each other during marathons?	




Team Hoyt

by Angela Brown



Dick (left) and Rick (right) Hoyt competing in one of their first marathons


- 1 Dick and Rick Hoyt, known as “Team Hoyt,” were a well-known father-and-son pair. They competed in marathons and other athletic contests all around the world. Together, they participated in more than 1,100 races. Rick, who cannot fully control the movement of his arms or legs, was pushed or pulled by his father, Dick, in specially designed wheelchairs, bikes, or boats whenever they competed. They made a great team.
- 2 Rick Hoyt was born in 1962 with cerebral palsy, a disability that affects people’s ability to control some of their muscles. The doctors told his parents that Rick would never be able to walk or speak. Although Rick wasn’t able to verbally communicate his thoughts or feelings when he was very young, his parents saw how carefully he listened. They knew their son wanted to learn.
- 3 When Rick was 10 years old, engineering students created a computer that Rick could use to type out his thoughts and communicate with others. This technology made it possible for Rick to connect with family and friends in ways that were not possible before. He was also finally able to share his interests, feelings, and sense of humor.
- 4 When Rick was 15, he heard about a five-mile charity run to **benefit** an athlete who was paralyzed. He convinced his father that they should join the run. Team Hoyt came in second to last, but they were happy to have simply finished. 

benefit = raise money to help

Stop & Discuss

Why did Team Hoyt begin racing?

Underline two sentences that tell you.

- 5 That night, Rick typed a special message into his computer. It said, “Dad, when I’m running, it feels like I’m not disabled.” Rick wanted to participate in more races. Team Hoyt was off and running!
- 6 After years of training, one of Team Hoyt’s first big races was the Boston Marathon. After that, they joined more and more athletic events. Over the course of 35 years, they participated in hundreds of events, including six long-distance triathlons. The triathlon may be the most challenging of all sporting events. It includes a 2.5-mile (4-kilometer) swim, a 112-mile (180.3-kilometer) bike ride, and a 26.2-mile (42.2-kilometer) marathon.
- 7 Although Team Hoyt won many medals and honors, the goal was never to win but to finish. Rick says that even when things went wrong, “We still continued and finished the race. Dad and I are not quitters. ... To me, finishing is so important.”
- 8 Why is finishing so important to Rick? Rick feels that having the determination to get to the end of a race is a symbol for something greater. It’s about believing in yourself and believing in others. Rick knows he has achieved many of his dreams because of his parents’ love and support. 

Stop & Discuss

What does Rick Hoyt think is the most important thing about racing?

Use details from the text to support your ideas.



motivated = made someone want to do something

Stop & Discuss

What is the message Rick wants to share?
Why does Rick want to share this message?

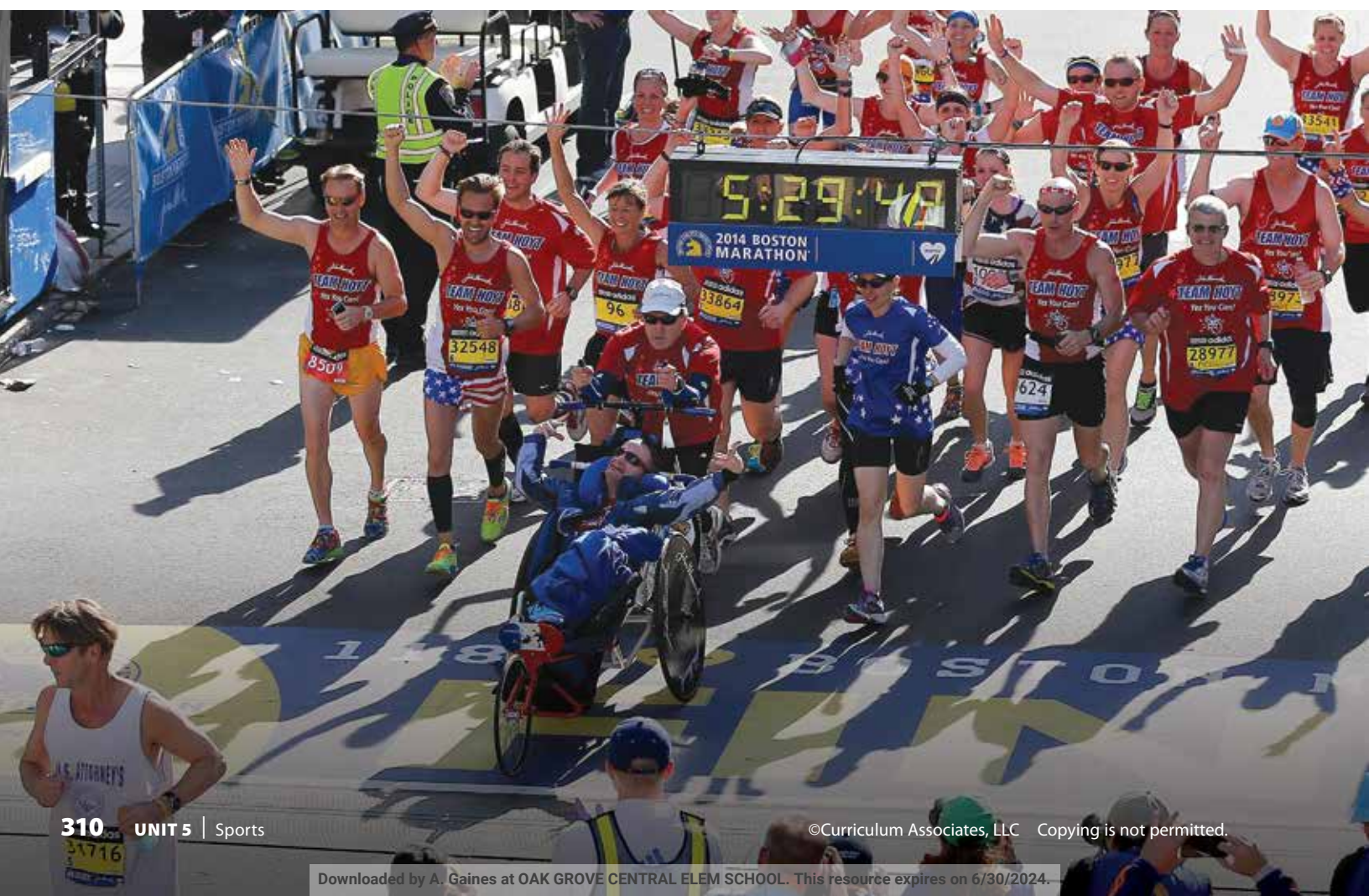
Discuss the message and what it means.

9 Dick Hoyt died in 2021 at the age of 80. Few who saw Team Hoyt will ever forget his devotion to Rick. “He’s the one who has **motivated** me,” Dick once said, “because if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t be out there competing.”

10 Rick has a message for everyone: “Yes, you can.” What Rick and Dick wanted most is to share this message with others and encourage people—with or without disabilities—to work for and achieve their goals. In Rick’s words, “You can do anything you want to do as long as you make up your mind—you can do it.”



The Hoyts inspired each other and many others.





Integrate Information

- Reading more than one text on a topic will help you better understand a topic so you can talk and write about it.
- Texts on the same topic may include some of the same information, but they will also include different facts or details.
- You can **integrate**, or put together, information you learn from two texts on the same topic to deepen your understanding of that topic.

Reread/Think

Reread "Team Hoyt." Look for information that answers the questions below.

Write information from the text in the chart.

Question	Information from "Team Hoyt"
Why did the Hoyts want to race in marathons?	
Why did the Hoyts support each other during marathons?	
How did the Hoyts support each other and others during marathons?	





Tegla Loroupe has loved running since she was a child.

You Can't Stop Tegla Loroupe!

by Alice Cary

- 1 When 21-year-old Tegla Loroupe (lah-ROO-pee) won the 1994 New York City Marathon, many people were surprised. Why? Loroupe was the first African woman to win in New York—and the youngest winner in the marathon's history. But the biggest surprise? This was her first marathon ever! Loroupe, though, has been surprising people with her talent for most of her life.
- 2 Growing up in Kenya, Loroupe loved to race. Her dream was to become a professional runner, which was an unusual idea for a Kenyan girl at that time. Her father called the sport “unladylike.” When she was 12, he even told her to stop running. But students were required to play sports at her school, so Loroupe ran anyway. She won many races at school, often against older runners.





"I don't run for myself. I run for others," says Loroupe.

- 3 By age 13, Loroupe had earned a spot on Kenya's national athletics team. However, she received very little support from her community. Many people thought a person needed long legs to be good at running, and Loroupe was just 4 feet, 11 inches (1.5 meters) tall at the time. But Loroupe had big dreams. Her mother told her to believe in herself, saying, "One day you will be the best."
- 4 Her mother was right. Between 1994 and 2002, Loroupe won several major marathons all over the world. She also ran in three Olympics. For a while, she was the fastest female long-distance runner in the world.
- 5 Loroupe hopes her success will inspire Kenyan girls to follow their dreams. "I don't run for myself," she once said. "I run for others." She also hopes that professional athletes from Africa who compete around the world will return—just like she has—to help encourage young people.





Champion of Peace

by Hazel Meador

- 1 During Tegla Loroupe's running career, she won marathons all over the world. In the 1998 Rotterdam Marathon in the Netherlands, she even set a world record. One year later, she broke her own record when she completed Berlin, Germany's marathon in two hours, 20 minutes, and 43 seconds. But Loroupe is not only well-known for her career as a long-distance runner. She is celebrated around the world as a peacemaker, or champion of peace.
- 2 In 2003, she created the Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation. This foundation works to spread peace in Africa through education and sports. Africa is made up of more than 50 countries and is home to many ethnic groups. Some groups do not get along. For example, when Loroupe was a child, there was fighting between people in Kenya and Uganda. But today, Loroupe and the foundation's staff work to bring together people from different countries to encourage peace and understanding.

Tegla Loroupe in 2016



access = right or pathway



Runners compete in the Peace Race.

Loroupe (front row, third from right) is honored at the European Peace Run in Rome, Italy.



- 3 The foundation's Peace Race is one of Loroupe's favorite events. Every year people from communities in conflict in Kenya and Uganda come together to race. Runners also share a meal and participate in traditional dances. The race events help people get to know and accept one another.
- 4 Loroupe also wanted to help kids—especially African girls—who don't always have the same **access** to education as African boys. So, in 2012, she started the Tegla Loroupe Peace Academy. Since then, hundreds of students have attended the school. Loroupe believes that education is necessary for progress. "The children should live in a loving environment where they learn to accept each other," she explains. Students take classes in peace education in addition to other subjects. The school is also a training center for young people who dream of becoming professional athletes. She hopes these students will one day be champions of peace themselves.
- 5 Tegla Loroupe shows the world how one person can make a difference. And the Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation is her way of showing how sports, education, and peace can change the world.



Respond to Text

Reread/Think

Reread “You Can’t Stop Tegla Loroupe!” and “Champion of Peace.” Then choose the best response to each question.

1. Mark an X in the chart to show if the detail is found in “You Can’t Stop Tegla Loroupe!,” “Champion of Peace,” or both texts.

Detail	You Can’t Stop Tegla Loroupe!	Champion of Peace	Both
Loroupe received little support from her community.			
Loroupe ran in many marathons.			
Loroupe was the youngest winner of the New York City Marathon.			
Loroupe started her foundation in 2003.			

2. Read this sentence from paragraph 5 of “You Can’t Stop Tegla Loroupe!”

Loroupe hopes her success will inspire Kenyan girls to follow their dreams.

Which sentence from “Champion of Peace” **best** supports this detail?

- A. “For example, when Loroupe was a child, there was fighting between people in Kenya and Uganda.” (paragraph 2)
- B. “The race events help people get to know and accept one another.” (paragraph 3)
- C. “Loroupe also wanted to help kids—especially African girls—who don’t always have the same access to education as African boys.” (paragraph 4)
- D. “Students take classes in peace education in addition to other subjects.” (paragraph 4)



Reread/Think

- 3.** Read this sentence from paragraph 1 of “Champion of Peace.”

In the 1998 Rotterdam Marathon in the Netherlands, she even set a world **record**.

What is the meaning of *record*?

- A.** a trip between two very distant places
- B.** a goal that has never been reached before
- C.** an injury requiring special medical attention
- D.** a race taking more time than most marathons

Write

Describe Tegla Loroupe's achievements, including her running successes and the actions she has taken to spread peace. Use information from both texts in your response.

[illegible]

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I described Tegla Loroupe's running achievements.
- ☐ I described what Tegla Loroupe has done to spread peace.
- ☐ I used information from both texts.
- ☐ I used complete sentences.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



Respond to the Focus Question

How can sports bring out the best in people?

Reread/Think

Reread one text from the lesson. Then answer the question below.

TEXT: _____

What did you learn from the text you reread about how sports can bring out the best in people?

Talk

Discuss the following questions about the people featured in this lesson's texts.

How did sports bring out the best in each person?

Which person or group do you think is most inspiring? Why?

Sports brings out the best in ____ when ____.

The person/group that is most inspiring is ____.

They are inspiring because ____.

Write

In this lesson, you read about people who participate in marathons and the people who support them. Who do you think is most inspiring? Why?