



TEACHER WORKSHEET

CYCLE 3 • READING AND READING COMPREHENSION

SPORTS STARS AND HEROES

OVERVIEW

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

- Learn about heroic figures.
- Understand the emotions those figures provoke in readers.

SPECIFIC SKILLS:

- **Reading:**
Understand a literary text and interpret it. Understand texts, documents, and images, and interpret them.
- **Writing:**
Produce a variety of written exercises.
- **Speaking:**
Understand verbal communication and develop speaking skills.
- **Knowledge in literature and the arts:**
Literary issues: Heroes, heroines, and characters.

INTERDISCIPLINARY SKILLS:

- **History:** Determine one's place in time.
- **Geography:** Determine one's place in space.

SCHEDULE FOR SESSIONS:

- Launch project.
- Gather initial student project feedback.
- Read text aloud as a class.
- Do activities in pairs:
 - Reading comprehension (non-fiction and literature).
 - Image analysis.
- Share with class and review.
- Extend activity.

DURATION:

- 2 sessions (2 × 45 minutes).

ORGANIZATION:

- Work in pairs, then share as a class.



OLYMPIC GAMES KEYWORDS:

HERO • ACHIEVEMENT • ANCIENT GREECE • MARATHON • SURPASSING ONESELF



CONCEPTS ADDRESSED

THE FIRST OLYMPIC GAMES

Starting in 776 B.C., the Greeks would organize public festivities in the city of Olympia in honor of Zeus. Athletes from all the Greek cities competed in sports events, which thousands of Greeks would watch. The Games, then known as the "Games of Olympia", were held every four years until the Roman Emperor Theodosius outlawed them in 394. There were also Games in the cities of Delphi and Nemea, and on the Isthmus of Corinth.

THE MARATHON

A marathon is a long-distance race, now 42.195 kilometers. It became an Olympic discipline at the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. Spyridon Louis, a Greek shepherd, won the then-40-kilometer race in 2 hours, 58 minutes, and 50 seconds.

The event dates back to ancient Greece. In 490 B.C., the Persians (a powerful empire that dominated the Greek cities established on

FUN FACT!

In 1984, at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles, California, the women's marathon was first included in the program. The American athlete Joan Benoit won gold.



the coasts of Asia Minor) landed at Marathon, in the Athens region, with plans to invade the Greek peninsula. The Athenians held off the invaders—one legend claims that an Athenian messenger who was to announce the victory traveled the 40 kilometers that separated Marathon from Athens so fast that it killed him.

MYTHS

Myths (from the Greek *muthos*, meaning “speech” or “word”) are imaginary tales that were used to explain the origin of the world. They portrayed extraordinary or supernatural characters (mere mortals or demigods) who, through their bravery, ingenuity or with the help of the gods, achieved incredible feats. Those mythological heroes (e.g. Ulysses, Achilles, Jason, Hercules, etc.) were immortalized in the minds of men, who worshipped them.

MODERN HEROES

Nowadays, the word “hero” in literature refers to the main character in a novel or story. Though the characters may initially start out as “ordinary”, they become heroes in their own right by surpassing themselves in the face of hardship.

Heroes can also be Olympic medalists, who make history by delivering performances through their perseverance and hard work. At the opening of the Olympic Games, the Olympic oath is taken by an athlete from the host country on behalf of all athletes: “*In the name of all the athletes, we promise to take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules and in the spirit of fair play. We all commit ourselves to sport without doping and cheating. We do this, for the glory of sport, for the honor of our teams.*” Their performance depends on physiological, psychological, and technical (equipment) factors.

FUN FACT!

The world record of 2 hours, 1 minute, and 39 seconds was set by the Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge at the 2018 Berlin marathon in Germany.



STUDENT WORKSHEET OVERVIEW

VOCABULARY:

Athlete, achievement, marathon, mythological story, Greek hero.

ACTIVITIES:

► ACTIVITY 1: A FOCUS ON ALAIN MIMOUN

Reading comprehension of a non-fiction text **9–10 yr** **10–11 yr** **11–12 yr**
 Materials: Text: L'Équipe.fr article

► ACTIVITY 2: MARATHON RUNNERS DURING THE RACE

Image analysis **9–10 yr** **10–11 yr** **11–12 yr**
 Materials: - Photo: Marathon runners during the first modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, in 1896
 - Photo: A marathon runner during the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016

► ACTIVITY 3: THE MARATHON MESSENGER

Reading comprehension of a literary text **9–10 yr** **10–11 yr** **11–12 yr**
 Materials: Text: Excerpt from *Le Coureur de marathon (The Marathon Runner)*, by Jean-Luc Déjean



STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

▶ ACTIVITY 1: A FOCUS ON ALAIN MIMOUN

Reading comprehension of a non-fiction text **9-10 yr** **10-11 yr** **11-12 yr**

- 1) Alain Mimoun lived in the 20th century.
- 2) Alain Mimoun was born in French Algeria in 1921.
- 3) Alain Mimoun was seriously injured in World War II and his leg was almost amputated.
- 4) Alain Mimoun won the marathon at the Olympic Games in Melbourne, Australia, in 1956.
- 5) It was very hot and he wasn't wearing a hat.
- 6) Alain Mimoun was a three-time Olympic silver medalist (for the 10,000-meter event at the 1948 Olympic Games in London, and the 5,000- and 10,000-meter events at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki).
- 7) Alain Mimoun showed perseverance in his efforts.
- 8) a) "His passing Thursday evening closed [a chapter](#) in the history of athletics."
b) "He recalled [the high point](#) of his career as a champion."

▶ ACTIVITY 2: MARATHON RUNNERS DURING THE RACE

Image analysis **9-10 yr** **10-11 yr** **11-12 yr**

	Document 1	Document 2
Describe where the race takes place	The race takes place in the countryside, on a path.	The race takes place on a paved road that has been marked out.
Describe the gear the runners use	The runners do not wear race numbers or any technical gear (in casual clothes, barefoot, without a hat or sunglasses).	The runner is wearing a bib and specific gear: special running shoes, close-fitting lycra clothing (breathable fabric), sunglasses... She is equipped with a hydration system (in her backpack), a stopwatch, etc.

▶ ACTIVITY 3: THE MARATHON MESSENGER

Reading comprehension of a literary text **9-10 yr** **10-11 yr** **11-12 yr**

Exercise 1

- 1) The messenger must run from Marathon to Athens.
- 2) He had to run because there were no horses.
- 3) Mylias looks for strong runners, with good "legs", "style", and "rhythm".
- 4) "He wasn't one of those fine athletes[...]. Thin, with a broad but flat chest. Long legs and strong calves [...]. Fiery red hair, a straight nose, rather handsome."
- 5) Though thin, the runner seemed to possess the qualities of a fine runner, i.e. good legs and a broad chest, which are necessary to keep a good rhythm.



Exercise 2

- Root that serves as the basis for the construction of the word “indefatigable”: the Latin word *defatigare* (“to tire out”).
- Prefix and meaning: “in” (which is used to construct antonyms).
- Suffix and meaning: “able” (which indicates possibility).
- Class: adjective.
- Synonym: tireless.



FIND OUT MORE

CNOSF EDUCATIONAL FILES

Cycle 3: “Vocabulary for sports and athletic achievement”

9–10 yr: “Stadium history from ancient times to the present day”

11–12 yr: “The first Olympic Games”

Cycle 3: “Swimming events at the Olympic Games (time)”

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Find out more about the legend of the city of Marathon:

<http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/ville/Marathon/131649>

Find out more about the Olympic Games in ancient Greece:

http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/Jeux_Olympiques_de_la_Gr%C3%A8ce_antique/185462

Learn more about the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games:

<https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/OlympicOrg/Factsheets-Reference-Documents/Games/Ceremonies/Factsheet-Opening-Ceremony-of-the-Games-of-the-Olympiad.pdf>

Learn more about the history of athletics from ancient times to the present day:

<http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/athl%C3%A9tisme/23722>

Learn more about Alain Mimoun:

http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/personnage/Alain_Mimoun/133263#xZLOtlkQWa2dBR7G.99

Article on Olympic stars and heroes of the Rio Olympic Games:

<https://www.olympic.org/news/the-stars-of-rio-2016>

Virtual exhibitions to see:

http://expositions.bnf.fr/homere/expo_us/salle1/index.htm

http://classes.bnf.fr/heros/expo_uk/salle1/index.htm

Éduscol support document:

http://cache.media.eduscol.education.fr/file/Culture_litteraire_/02/0/8-RA16_C3_FRA_5_heros_heroines_591020.pdf

FURTHER READING FOR STUDENTS

Le Petit Léonard no. 171, July/August 2012 issue, “Spécial JO” (Olympic games special edition).

Mythological heroes in Cycle 3:

<http://www.lesclefsdelecole.com/Clefs-des-champs/Listes-de-lecture/Lectures-conseillees-pour-preparer-le-programme-de-6eme>

BOOKS/FILMS FOR TEACHERS

Spiridon Superstar: Les Premiers Jeux Olympiques, by Philippe Jaenada

Marathon, by Pascal Silvestre, Éditions Jean-Claude Lattès

Marathon Man, directed by John Schlesinger (United States, 1976)

Chariots of Fire, directed by Hugh Hudson (United Kingdom, 1981)

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS

End of unit: “It’s your turn! Sports stars and heroes” (and answer key)





STUDENT WORKSHEET

CYCLE 3 • READING AND READING COMPREHENSION

SPORTS STARS AND HEROES

Aa

VOCABULARY

ATHLETE: A person who does a physical activity.

ACHIEVEMENT: An exceptional, remarkable action (synonym: a feat).

MARATHON: A long-distance race that is 42.195 km long and usually run on a road.

MYTHOLOGICAL STORY: An imaginary tale about a hero who achieves incredible feats.

GREEK HERO: A mortal or demigod who, through bravery and ingenuity, achieves feats (like fighting a monster).



ACTIVITIES

► ACTIVITY 1: A FOCUS ON ALAIN MIMOUN

MATERIALS:

- Article from L'Équipe.fr, published on 06/28/2013.

// The 1956 Olympic marathon winner passed away Thursday evening at the age of 92 at Bégin military hospital in Saint-Mandé, a suburb of Paris [...].

Alain Mimoun was a major star in the 1940s and 1950s, and his passing Thursday evening closed a chapter in the history of athletics.

Mimoun won the Olympic marathon on December 1, 1956, with only a white bandana on his head to protect him from the Melbourne heat (which reached 36 °C in the shade), while the title had been expected to go to Emil Zátopek, a long-standing rival and close friend. Mimoun, born in French Algeria on January 1, 1921, remains the greatest French runner of all time.

A three-time Olympic silver medalist on track, in 1948 in London (10,000 m) and in 1952 in Helsinki (5,000 m and 10,000 m), Mimoun achieved glory by the strength of his will, forged through a tragic tale that even the greatest Hollywood writers wouldn't have thought of.

After being denied a scholarship as a boy in Algeria, he went on to enlist in the French army. It was in Bourg-en-Bresse, after German forces had conquered France in 1940, that Mimoun first came across athletics. He fought against the Afrika Korps in Tunisia from 1942 to 1943, and almost had his left leg amputated due to an injury at the Battle of Monte Cassino in Italy in 1944. He then went on to have an unparalleled career. [...] Two years ago, when he welcomed us at his home in Champigny-sur-Marne, he recalled the high point of his career as a champion, in Melbourne, the day after his daughter, Olympe, was born: *"When the French flag was raised I cried without tears because I was so dehydrated. The next day, it was still waving.*

A tremendous tale, isn't it?" Indeed it is, Mr. Mimoun... //

L'Équipe.fr, N. H., 06/28/2013.



TIPS & TRICKS



Before answering any questions, **read the text at least twice** to understand it and picture what it says. Ask yourself what the story's **subject** might be (the title may help you), who the main **characters** are, and **where** and **when** the story takes place...

Some answers can be found in the text; others may not be so obvious. Gradually, you'll **learn to read between the lines** and understand what the text implies!



After you have read the text, answer the following questions:

- 1) In what time period did Alain Mimoun live?
- 2) When and where was he born?
- 3) What tragic event could have stopped him from becoming a track and field star?
.....
- 4) What achievement made him famous?
- 5) What circumstances could have kept him from winning?
- 6) Before that achievement, how many times had Alain Mimoun been in second place on an Olympic podium?
.....
- 7) What key value did Alain Mimoun demonstrate throughout his career?
.....
- 8) Consider the context to find the meaning of each underlined word:
 - a) “*His passing Thursday evening closed a chapter in the history of athletics*” means:
 - “A period in the history of athletics ended.”
 - “A detail in the history of athletics was lost.”
 - b) “*He recalled the high point of his career as a champion*” means:
 - “He recalled the most glorious moment of his career.”
 - “He recalled the most miserable moment of his career.”

▶ ACTIVITY 2: MARATHON RUNNERS DURING THE RACE

MATERIALS:

- Photo of Marathon runners during the first modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, in 1896.
- Photo of a marathon runner during the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2016.



Document 1:
Marathon event, Athens Olympic Games (Greece, 1896).
Center: Kharilaos Vasilakos, silver medalist in the event.



Document 2:
Christelle Daunay running the marathon, Rio Olympic Games (Brazil, 2016).



Look at documents 1 and 2 and follow the instructions to fill in the table below.

	Document 1	Document 2
Describe where the race takes place		
Describe the gear the runners use		

► FIND OUT MORE:

- Spyridon Louis (Greece) won the gold medal at the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens with a time of 2 hours, 58 minutes, and 50 seconds.
- Eliud Kipchoge (Kenya) won the gold medal at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio with a time of 2 hours, 8 minutes, and 44 seconds. The world record of 2 hours, 1 minute, and 39 seconds was set by the Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge at the Berlin Marathon in 2018.

What influence do you think technological gear or equipment might have on a runner's performance?

.....

.....

.....



▶ ACTIVITY 3: THE MARATHON MESSENGER

MATERIALS:

- Text: Excerpt from *Le Coureur de marathon*, by Jean-Luc Déjean, Livre de Poche Jeunesse.

Exercise 1

In the 5th century B.C. the Greek city of Athens was attacked by the Persians, who had come from Asia Minor in hundreds of armed ships. In the city of Marathon, located some 40 kilometers from Athens, the Athenian General Miltiade led a troop of soldiers to victory—without cavalry or archers—over the Persians. He urgently needed to inform his superiors in Athens, and so he asked the trainer Mylias to find a messenger.

//

The Athenians wait in anguish for the battle's outcome. We have to let them know we won. Send a message to the city. I've been told there are no more horses. Is that so?

– None that can stand on all fours.

– Mylias, there must surely be some strong runners in our army? The Athenians must know about our victory, their victory, tonight, to ease hearts and give thanks to the gods. Anyone?

– No one. Not a single runner I have trained. However... I have found a man who may be able, despite the fatigue of battle.

– Able to run 240 **stadiums***? A man untrained in long-distance running?

– I would place my bets on him. I saw his legs, his style, his rhythm. He is a hunter—one of those spindly, indefatigable hunters. How can I say? I have a good feeling about him. He may stumble along the way, but he will try. Sensing the qualities of a runner is my job, Miltiade! Besides, we have no choice.

– If he's the only one... Send for him!

– I have brought him, General. He is with me. Come here, my friend!"

Miltiade looked at the small man who approached and greeted him awkwardly. He wasn't one of those fine athletes who inspire sculptors. Thin, with a broad but flat chest. Yet he had long legs and strong calves. Fiery red hair, a straight nose, rather handsome. [...]

"Would you be able to run all the way to Athens without stopping?

– I can try, General.

– It isn't about trying, but succeeding. Our city must be informed of the victory over the Persians. The people must know that we shall pursue them to thwart their landing at Phalerum, that Darios has been defeated and that his troops were crushed in Marathon. Will you be my messenger, for the honor of your country?

– I shall try... I mean, I shall go. //

***Stadium (or stadion)**: Term used in ancient Greece to designate the length of a race track. The length could vary from one Greek city to another (180–196 meters).

After you have read the text, answer the following questions:

- 1) Which cities must the messenger travel?
- 2) Why must he run rather than ride a horse?
.....
- 3) What qualities does Mylias look for in a runner?
.....
- 4) Reread lines 14 to 16 and note the expressions that describe the runner.
.....
- 5) Reading the description, do you think that Mylias made the right decision?
.....



Exercise 2

Look at the word “indefatigable” (line 10) and give:

- The root that serves as the basis for the word’s construction:
- The prefix and its meaning:
- The suffix and its meaning:

Which grammatical class does the word belong to?

Give a synonym for the word:

.....

► FIND OUT MORE:

- “*It isn’t about trying, but succeeding*”, affirms General Miltiade to the messenger.

What do you think of that order?

.....

.....



REVIEW

- The values of a hero are **bravery, humility, and the ability to surpass oneself**.
- Reading can be fun when you **experience heroic adventures** and **share in the emotions**.
- **Perseverance and drive** are necessary for achievement.



NOW, TAKE ACTION!

- **Set challenges for yourself at your own level.** In order to make progress, you should **always strive to go beyond what you can do**. If you aren’t comfortable with reading, for example, don’t worry, you can make progress! Once a week, you can read a story to your little brother or sister. That way, you’ll make progress without even realizing it, while at the same time helping your sibling. If you enjoy it, you could do it twice a week. Then, if you really enjoy it, choose a story just for yourself!
- **Never give up. Never leave defeated.** If you think it would be fun to create your own video game but don’t know how and don’t know where to start... That’s no problem: **you can learn!** On the Internet, at the library, in a club—you can learn whatever you want to, on your own or with someone else. **If you’re curious and determined**, you can go all the way.
- **Take into account the people around you.** Motivation must come from yourself, but friends, family, and adults can help you get to know yourself better. By treating them kindly, they’ll treat you the same way, and **together you can learn how give the best of yourselves**.



IT'S YOUR TURN!

CYCLE 3 • READING AND READING COMPREHENSION

SPORTS STARS AND HEROES

PUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST

1 SELECT THE QUALITIES THAT YOU THINK ARE HEROIC:

- Cunning Patience Cowardice Courage Perseverance

2 WHERE WAS ALAIN MIMOUN BORN?

- Algeria Romania Albania

3 HOW FAR IS ATHENS FROM MARATHON?

- About 20 km About 30 km About 40 km

4 WHICH NAME IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY INSPIRED THE NAME OF ALAIN MIMOUN'S FIRST DAUGHTER, BORN IN 1956?

- Olympus Athena Artemis

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE FURTHER

1 THE WORD "MARATHON" HAS A FIGURATIVE MEANING. FROM THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS, CAN YOU GUESS WHAT IT IS?

- A math logic game.
 A long task or event that requires a great deal of endurance (e.g. a dance marathon, a marathon session).
 A dessert made with almonds.

2 MATCH THE HERO WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT:

- | | |
|------------|------------------------------|
| Jason • | • Cleaned the Augean stables |
| Hercules • | • Acquired the Golden Fleece |
| Theseus • | • Defeated the Minotaur |

3 MATCH THE OLYMPIC STAR WITH THE COUNTRY:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Usain Bolt • | • Jamaica |
| Christophe Lemaitre • | • United States |
| Allyson Felix • | • France |



4 WHERE DID THE OLYMPIC GAMES ORIGINATE?

- Delphi Olympia Athens Thebes

5 WHY IS A MARATHON 42.195 KILOMETERS?

.....
.....

KICK OFF THE DISCUSSION... GIVE YOUR OPINION

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A HERO TODAY?



.....
.....
.....

NAME A FEW MODERN HEROES.



.....
.....
.....

IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A HERO TO FAIL?



.....
.....
.....

WHAT DO YOU ADMIRE ABOUT STAR ATHLETES?



.....
.....
.....



IT'S YOUR TURN! ANSWER KEY

CYCLE 3 • READING AND READING COMPREHENSION

SPORTS STARS AND HEROES

PUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE TO THE TEST

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- Jason → Acquired the Golden Fleece
Hercules → Defeated the Minotaur
Theseus → Cleaned the Augean stables

3 MATCH THE OLYMPIC STAR WITH THE COUNTRY:

- Usain Bolt → Jamaica
Christophe Lemaitre → France
Allyson Felix → United States



4 WHERE DID THE OLYMPIC GAMES ORIGINATE?

- Delphi Olympia Athens Thebes

5 WHY IS A MARATHON 42.195 KILOMETERS?

Originally, a marathon was about 40 kilometers (about the distance from Marathon to Athens). At the 1908 Olympic Games in London, the marathon departed from the East Terrace at Windsor Castle so that the King's grandchildren could watch the race, making the distance from start to finish 42.195 kilometers. Since then, 42.195 kilometers has become the official distance of a marathon.