

## Comprehension Passages

### Stanza 1 and 2

The athletes had come from all over the country  
To run for the gold, for the silver and bronze  
Many weeks and months of training  
All coming down to these games.  
The spectators gathered around the old field  
To cheer on all the young women and men  
The final event of the day was approaching  
Excitement grew high to begin.

Read the lines given above and answer the following questions:

#### Question 1.

Explain with reference to context.

##### Answer:

These lines are from the poem 'Nine Gold Medals' by David Roth. The poem sends the message that sports are not only about medals but also about learning the values of cooperation, sharing, competing and complementing. In this poem 'Nine Gold Medals', the poet, David Roth has presented the idea of empathy and how human values are as important as the spirit of competition. The poem presents the situation of a race, where the contestants leave aside their desire to win the medal to help a smaller and weaker contestant. They all go hand-in-hand to the finishing line. Athletes from all over the world train hard to participate in this event. Winning a medal in the Olympics is the ultimate goal of every athlete of the world. However, the setting or the scene of this poem is that of 'Special Olympics'. In these Olympics, differently-abled persons, who have some problem/s in a particular part of the body, participate in various sports events. The contestants put in a lot of preparation and practice. Everyone hopes to win a medal. The spectators are as excited as the contestants. They cheer and encourage the contestants. These two stanzas help to create the setting of the poem.

#### Question 2.

What do the words 'gold', 'silver' and 'bronze' stand for in the poem?

##### Answer:

The 'gold', 'silver' and 'bronze' stand for the medals which are given to the first position holder, second position holder and the third position.

#### Question 3.

Were the contestants well prepared for the event? Pick the line that illustrates this.

##### Answer:

Yes, they were well prepared. The line that illustrates this is: 'Many weeks and months of training All coming down to these games.'

#### Question 4.

What event is being referred to?

##### Answer:

The event referred to is the Special Olympics, in which the contestants are differently-abled persons, who have some problem/s in a particular part of the body.

### Stanza 3, 4 and 5

The blocks were all lined up for those who would use them  
The hundred-yard dash and the race to be run  
These were nine resolved athletes in back of the starting line  
Poised for the sound of the gun.  
The signal was given, the pistol exploded  
And so did the runners all charging ahead  
But the smallest among them, he stumbled and staggered  
And fell to the asphalt instead.  
He gave out a cry in frustration and anguish  
His dreams and his efforts all dashed in the dirt  
But as sure as I'm standing here telling this story  
The same goes for what next occurred.

**Read the lines given above and answer the following questions:**

#### **Question 1.**

Explain with reference to context.

#### **Answer:**

These lines are from the poem 'Nine Gold Medals' by David Roth. The poem sends the message that sports are not only about medals but also about learning the values of cooperation, sharing, competing and complementing. In this poem 'Nine Gold Medals', the poet, David Roth has presented the idea of empathy and how human values are as important as the spirit of competition. The poem presents the situation of a race, where the contestants leave aside their desire to win the medal to help a smaller and weaker contestant. They all go hand-in-hand to the finishing line. Of all the events in Olympics, the hundred-meter race is the most prestigious. The athlete, who wins it, is remembered as the fastest man in the world. So, for the Special Olympics mentioned in the poem this is the final event, hence the most prestigious. The hundred-yard race is about to begin. The athletes take position at the starting blocks. They begin to run immediately after the starting pistol is fired. However, one of them is unable to run and falls on the track. The action has begun and already one episode has taken place. The eight contestants are strong and run forward, while the ninth, who is the smallest, falls down. He cries out with the pain of disappointment. He has trained hard but does not get the opportunity to show his talent. All his dreams of winning the medal are broken and destroyed.

#### **Question 2.**

The word 'exploded' is used for the firing of the pistol. What does the phrase 'so did the runners' in line 2 of stanza 4 mean?

#### **Answer:**

As soon as the contestants heard the sound of the pistol being fired they all sprung into action and ran forward to race.

#### **Question 3.**

Who do you think are the competitors? How do you know which is the event mentioned?

#### **Answer:**

The differently – abled people are the competitors. The banner said that it was Special Olympics. The event mentioned is the 100 yard dash.

**Question 4.**

How were the dreams of one of the contestants 'dashed in the dirt'?

**Answer:**

The ninth, who is the smallest, falls down. He cries out with the pain of disappointment. He has trained hard but does not get the opportunity to show his talent. All his dreams of winning the medal are broken and destroyed.

**Question 5.**

How many competitors were there for the events?

**Answer:**

There are nine competitors for the event.

**Question 6.**

What happened when the gun was fired?

**Answer:**

When gun was fired all the nine athletes took off and charged ahead.

**Question 7.**

Did all hope to win? How do you know? Why did the eight runners pull up on their heels?

**Answer:**

They all took off and charged ahead when gun was fired. So I think that they all hoped to win. The eight runners pulled upon their heels, because the smallest of the competitors slipped, swayed and fell down on the asphalt track.

**Stanza 6, 7 and 8**

The eight other runners pulled up on their heels  
The ones who had trained for so long to compete  
One by one they all turned around and went back to help him  
And brought the young boy to his feet.

Then all the nine runners joined hands and continued  
The hundred-yard dash now reduced to a walk  
And a banner above that said (Special Olympics)  
Could not have been more on the mark.  
That's how the race ended, with nine gold medals  
They came to the finish line holding hands still  
And a standing ovation and nine beaming faces  
Said more than these words ever will.

**Read the lines given above and answer the following questions:**

**Question 1.**

Explain with reference to context.

**Answer:**

These lines are from the poem 'Nine Gold Medals by David Roth. The poem sends the message

that sports are not only about medals but also about learning the values of cooperation, sharing, competing and complementing. In this poem 'Nine Gold Medals', the poet, David Roth has presented the idea of empathy and how human values are as important as the spirit of competition. The poem presents the situation of a race, where the contestants leave aside their desire to win the medal to help a smaller and weaker contestant. They all go hand-in-hand to the finishing line. When the remaining eight contestants saw him fall, they, instead of continuing the race, came to the help their fellow contestant. All the athletes had dreamt of winning the medal. However, they readily forgot their dream and came forward to help the boy to his feet. Then all the nine contestants walked hand-in-hand to the finish line. 'The audience was so moved by the exemplary behavior of the contestants that it stood up and clapped.

There were now nine winners, instead of one, and each was given a gold medal. All the contestants displayed empathy turning the Special Olympics into a really 'special' one.

Empathy is the capacity to understand another person's experience from his point of view. Simply stated, empathy is the ability to 'put oneself in another's shoes'. That is exactly what the eight contestants had done. One look at the fallen contestant had forced them to think 'what would I have felt if I had fallen?' and they knew exactly what they had to do.

By awarding gold medals to all nine contestants, the authorities honoured their display of empathy, helpful nature and human values.

### Question 2.

Who gave standing ovation? Why?

#### Answer:

The spectators gave the standing ovation, as they were moved by the feeling of brotherhood and oneness displayed by the handicapped athletes.

### Question 3.

Explain the following phrases in a sentence or two.

(a) Pulled up on their heels

(b) Brought the young boy to his feet.

#### Answer:

(a)

The phrase 'pulled up on their heels' means that the other eight contestants stopped running.

(b)

The phrase 'brought the young boy to his feet' means that the other eight contestants helped the boy who had fallen down, to stand up on his feet.

### Question 4.

Explain in your own words the meaning of the line 'the hundred-yard dash now reduced to a walk'.

#### Answer:

The phrase 'the hundred-yard dash now reduced to a walk' describes the moment when the other eight contestants help their friend, who had fallen down, to stand up on his feet. Since the boy was unable to run, the others decide not to run either. All nine contestants walk hand-in-hand to the finish line. In other words, the contestants walk the distance of the hundred yards (which was to be run) at the speed of the contestant who had fallen down.

### Question 5.

How would the nine contestants have felt when they all reached the finish line together? Which words indicate this? Do you think they were happy because they had won the gold medal? Why?

#### Answer:

The contestants must have felt happy and united when they reached the finish line still 'holding hands'. The words 'nine beaming faces' tell us how happy they were. The contestants get a 'standing ovation' which would have made them feel proud of what they had done.

The contestants were happy not simply because they had won the gold medal. They were proud of being a united group who stood by each other, understood each other's problems and helped each other even at the cost of winning a gold medal. For this group of contestants it was more important to empathise with and help each other than to win an individual prize.

### Question 6.

How did the spectators react to this gesture of the eight contestants?

#### Answer:

The spectators gave a 'standing ovation' to the contestants, which means they stood up and clapped and cheered for them. Each of the contestants was rewarded with a gold medal.

## Project

### Question 1.

What message is conveyed in the poem?

#### Answer:

In order to enhance the quality of our life we need to/develop empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand and accept others who are different from us. It helps us to appreciate what the other person is going through and to offer emotional support at the time of need.

Empathy works wonders when applied to relationships – our family, our friends or colleagues. It encourages positive behaviour towards people who are in need. Not only does empathy help us to resolve conflicts but it also enables us to find solutions to problems.

In the process we end up making decisions to benefit us without hurting others. The poem also shows that empathetic behaviour is applauded by all.

### Question 2.

In how many ways was this Olympic special? Explain?

#### Answer:

This Olympic was special for people. In 100 yard dash event the nine participants did not care to win the race. They stopped running to raise the smallest of them who had stumbled. These athletes walked together and completed the race. All the nine were winners of the gold. The spectators also applauded them all. They did not have their favourite.

### Question 3.

Who won the race and how? Explain in about 50 words.

#### Answer:

All the nine contestants won the race as they all reached the finish line together. One of them had fallen down at the start of the race. Instead of running to get their positions, they turned back and went to his help. Then they completed the race together.

They were given the gold medal because they showed the true spirit of sportsmanship by helping the smallest among them at the risk of losing the race.

### Question 4.

Do you think the title of the poem is justified? How?

#### Answer:

Yes, 'Nine Gold Medals' is an appropriate title as all the nine contestants deserved the medal. The smallest one, for not giving up, and the others for being helpful and caring.

### Question 5.

What is the central idea of the poem?

#### Answer:

The poet wants to convey that sharing and caring are as important as winning and achieving.

### Question 6.

Which is the turning point in the poem?

#### Answer:

When the pistol was fired, one contestant fell down while the rest ran forward. Normally the race would finish with any three out of them winning the first three positions.

But this did not happen in this race, something else happened. All of them stopped and turned back to help their fellow-contestant. And this was the turning point of the poem.



**Question 7.**

What lesson is learnt from the poem?

**Answer:**

The poem teaches us the lesson of selflessness. There are moments in our life when we keep our own interests aside and help our friends who may be in a difficult situation. The value of cooperation is greater than the spirit of competition. It teaches us the joy of helping another without thinking of one's own interest.

**Extra Questions****Question 1.**

What event is referred to in the poem?

**Answer:**

The 100 yards race which in the Special Olympics is being referred to in the poem.

**Question 2.**

What kind of athletes were they?

**Answer:**

They were differently-abled athletes, who have some problem/s in a particular part of the body.

**Question 3.**

Who won the race as described in the end.

**Answer:**

All the nine contestants walked hand-in-hand to the finish line. There were nine winners, instead of one, and each was given a gold medal. All the contestants displayed empathy turning the Special Olympics into a really 'special' one. The eight contestants had all helped the fallen ninth contestant and not cared about their medals. They had stood by their team mate and shown consideration. The authorities honoured their display of empathy, helpful nature and human values by considering them all winners and awarding medals to all of them.

**Question 4.**

How did the last event turn out to be special?

**Answer:**

When the eight contestants saw their team mate fall, they, instead of continuing the race, came to the help of their fellow contestant. All the athletes had dreamt of winning the medal. However, they readily forgot their dream and came forward to help the boy to his feet. Then all the nine contestants walked hand-in-hand to the finish line. The audience was so moved by the exemplary behaviour of the contestants that it stood up and clapped.

There were now nine winners, instead of one, and each was given a gold medal. All the contestants displayed empathy turning the Special Olympics into a really 'special' one.

**Question 5.**

What human value is displayed by the action of the eight contestants?

**Answer:**

The eight contestant displayed empathy for their fallen fellow contestant. Empathy is the capacity to understand another person's experience from his point of view. Simply stated, empathy is the ability to 'put oneself in another's shoes'. That is exactly what the eight contestants had done. They had all dreamt of winning the medal. But one look at the fallen contestant had forced them to think 'what would I have felt if I had fallen?' and they knew exactly what they had to do. They readily forgot their dream and came forward to help the boy to his feet. Then all the nine contestants walked hand-in-hand to the finish line.

**Question 6.**

What is the theme of the poem? How is it conveyed?

**Answer:**

The theme of the poem is that sports is not only about winning medals. It is also about learning the values of cooperation, sharing, competing and complementing. In this poem 'Nine Gold Medals', the poet, David Roth has presented the idea of empathy and how human values are as important as the spirit of competition. The poem presents the situation of a race, where the contestants leave aside their desire to win the medal to help a smaller and weaker contestant. They all go hand-in-hand to the finishing line.