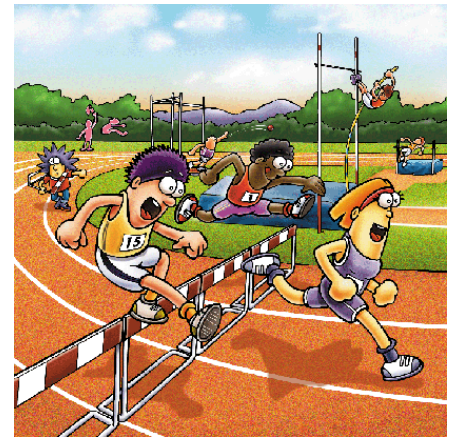


TRACK AND FIELD - ATHLETICS

Many people have memories of competing in athletics, or "track and field", in school. Some competed in running events, such as sprints and longer-distance races, jumping events, such as high jump and long jump, or throwing events, such as discus and shot put.

While most people give up athletics after leaving school, a few go on to become professional athletes who compete in top competitions around the world.

Many people enjoy watching these highly-skilled, super-fit athletes when they compete in major competitions such as the IAAF World Championships in Athletics and the Olympic Games.



TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETICS, commonly known as **athletics** or **track and field**, is a collection of **sports events** that involve **running**, **throwing** and **jumping**. The name "athletics" is derived from the Greek word "athlos" meaning "contest".

History

It is based on man's natural skills (running, walking, jumping, throwing...).

Athletics competitions date back to ancient times. By the 8th century B.C., athletics events were part of the original Olympics (Greek Olympic Games - 776 B.C.). The main event in the Olympics was the **Pentathlon**, which involved a **short foot race (180 m.)**, **long jump**, **discus throw**, **javelin throw** and **wrestling**. During the Olympics peace was declared, a sacred truce in all Greece.

Some of the events from that time, such as javelin and discus throwing, are still part of modern athletics. From the time of the first modern Olympic Games until now, **Athletics has been one of the main sports in the Olympics**. Nowadays, the World Championships in Athletics is seen as one of the top events in the world of sports, along with the Summer Olympics and the FIFA World Cup Football Tournament.

Athletics was included in the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 (Athens). Women were first allowed to participate in track and field events in the 1928 Olympics (Amsterdam).

Modern athletic events are usually organized around a **400 metre running track** on which most of the running events take place. Field events (jumping and throwing) often take place inside the track.

How Athletics works

In **individual sports**, each sportsman competes against all the others.



They can compete at the **same time** (**TRACK EVENTS**) or **in turns** (**FIELD EVENTS**).

When they compete at the same time, they can do it in the **same space** (1500 m.) or **in their own lanes** (100 m).

The **winners** are determined by the **best time**, the **highest or longest distance** or the **best score**.

Athletes can practise this sport **outdoor** (spring and summer) or **indoor** (winter). Outdoor competitions take place on a 400 metre track with 8 or 9 lanes; jumping and throwing events take place on the large open area inside the track. Indoor events take place on a 200 metre track with 4-6 lanes.

In both indoor and outdoor competitions, **men and women compete in their own events**. While they usually run the same distances in track events, hurdles are lower for women. In field events, the weights of the shot, discus, javelin and hammer are less for women than for men.

Some rules



Starting blocks must be used for all races up to and including 400 m. and may not be used for any other race. At most international competitions the commands of the starter are "**On your marks**" and "**Set**". When all athletes are "set", the gun must be fired.



False start. It is called a false start when a runner starts too soon, before the gun is fired. Any athlete making two false starts is out of the competition.

In the races, racers run in **lanes**, and each athlete must keep inside his lane from start to finish.



Track events

Track events include a wide range of races for runners.

Running and race-walking events

Sprints (the shortest races) are events up to and including the 400 metres:

- 60 metres (indoors only)
- 100 metres
- 200 metres
- 400 metres



Hurdles events are:

- 60 metres hurdles (indoors only)
- 100 metres hurdles (women)
- 110 metres hurdles (men)
- 400 metres hurdles



Relay races are events in which four athletes participate as a team. In these races, runners carry a *baton* and pass it to the next runner as they finish their part of the race:

- 4 x 100 metres relay
- 4 x 400 metres relay

Middle Distance Events are events longer than sprints and up to 3000 metres:

- 800 metres
- 1500 metres
- One mile
- 3000 metres
- 3000 metres steeplechase (runners have to jump over barriers and water jumps)



Long Distance Events are events over 3000 metres:

- 5000 metres
- 10000 metres

Road Races are events conducted on open roads, sometimes finishing on a track:

- 10 km
- 20 km
- Half marathon(21.0975 km)
- Marathon (**42.195 km**). It is the longest race for runners. Most of this 42.195 km race is run on public roads, with only the last part being run on an athletics track.

Race-walking may be contested on either the track or on open roads:

- 10 km
- 20 km
- 50 km (men)



Field events

Field events include jumping events and throwing events. The **jumping events** are the *high jump*, *long jump*, *triple jump* and *pole-vault*. The **throwing events** are the *shot put*, in which a heavy metal ball (called the shot) is thrown as far as possible; the *hammer throw*, in which a heavy metal ball attached to a wire and handle is thrown; the *javelin*, in which a spear-like object made of metal or fiberglass is thrown; and the *discus*, in which a heavy disc is thrown.



Throwing events

- Discus Throw
- Hammer Throw
- Javelin Throw
- Shot Put

Jumping events

- High Jump
- Pole Vault
- Long Jump
- Triple Jump

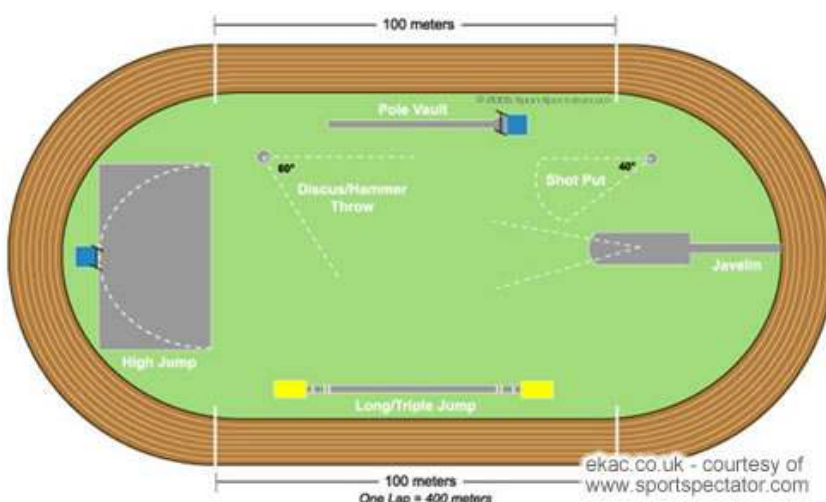


Multiple Event Competitions

These competitions include events from both the track (running) and field (jumping and throwing).

Heptathlon (for women): it includes SEVEN events.

Decathlon (for men): it includes TEN events.



Athletics TRACK

Athletics Vocabulary

Word	Example sentence	Meaning
athlete	Paavo Nurmi and Carl Lewis are two of the greatest athletes of all time.	a person who is skilled in track and field events; a sports person
athletics	Many people compete in athletics competitions while they are in school.	the sport of competing in track and field events
baton	The worst mistake a relay runner can make is to drop the baton.	a short stick or tube passed from runner to runner in a relay race
bell lap	The bell rang and I knew I only had 400 metres of the bell lap to go.	the final lap in a distance race, signalled by the ringing of a bell
decathlon	A decathlon competition is normally held over two days.	a men's athletic competition combining 10 track and field events
discus	The discus throw is one of the oldest events in athletics.	a heavy, thick-centered disk; the sport of throwing the discus
false start	She moved forward before the starting gun went off, and a false start was declared.	failed start of a race, usually caused by a runner moving forward before the starting gun is fired
field	Some athletes prefer track events while others prefer the field events.	an area of open land; events in athletics that involve throwing and jumping
foul	If a long jumper's foot goes over the takeoff board, the jump will be called a foul.	an unfair or illegal act, e.g. foul throw, foul jump
hammer	Most athletes who compete in the hammer throw are big and very strong.	a 16-pound metal ball attached to a wire for throwing in an athletic contest; the sport of throwing the hammer
heptathlon	Women who compete in the heptathlon have to spend a lot of time training for all the different events.	a women's athletic competition combining 7 track and field events
high jump	Most athletes who compete in the high jump are very tall and slim.	sport in which competitors jump over a bar that is raised until only one competitor can jump over it
hurdles	The hurdles used in women's races are 10 cm lower than those used in the men's events.	upright frames, normally placed in a series, that athletes jump over; a race over such frames

javelin	Officials must be sure that javelin throwers have plenty of room in which to compete.	a lightweight, spear-like object; the sport of throwing the javelin
lane	Most running tracks have 8 lanes, allowing up to 8 runners to compete in a race.	each of a number of parallel strips marked on a running track for athletes to run along
lap	A 400-metre race is one lap of an outdoor track, or two laps of an indoor track.	one circuit of, or one time around, a running track or a racetrack
long jump	Carl Lewis was a champion sprinter, but he was also a four-time Olympic champion in the long jump.	an athletic event in which competitors jump as far as possible along the ground in one leap
marathon	Not many people become marathon runners because it is such a difficult race.	a long-distance running race of 26 miles and 385 yards (42.195 km)
middle-distance	Many of the world's best middle-distance runners come from Northern Africa.	a race distance of between 800 and 5,000 metres
pole-vault	The pole-vault is one of the most technically difficult events in athletics, and also one of the most exciting to watch.	an event in which competitors vault over a high bar with the aid of an extremely long, flexible pole used to give extra spring
relay	Relay races are some of the few events in athletics that are team sports, not individual sports.	race between teams of runners in which each team member in turn covers part of the total distance
record	The main goals for top athletes are Olympic medals, world titles, and world records.	the best performance in a sporting event that has been officially measured and noted
shot put	Many of the world's best competitors in shot put come from Northern and Eastern Europe.	an athletic contest in which a very heavy metal ball is thrown as far as possible
sprint	One of the sprint races that always creates a lot of interest is the 100 metres.	a short, fast race run over a distance of 400 metres or less
starting blocks	Before the race, the sprinters squatted down and positioned their feet in the starting blocks.	small rigid blocks for bracing a runner's feet at the start of a race
steeplechase	When runners in the steeplechase go over the water jump, they're trying not to fall over.	a running race in which competitors must clear hurdles and water jumps

track	An athletics track is usually oval in shape, 400 metres long, and it usually has 8 running lanes.	a prepared circuit for athletes to run on; the sport of running on such a track
track and field	"Track and field" is the term used in North America, while "athletics" is used in most other places.	athletics events that take place on a running track and on a field often enclosed by the track
triple jump	Most people who are good at the triple jump are tall and lean, and most are also good at sprinting.	an event in which competitors leap as far as possible by performing a hop, a step and a jump

ACTIVITIES

1. *What are the three main types of athletics events?*

2. *Write down the two types of "length" jumps and the two types of "height" jumps.*

3. *Try to find out on the Internet or in an encyclopaedia which seven events make up the heptathlon.*

4. *One of the events in the Olympic Games in ancient Greece was:*
 - a. *Discus*
 - b. *Steeplechase*
 - c. *Pole Vault*

5. *Most outdoor athletics tracks have:*
 - a. *6 lanes*
 - b. *8 lanes*
 - c. *12 lanes*

6. *Most indoor athletics tracks have a length of:*
 - a. *200 metres*
 - b. *300 metres*
 - c. *400 metres*

7. *The longest running race in athletics is the:*
 - a. *Steeplechase*
 - b. *10.000 metres*
 - c. *Marathon*

- 8. Some of the few team events in athletics are the:**
 - a. Relay races
 - b. Field events
 - c. Triple jumps

- 9. Field events in athletics include jumping and:**
 - a. Running events
 - b. Throwing events
 - c. Sprinting events

- 10. In relay races, the runners carry a:**
 - a. Discus
 - b. Baton
 - c. Bell

- 11. The Heptathlon is an event for:**
 - a. Women
 - b. Men
 - c. Men and women

- 12. The last lap of a middle-distance race is called the:**
 - a. Fast lap
 - b. False lap
 - c. Bell lap

- 13. If a runner starts too soon, a:**
 - a. Failed start is called
 - b. Fast start is called
 - c. False start is called

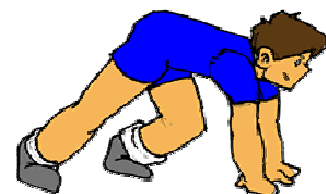
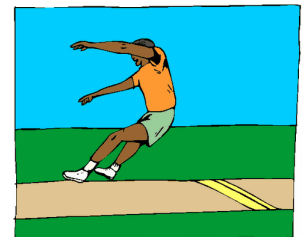
- 14. In sprint races, each runner runs in his or her own:**
 - a. Lane
 - b. Line
 - c. Track

- 15. The best-ever performance in an event is called a:**
 - a. Record
 - b. Title
 - c. Champion

- 16. Runners have to go over a water jump in the:**
 - a. Marathon
 - b. Steeplechase
 - c. Pole Vault

- 17. Runners run fastest in the:**
 - a. Middle-distance races
 - b. Long-distance races
 - c. Sprint races

18. Write the proper word or expression below each picture.



TRIPLE JUMP / POLE VAULT / SHOT PUT / LONG JUMP / HIGH JUMP /
DISCUS THROW / HAMMER THROW / JAVELIN THROW / ON YOUR MARKS /
(GET) SET / 100 M. HURDLES / 110 M. HURDLES / STARTING BLOCKS

www.englishclub.com, www.wikipedia.org