



Sports and Leisure

Short-answer questions: orienteering in Finland | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. Have you ever used a map to find your way somewhere?
2. Would you enjoy a sport that involves running and problem-solving?
3. What skills would be useful in a forest or park?
4. Is it better to compete quickly or make careful decisions?

Exercise 1 at a glance

Read one factual text. Answers are in the text. Copy exact words and check the question carefully before choosing your answer.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. What makes orienteering different from ordinary running races?

Orienteering in Finland

Orienteering is a sport in which competitors use a map and compass to find control points in the correct order. It is popular in several Nordic countries, including Finland, where forests, lakes and public access to natural areas make outdoor activities part of everyday life. Unlike a normal running race, the fastest route is not always the most obvious one.

Modern orienteering began in Scandinavia in the late nineteenth century as a navigation exercise. It later became a competitive sport for civilians as well as soldiers. In Finland, clubs organise events in forests, parks and school grounds. Beginners often start on short courses with clear paths nearby, while experienced competitors may cross rough ground and make decisions quickly.

Before starting, each competitor receives a detailed map. The map shows paths, hills, rocks, marshes, fences and other features. Control points are marked with circles, and competitors must visit them in the correct sequence. At each control, they use an electronic card to record that they have reached the right place.

Good orienteers do not simply run as fast as possible. They plan routes, compare distances and decide whether a longer path may be safer than a direct line through thick forest. A small mistake can cost several minutes, especially if a competitor runs confidently in the wrong direction. For this reason, concentration is as important as fitness.

Schools sometimes use orienteering to help students build confidence outdoors. A simple course can teach map symbols, teamwork and safe movement around a local area. Some students enjoy it because the sport rewards careful thinking, not only speed. Others like the independence of choosing their own route between controls.

Technology has changed training, but maps remain central. GPS watches can help runners analyse their route afterwards, yet most competitions still limit how technology is used during the race. Organisers want competitors to make decisions themselves. This mix of physical activity, navigation and problem-solving is why orienteering continues to attract people of different ages.

3. Strategy focus

Check the question focus

Some answers are close together in the text. Underline the key noun in the question, then copy only the words that answer that exact point.

4. Exam-style short-answer questions

Answer the questions using words from the text.

1. What do competitors use to find control points? [1]

2. Where do beginners often start orienteering? [1]

3. What must competitors visit in the correct sequence? [1]

4. What can cost a competitor several minutes? [1]

5. What do GPS watches help runners analyse afterwards? [1]

6. According to the text, what are three things that make orienteering different from ordinary running races? [3]

5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Would you prefer an orienteering course in a forest, park or city? Why?

2. Summary: Summarise orienteering in about 50 words.

3. Creative task: Design three safety tips for students trying orienteering for the first time.

4. Vocabulary: Circle words and phrases connected to sport, navigation and outdoor activities.

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4. Exam-style short-answer questions

1. a map and compass
2. short courses
3. control points
4. a small mistake / running in the wrong direction
5. their route
6. Any three from: competitors use a map and compass; competitors find control points in the correct order; the fastest route is not always the most obvious one; competitors plan routes; competitors compare distances; competitors solve navigation problems.

Notes for checking

1. Answers should be short and clearly based on the text.
2. Accept bracketed or optional wording if the meaning is clear.
3. For the final question, learners need three separate details.