



# Dragon Boat Racing

Reading Worksheet — Level F | [tahricteaches.com](http://tahricteaches.com)

Dragon boat racing is one of the oldest **competitive** water sports in the world, with roots stretching back more than two thousand years to ancient China. According to **legend**, the tradition began when local villagers raced their boats out onto a river in a desperate attempt to rescue the beloved poet Qu Yuan, who had drowned himself in protest against political corruption. Today, the sport is **commemorated** annually during the Duanwu Festival, which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.

A standard dragon boat is a long, narrow vessel **adorned** with an ornately carved dragon's head at the bow and a tail at the stern. Most boats accommodate twenty paddlers seated in pairs, along with a drummer who sets the pace and a steersperson who maintains the course. The drummer's rhythmic beat is far more than ceremonial; it functions as the pulse of the entire crew, ensuring that every paddle strikes the water in perfect unison.

Success in dragon boat racing demands a remarkable degree of **synchronization** among teammates. Even a single paddler stroking out of time can disrupt the boat's momentum and cost the team precious seconds. For this reason, crews often train for months before a major competition, refining their technique through repetitive drills and rigorous physical conditioning.

Beyond its athletic dimension, dragon boat racing carries profound cultural significance. The sport has been **embraced** by communities across Asia, Europe, and the Americas, evolving into a global phenomenon that attracts thousands of participants each year. International festivals frequently incorporate traditional rituals, including the symbolic painting of the dragon's eyes to awaken the spirit of the boat.

For many participants, dragon boat racing represents far more than mere recreation. It cultivates teamwork, discipline, and a tangible connection to heritage. Whether pursued competitively or casually, the sport continues to inspire devotion among enthusiasts who value its unique blend of physical challenge and cultural tradition.

## A. Vocabulary

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|-------------------------|---|
| 1. competitive ____     | a. boat or ship used for traveling on water   |
| 2. legend ____          | b. extremely thorough, demanding, and physically or mentally challenging              |
| 3. commemorated ____    | c. traditions, values, and cultural practices inherited from previous generations     |
| 4. adorned ____         | d. honored or remembered through ceremony or celebration                              |
| 5. synchronization ____ | e. coordination of actions so they happen at exactly the same time                    |
| 6. embraced ____        | f. state of doing something together at the same time in agreement                    |
| 7. rigorous ____        | g. involving rivalry where participants try to win or be better than others           |
| 8. heritage ____        | h. traditional story passed down through generations, often blending history and myth |
| 9. vessel ____          | i. decorated or made more attractive with ornaments                                   |
| 10. unison ____         | j. accepted or adopted willingly and enthusiastically                                 |

## B. True or False

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Dragon boat racing originated approximately two thousand years ago in China. | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. According to legend, villagers raced to rescue a famous poet named Qu Yuan. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. The Duanwu Festival takes place on the tenth day of the tenth lunar month.   | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. A standard dragon boat typically accommodates twenty paddlers seated in     |

- \_\_\_\_\_ pairs.
- \_\_\_ 5. The drummer's role is purely ceremonial and has no practical purpose.
- \_\_\_ 6. One paddler stroking out of time can disrupt the boat's momentum.
- \_\_\_ 7. Most crews train for only a few days before a major competition.
- \_\_\_ 8. Dragon boat racing is practiced in Asia, Europe, and the Americas.
- \_\_\_ 9. The painting of the dragon's eyes is meant to awaken the spirit of the boat.
- \_\_\_ 10. Qu Yuan drowned himself in protest against environmental destruction.

### C. Fill in the Blanks

**Word Bank:** competitive, legend, commemorated, adorned, synchronization, rigorous, heritage, unison

1. The dragon boat was beautifully \_\_\_\_\_ with a carved dragon's head at the bow.
2. Perfect \_\_\_\_\_ among paddlers is essential for the boat to move efficiently.
3. The festival is \_\_\_\_\_ each year on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month.
4. Athletes must follow a \_\_\_\_\_ training schedule to prepare for major competitions.
5. According to \_\_\_\_\_, villagers tried to save the poet Qu Yuan from drowning.



### D. Comprehension Questions

1. Why did the original villagers race their boats out onto the river, according to legend?
2. What practical role does the drummer play during a dragon boat race?
3. Why is teamwork especially critical in dragon boat racing compared to individual sports?

### E. Discussion Questions

1. Do you think traditional sports like dragon boat racing should receive more government funding to preserve cultural heritage, or should communities support them independently?
2. How might participating in a team sport that requires synchronization, such as dragon boat racing, change a person's approach to teamwork in their professional life?



# Answer Key

## Dragon Boat Racing

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**A. Vocabulary:** 1-g, 2-h, 3-d, 4-i, 5-e, 6-j, 7-b, 8-c, 9-a, 10-f

**B. True/False:** 1-T, 2-T, 3-F, 4-T, 5-F, 6-T, 7-F, 8-T, 9-T, 10-F

**C. Fill Blanks:** 1-adorned, 2-synchronization, 3-commemorated, 4-rigorous, 5-legend

**D. Comprehension:**

1. They were attempting to rescue the poet Qu Yuan, who had drowned himself in protest against political corruption.
2. The drummer sets the pace and acts as the pulse of the crew, ensuring all paddlers strike the water in perfect unison.
3. Because even a single paddler stroking out of time can disrupt the boat's momentum and cost the team valuable seconds.