



This passage is about a bicycle competition called Race Across America.

Not a Race for Everyone

- 1 To most people, riding 100 miles on a bicycle sounds like an enormous task. To the ardent cyclists who plan to compete in the Race Across America, 100 miles is just a warm-up exercise. A 100-mile ride, or what cyclists call a century, is the equivalent to a jog around the block for a marathon runner.

Race Across America — RAAM

- 2 The Race Across America—RAAM—began in 1982 when four determined cyclists decided to race each other across the United States from Santa Monica, California, to New York, New York. The race has taken place every year since. Always moving west to east, RAAM starts on the coast of the Pacific Ocean in the west and ends on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in the east. Over time, RAAM has evolved from being relatively unknown to inspiring people around the globe.
- 3 When the world's toughest competitions have been analyzed, RAAM is often ranked number one. Even the most famous bicycle race in the world, the Tour de France, is not as *grueling* as RAAM. The Tour de France is shorter and raced in stages, with specific distances to be cycled each day. That race takes 23 days, but riders get to rest each evening and have two entire days off as well. At the end of the Tour de France, competitors add up their times from each stage of the race to determine the winner.
- 4 RAAM, on the other hand, is a continuous race. The clock does not stop until bikers cross the finish line. This means bikers can and do ride through the night and only take short rest breaks. Also, at 3,000 miles, RAAM is longer than the Tour de France, yet it is finished in half the time. RAAM must be completed in less than 12 days.



Training

- 5 In order to accomplish a feat such as finishing RAAM, racers must train extensively. Cyclists must be ready to ride very long distances across varying elevations without stopping. Competitors devote hours each week to biking, steadily increasing their distance and speed. About two months before the event, some bikers go on all-day rides, riding for up to 24 continuous hours. About a month before the race, training slows down a little so that a rider's muscles can be at full strength. A single competitor might log over 5,500 miles of training in the months leading up to the event.

Crews

- 6 All RAAM participants have a crew working with them. Most crews consist of 8–12 people in a car that follows the rider across the country. A good crew is critical for success. The crews provide necessities like food and water to their riders. Special gels that are packed with vitamins and protein are the most common “food” for racers because they are easy to eat and digest. Sometimes giving food to racers means stopping ahead of the rider, then handing off a bottle of water and a banana as the rider whizzes by at 15 miles per hour.
- 7 Communication is also a key crew function. Cyclists need to be informed of what road conditions lay ahead of them on the RAAM route. Crew members talk to their rider using cellular phones, walkie-talkies, and simply yelling out the window. Perhaps most important is the encouragement crews give to their cyclist. When competing in such a strenuous race, riders are sometimes tempted to give up on their goal of finishing.
- 8 The crew vehicle serves several purposes. When traveling such distances, a rider’s bike can be expected to need tire replacement and adjustments, so the crew vehicle is equipped for bike repairs. The crew vehicle is also a hotel on wheels. Racers do not eat or sleep often. When they do, they take just a quick meal or nap in the back seat of a crew car where food and bedding have been prepared in advance.

The Race

- 9 The starting line always contains a high level of excitement. Supporters give heartfelt cheers for the ordinary people about to set off on an extraordinary mission. Hope flows like a river with the anticipation of turning dreams into reality.
- 10 By the end of that first day, however, riders begin to realize the difficult journey ahead of them. Riders maneuver through 14 states on two wheels regardless of the conditions. An individual racer can travel about 250 to 350 miles a day, finishing the entire race in 9 to 12 days on very little sleep.

Many Challenges

- 11 The demanding route of the race makes RAAM very difficult. One of the first major challenges RAAM riders face is biking through the Mojave Desert, which stretches through California and Arizona. Temperatures there reach 115° Fahrenheit, enough to make any activity difficult. Steady pedaling for hours can feel like torture. However, not long after riders make it through the desert heat, the Rocky Mountains stand in their way. While their legs are screaming for relief, the dedicated cyclists keep pushing and pushing up thousands of feet at steep inclines. As if that was not enough of a challenge, mountain temperatures drop

**Selected 2010 Race Across America
Route Elevations**

Location	Distance From Start (miles)	Elevation (feet)
Lake Henshaw, CA	53.5	2757
Parker, AZ	282.9	417
South Fork, CO	975.3	8176
Montezuma, KS	1389.1	2781
Greenville, IL	2089.5	523
Keyser, WV	2759.6	2320
Annapolis, MD (near finish line)	3001.5	83



sharply at nightfall to almost freezing. Then, later in the race, when riders are even more exhausted, the Appalachian Mountains must be conquered.

- 12 Weather conditions also threaten racers. RAAM riders do not have the luxury to stop each time a storm is in their path. They must keep pedaling. For example, in 2010 the *biting* winds and driving rain were so bad in Kansas, RAAM officials had to reroute bikers to avoid flooded streets.
- 13 In addition, the RAAM path is not blocked off for the race, so traffic can pose problems. Bikers encounter streets clogged with cars. Traffic sometimes causes the crew to lose sight of their rider. Plus, riders may have only a narrow strip of road available to them when navigating past cars.
- 14 The ultimate challenge, though, is exhaustion. Riders push their bodies to the limit of what is humanly possible. In order for racers to finish by the twelfth day, they must ride for over 20 hours a day. The physical demands and lack of sleep make each mile arduous. Deprived of rest, riders can lose motivation to continue. Crews are invaluable at this point. They can give pep talks, keep the bikers alert, or advise them to stop for rest or food.

Rewards

- 15 Without question, participation in RAAM means facing incredible challenges. Each year the number who finish the race is fewer than the number who start. However, with great struggles come amazing rewards. Cyclists who cross the finish line on the Atlantic coast feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment. They have endured a level of physical and mental strain that few others have attempted. They truly know that if they set their minds to a task, they can achieve it.

Determining Difficulty

Many people believe RAAM is a harder race than the Tour de France. RAAM is longer, it is completed in less time, and it lacks rest breaks. Although the Tour de France may be less difficult, it requires more strategy. Race strategy in RAAM is simple: go as fast as you can for as long as you can until you're done. Race strategy in the Tour de France is not so straightforward.

In the Tour de France, all riders race in teams of nine. Eight of those team members are focused on helping the ninth member, or team leader, win. After each day of the Tour de France, an individual winner is declared. The rider who has won the most days wins the entire race. However, the success of an individual rider depends on the cooperation of the other eight teammates. Those teammates may also be seeking individual skill awards at the same time they are helping their leader. This is where race strategy becomes complex.

The main function of the other eight team members is to ride ahead of their team leader, blocking the wind that tires and slows their leader down. This strategy is called "drafting." Teammates will also ride in ways that block rival riders from passing their group. A third strategy is for a teammate to burst ahead and threaten the lead of a competing group. In doing so, the rider helps exhaust members in the competing group, allowing the rider's own group to sneak ahead.

There are at least six awards individual riders can win besides "winner for the day." Awards are given for "individual time trial winner," "team time trial winner," and "most aggressive rider." Then there are awards for race achievements like "King of the Mountain," "skill in sprinting," and "fastest rider under age twenty-five." Fans even unofficially track the slowest cyclist! Because each individual rider is helping the team leader, trying for an individual award, and keeping in mind how individual choices affect the whole team, planning and strategy for a Tour de France biker can be extremely complex!



1

Which word from “Not a Race for Everyone” means the same as *grueling* in paragraph 3?

- A Continuous
- B Demanding
- C Rewarding
- D Incredible

2

What is the author’s *main* purpose for comparing RAAM to the Tour de France in “Not a Race for Everyone”?

- A To emphasize the greater challenges of RAAM
- B To explain why the Tour de France is more famous
- C To describe the different rules of the two races
- D To show that the two races take place in different countries

3

When competing in RAAM, which geographic feature do the riders encounter first?

- A South Fork
- B Mojave Desert
- C Rocky Mountains
- D Appalachian Mountains

4

Which has the same meaning as *biting* as used in paragraph 12?

- A Eating
- B Ripping
- C Stinging
- D Gripping

5

What organizational pattern is found in paragraph 12?

- A Spatial order
- B Sequential order
- C Cause and effect
- D Compare and contrast

6

Why does the author include the phrases “rider whizzes by” in paragraph 6 and “clogged with cars” in paragraph 13?

- A To illustrate the competitive conflict and excitement of the race
- B To create imagery and provide sensory details
- C To show the variety of setbacks riders experience on the road
- D To contribute to the suspenseful tone of the passage



7

Which conclusion does the table specifically support?

- A** Only Americans can compete in RAAM.
- B** The riders have to pedal up steep inclines.
- C** The riders have to deal with extreme weather conditions.
- D** RAAM is a very different race from the Tour de France.

8

Based on information in “Not a Race for Everyone,” for which reason would a racer *most likely* stop during RAAM?

- A** A bad storm
- B** Heavy traffic
- C** A bike repair
- D** Extreme temperatures

9

Which statement *best* summarizes “Not a Race for Everyone”?

- A** The passage explains the training undertaken by RAAM participants.
- B** The passage explains the differences between other races and RAAM.
- C** The passage explains the importance of crew members to RAAM participants.
- D** The passage explains the many challenges riders face during RAAM.



10

According to the information provided by the authors in “Not a Race for Everyone” and “Determining Difficulty,” which sentence *best* explains the difference between RAAM and the Tour de France?

- A** Participation in the Tour de France requires planning, whereas participation in RAAM requires little planning.
- B** Success in the Tour de France requires a team, whereas success in RAAM requires only the effort of an individual.
- C** Participation in RAAM is difficult, whereas participation in the Tour de France is less demanding.
- D** Success in RAAM is more about endurance, whereas success in the Tour de France is more about strategy.