

Crash Coogan

by Jerry Spinelli

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I hardly ate breakfast. I didn't pay attention in class. I kept thinking of the race-off today, and the Relays Friday.

The four-by-one-hundred-meter relay means four runners each run a hundred meters. Each runner passes the baton to the next runner. The baton looks like a foot-long pipe, but it's light, it's made of aluminum.

Since I'm the fastest, I'll probably run the anchor leg. The anchor gets the baton last. The anchor crosses the finish line. The anchor is your chance to win. The anchor gets the glory.

All day long I pictured Friday's race: Huber leads off, he hands the baton to Noles halfway through the first turn, Noles tears down the backstretch, hands to Caruso. I crouch. I look back past my shoulder. They're all coming, eight sprinters sprinting. I pick out Caruso. He's leaning into the final turn, he's fifteen meters from me . . . ten meters . . . I take off, I drag my left hand behind me, palm open, fingers spread (Hit it! Hit it! Now!). I feel the baton smack into my left hand, I curl my fingers around it, I switch it to my right hand and take off down the chalk-striped brick-colored lane. I'm dead last, ten meters behind everybody. It's hopeless. By the time I hit the straightaway

I'm passing the next-to-last runner, then the next, and the next. Forty thousand people leap to their feet. Eighty thousand eyes slide from the leader to the kid who's coming out of nowhere. "Who is he?" they ask, and the answer comes, "It's Coogan! Crash Coogan of Springfield!" I pass another, and now there are only three ahead of me, but there's not enough time. "He can't do it!" they scream, and now there are two ahead of me and the red ribbon across the finish line seems close enough to be a blindfold and they're hanging from the railing and stomping on the scoreboard and there's only one ahead of me now and the human hurricane is chasing me around the track, blowing at my back, and I'm on the leader's shoulder and for an instant the world freezes because we're dead even—seeing us sideways we look like one—and I remember the coach saying in a close race the one who leans will win, so now with one last gasp I throw my arms back and my chest forward and the red ribbon breaks like a butterfly across my shirt. I slow down, I stop. I stand on the brick-colored track. I heave the baton into the air high as the pennants wave over the stadium, and the hurricane finally catches me and I close my eyes and let it wash over me: "COOOOOOOOOOOOOOOGAN!"

1. What is the **main** purpose of the second and third paragraphs?
 - A to make the reader feel the excitement of a race
 - B to explain to the reader how relay races work
 - C to show the reader how Crash feels about relay races
 - D to prove to the reader that Crash is a good racer

2. What seems to be the **most important** thing to Crash?
 - A being the anchor and winning
 - B following the coach's advice
 - C making the crowd feel excited
 - D not letting his teammates down

3. What is the hurricane that Crash talks about at the end of the selection?
 - A the sound that the other runners make
 - B the weather the day of the race
 - C the feeling of excitement inside his chest
 - D the noise made by the crowd

4. What does the reader learn about Crash in this selection?
 - A His mind is on the race.
 - B He has never won a race.
 - C He is not sure of himself.
 - D He has a lot of team spirit.

5. What is the ***most likely*** reason that the author has Crash Coogan tell the story?
- A so that the reader will like Crash Coogan
 - B so that the reader will think that the story is true
 - C so that the reader will understand racing better
 - D so that the reader will know what Crash Coogan is feeling
6. What can the reader learn from Crash's experience?
- A that it is difficult to win a relay race
 - B that some races are not really over until the last moment
 - C that Crash Coogan wanted the race to last longer
 - D that crowds get upset about a close race

End of Set

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EOG Grade 4 Reading Sample Items

Selection Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
Crash Coogan	1	B	Analyzing	2.04
Crash Coogan	2	A	Analyzing	2.05
Crash Coogan	3	D	Knowledge	2.05
Crash Coogan	4	A	Knowledge	2.05
Crash Coogan	5	D	Analyzing	3.01
Crash Coogan	6	B	Analyzing	2.04