

Build Your Word Bank: 21-Day Challenge (Day 2)

The Last Lap

Part 1: Reading Passage

Diego had been swimming in different competitions for three years. However, the regional finals were longer than any race he had trained for. Diego lost his rhythm completely somewhere in the third lap. His strokes became uneven, his breathing ragged and out of sync. One by one, his competitors swam ahead of him. Diego's arms and legs slowly felt more **fatigued**. His lungs were **gasping** for air with every turn of his head, and his shoulders were aching.

He hit the wall at the end of the third lap and pushed off for the final length. He wanted to slow down, however, something in his mind kept telling him to **persevere**. He remembered his coach telling him before that the last lap would be the toughest, but as long as he **steadily** swam without panic and giving up, he would reach there in the end. His coach has belief in him that Diego has the speed to win this competition.

Diego thought about every early morning session, **grimly** following his **rigid** schedule instead of spending more time lying in bed or playing with his friends. He thought about the **spectators** in the stands where his family and his coach were watching him.

Diego's legs **surged**. His strokes became stronger. He stopped thinking about the other swimmers and focused only on the line at the bottom of the pool, pulling himself forward one stroke at a time. And finally, he touched the wall.

Part 2: Vocabulary in Context

Choose the correct answer based on how the word is used in the passage.

1. "Diego's arms and legs slowly felt more **fatigued**." Diego was feeling _____.
 - (1) a sudden burst of energy before the finish
 - (2) a feeling of nervousness before a big race
 - (3) very tired from a very long activity
 - (4) a sharp pain in the muscles

2. "His lungs were **gasping** for air..." Gasping means _____.
 - (1) suddenly taking breaths
 - (2) breathing slowly and deeply
 - (3) holding breath underwater
 - (4) breathing steadily despite the effort

3. "He wanted to slow down, however, something in his mind kept telling him to **persevere**." Diego's mind was telling him to _____.
 - (1) to ask for help when things become difficult
 - (2) to slow down and conserve energy
 - (3) to continue doing something despite difficulty or setbacks
 - (4) to focus on winning above everything else

4. "...but as long as he **steadily** swam without panic and giving up..." Steadily means _____.
 - (1) in a sudden and surprising way
 - (2) in a loud and forceful manner
 - (3) in a slow and cautious way
 - (4) in a same pace and timing

5. "...**grimly** following his **rigid** schedule instead of spending more time lying in bed or playing with his friends." How did Diego follow his schedule?
 - (1) Happily and with great relief
 - (2) Slowly and without any energy
 - (3) With determined seriousness despite difficulty
 - (4) Carelessly and without much effort

6. "...**grimly** following his **rigid** schedule instead of spending more time lying in bed or playing with his friends." How was Diego's schedule?
- (1) Soft and easily moved
 - (2) Warm and welcoming
 - (3) Stiff, fixed, cannot be changed or moved
 - (4) Cold and uncomfortable
7. "He thought about the **spectators** in the stands..." Spectators are ____.
- (1) judges scoring the competition
 - (2) coaches giving instructions
 - (3) people watching an event
 - (4) swimmers waiting for their race
8. "Diego's legs **surged**." What did Diego's legs do?
- (1) Slowed down
 - (2) Moved forward with a sudden powerful burst of energy
 - (3) Cramped up from tiredness
 - (4) Stopped moving altogether



Part 3: Word Twins

Match each word on the left to its closest synonym on the right. Each synonym is used once only. Use a dictionary or the internet to help you and even learn new words!

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|----------------|
| 1 Persevere | • | • | A Viewer |
| 2 Gasping | • | • | B Endure |
| 3 Fatigue | • | • | C Unyielding |
| 4 Steadily | • | • | D Panting |
| 5 Rigid | • | • | E Consistently |
| 6 Spectator | • | • | F Exhaustion |
| 7 Surge | • | • | G Resolutely |
| 8 Grimly | • | • | H Propel |
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Part 4: Sentence Upgrade

Rewrite each sentence using one of the 8 vocabulary words to make it more vivid and precise.
The word to replace is underlined.

1. She kept going through every obstacle until she finally reached her goal.

2. He was breathing in short bursts after sprinting the entire length of the field.

3. The crowd of watchers fell silent as the final competitor crossed the finish line.

4. The river rushed forward with tremendous force after the heavy overnight rain.

5. She worked consistently and without stopping through the night to finish her project.

Part 5: Word Application

Choose the most suitable word from the box to complete each sentence. Each word may be used once only.

Persevere · Gasping · Fatigue · Steadily · Rigid · Spectator · Surge · Grimly

1. The rescue swimmer reached the child just in time _____ for breath after the long distance.
2. She was not a participant in the debate but a _____, watching carefully from the back of the room.
3. The long hours of revision had left him with a heavy sense of _____ that no amount of coffee could fix.
4. He held the plank of wood _____ in place while his father hammered in the nails.
5. No matter how many times she failed the test, she was determined to _____ until she passed.
6. The temperature had been dropping _____ all afternoon and by evening the ground was frozen.
7. He accepted the bad news _____, pressing his lips together and nodding slowly.
8. A sudden _____ of energy carried her through the final stretch of the race.

Part 6: Creative Writing

Use at least 4 of the 8 words from this worksheet in a paragraph of 6–8 sentences.

Prompt:

You are competing in a race or sporting event and things are not going well. Describe how you feel in the middle of the competition, what goes through your mind, and how you push yourself to reach the end.

 *Feel free to email it to us at **theopenvillageproject@gmail.com** if you'd like us to have a read and give you feedback on your paragraph!*



Answer Key

Part 2

Question	Answer
1	3
2	1
3	3
4	4
5	3
6	3
7	3
8	2

Part 3

Word	Synonym
1: Persevere	B: Endure
2: Gasping	D: Panting
3: Fatigue	F: Exhaustion
4: Steadily	E: Consistently
5: Rigid	C: Unyielding
6: Spectator	A: Viewer
7: Surge	H: Propel
8: Grimly	G: Resolutely

Part 5

Question	Answer
1	Gasping
2	Spectator
3	Fatigue
4	Rigid
5	Persevere
6	Steadily
7	Grimly
8	Surge

Part 4

	Suggested Answer
1	She persevered through every obstacle until she finally reached her goal.
2	He was gasping after sprinting the entire length of the field.
3	The crowd of spectators fell silent as the final competitor crossed the finish line.
4	The river surged forward with tremendous force after the heavy overnight rain.
5	She worked steadily through the night to finish her project.