Name: _____ Date: _____

The Last Lap

Circle group

The whistle blew. Eight runners shot off the start line. Jonah ran with his teeth shut tight. He was the best runner on the Hillside team. He had never lost the mile.

In the middle of the third lap, a new boy named Eli moved up next to him. Eli had been on the team for just a week. He ran with an easy stride. It looked like a walk in the park for him.

Jonah dug in and pulled ahead. The crowd cheered his name. But on the last lap, he heard steps get close again. His legs burned. He gasped for air. At the last curve, Eli passed him on the outside. Eli crossed the finish line first.

Jonah slowed to a walk. He looked at the ground. His eyes stung. He did not want to be a sore loser. But he did not feel like a smile.

Then he felt a hand on his back. "That was the hardest race I have ever run," Eli said. He was still out of breath. "I only caught up since I was chasing you the whole way. I never ran this fast."

Jonah looked up. He had been so mad about the loss. He had not thought of what his running did for someone else. A small smile crept on his face.

"Next time, I will have to run even faster," he said. The two boys shook hands.

Questions

1. How long had Eli been on the team?

_____

_____

2. What happened at the last curve?

_____

_____

3. How did Jonah feel right after he lost? What shows it?

_____

_____

4. Eli said, "I was chasing you the whole way." What did he mean?

_____

_____

5. What does the story say about winning and losing?

_____

_____

Words to know

stride: the length and rhythm of a person's steps when running
sore loser: someone who gets angry or rude after losing

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Last Lap

Triangle group

The whistle blew, and the eight runners shot off the starting line. Jonah ran with his teeth clenched, because he was the best runner on the Hillside team and he had never lost the mile.

Halfway through the third lap, a new boy named Eli moved up beside him. Eli had joined the team only a week ago, and he ran with an easy stride, as if the race were a walk in the park.

Jonah dug in and pulled ahead while the crowd cheered his name. But on the last lap, he heard footsteps getting closer again. His legs burned and his breath came in gasps. At the final curve, Eli passed him on the outside and crossed the finish line first.

Jonah slowed to a walk and stared at the ground. His eyes stung. He did not want to be a sore loser, but he did not feel like smiling either.

Then he felt a hand on his shoulder. "That was the hardest race I have ever run," Eli said, still panting. "I only caught up because I was chasing you the whole way, and I never ran this fast before."

Jonah looked up. He had been so angry about losing that he had not thought about what his running had done for someone else. A small smile crept across his face.

"Next time, I will have to run even faster," he said, and the two boys shook hands.

Questions

1. How long had Eli been on the team?

_____

_____

2. What happened at the last curve?

_____

_____

3. How did Jonah feel right after he lost, and what detail in the story shows it?

_____

_____

4. What did Eli mean when he said, "I was chasing you the whole way"?

_____

_____

5. What does the story suggest about winning and losing?

_____

_____

Words to know

stride: the length and rhythm of a person's steps when running
clenched: pressed tightly together
pant: to breathe hard and fast after hard work
sore loser: someone who gets angry or rude after losing

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Last Lap

Square group

The whistle shrieked, and the eight runners exploded off the starting line. Jonah ran with his teeth clenched, because he was the fastest runner on the Hillside team and had never once lost the mile.

Halfway through the third lap, a newcomer named Eli drew up alongside him. Eli had joined the team merely a week earlier, yet he ran with an effortless stride, as though the race were nothing more than a leisurely walk in the park.

Jonah dug in and surged ahead while the crowd chanted his name. On the final lap, however, he detected footsteps gradually closing the distance once again. His legs were burning, and he was gasping for breath. At the final curve, Eli swept past him on the outside and crossed the finish line first.

Jonah slowed to a walk and stared at the ground as his eyes stung. He had no desire to be a sore loser, but he certainly did not feel like smiling, either.

Suddenly, he felt a hand on his shoulder. "That was the most difficult race I have ever run," Eli admitted, still panting. "The only reason I caught up is that I was chasing you the entire way, and I have never run this fast before."

Jonah lifted his eyes. He had been so consumed by his disappointment that he had never considered what his running might have accomplished for someone else. Gradually, a small smile crept across his face.

"Next time, I suppose I will have to run even faster," he replied, and the two boys shook hands.

Questions

1. How long had Eli been a member of the team before the race?

_____

_____

2. What occurred at the final curve of the race?

_____

_____

3. How did Jonah feel immediately after losing, and which details reveal it?

_____

_____

4. What did Eli mean when he said he was "chasing you the entire way"?

_____

_____

5. What message does the story convey about winning and losing?

_____

_____

Words to know

stride: the length and rhythm of a person's steps when running
clenched: pressed tightly together
pant: to breathe hard and fast after hard work
sore loser: someone who gets angry or rude after losing

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Last Lap

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Last Lap

Easier · 238 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 0.7

1. Just a week.
2. Eli passed Jonah on the outside and crossed the finish line first.
3. Sad and upset. He slowed to a walk, looked at the ground, and his eyes stung.
4. Trying to keep up with Jonah made him run faster than ever. Jonah helped him run his best race.
5. A tough rival can make you better. A loss feels less bad when you see how you helped someone else.

Triangle: The Last Lap

This passage · 241 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.8

1. About a week.
2. Eli passed Jonah on the outside and crossed the finish line first.
3. Upset and disappointed. He slowed to a walk, stared at the ground, and his eyes stung.
4. Jonah's pace pushed him to run faster than he ever had. Jonah helped him run his best race.
5. A tough rival can make you better, and a loss can feel less bad when you see how you helped someone else.

Square: The Last Lap

Harder · 261 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.4

1. Merely a week.
2. Eli swept past Jonah on the outside and crossed the finish line first.
3. Disappointed and upset. He slowed to a walk, stared at the ground, and his eyes stung.
4. Keeping pace with Jonah pushed him to run faster than he ever had, so Jonah helped him achieve his best race.
5. A strong rival can push you to improve, and a loss can feel less painful when you recognize how you helped someone else.