

## High-tech camel racing (Mon 11 Apr, 2005)

### WARM-UPS / POST-READING ACTIVITIES

**CHAT:** Talk in pairs or groups about: high tech / camels / camel racing / child labor / robots / the Arabian Gulf countries / the desert / local heritage. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**ROBOT BRAINSTORM:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word “robot”. Share your words with your partner / group and talk about them.

### ROBOTS IN SPORT:

1. What do you think of the idea of using robots in sport? Would it be more exciting? Do we still need humans? Are there some sports that would be better with robots?
2. In pairs / groups, talk about the good and bad points about robots in sport. Change partners and explain what you talked about with your previous partner / group.
3. Talk about the following ideas with your new partner(s):
  - robo-goalkeepers in soccer or hockey
  - robo-bowlers/batters in cricket or robo-pitchers/hitters in baseball
  - robo-golf players to challenge Tiger Woods
  - robo-drivers to beat Michael Schumacher every time
  - robo-boxers
  - robo-jockeys to ride horses and camels
  - robo-sumo wrestlers
  - robo-table tennis players
  - Other?

**OPINIONS:** Talk about the following opinions based on the news article.

- a. Sport is for humans only.
- b. Robots would make things much faster and more exciting.
- c. I think having humans play against robots is interesting.
- d. Athletics is not a good sport to have robots.
- e. Robot jockeys would mean the camels ride faster and have more injuries.
- f. Racing animals is cruel. I think it should be banned.
- g. Robots should not be used in traditional sport.
- h. I don't like the idea. Soon sports stars will be Sony or Apple, not Ronaldo or Tiger Woods.

## PRE-READING IDEAS

**WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... of the words 'age' and 'old'.

**TRUE FALSE:** Guess whether the following statements about the article are true or false:

- a. Camel racing is very popular in the Middle East. T / F
- b. Camel racing jockeys are usually over forty years old. T / F
- c. Soon robots will become the camel jockeys. T / F
- d. The new robot jockeys will be remote controlled. T / F
- e. Camel racing is a very gentle sport. T / F
- f. There may be as many as 40,000 children racing camels. T / F

**SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| (a) traditional | take over from |
| (b) replace     | regulations    |
| (c) jockeys     | enthusiasts    |
| (d) fans        | satisfied      |
| (e) make        | historic       |
| (f) stop        | ban            |
| (g) happy       | racers         |
| (h) laws        | produce        |

**PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article:

- |                            |                               |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (a) traditional            | the age of sixteen            |
| (b) going to               | designing the robotic jockeys |
| (c) boys under             | character                     |
| (d) new robot jockeys were | many as 40,000 children       |
| (e) Engineers have been    | sport                         |
| (f) human                  | change next year              |
| (g) There may be as        | tested                        |
| (h) keep the traditional   | rights groups                 |

## GAP FILL

### High-tech camel racing

**BNE:** The \_\_\_\_\_ sport of camel racing, which is very popular in the Middle East, is going to change next year. New technology will be used to \_\_\_\_\_ child jockeys with robots. Boys under the age of sixteen usually sit on top of the camels and race them through the desert. However, on April 10<sup>th</sup>, new robot jockeys were tested in the United Arab Emirates. The high-tech robo-jockeys were carefully watched by many camel racing \_\_\_\_\_, including the UAE President, Prime Minister and royal family.

*fans*  
*tough*  
*replace*  
*laws*  
*challenge*  
*traditional*

Engineers have been designing the robotic jockeys since 2002. Their \_\_\_\_\_ was to make a strong but light robot. It also had to be remote controlled. Many human rights groups have tried for many years to stop children working as camel jockeys. Camel races are very \_\_\_\_\_ and often dangerous. There may be as many as 40,000 children racing camels in the Arabian Gulf. A UAE spokesman, Shaikh Sultan, was very happy with the first generation of robots. He said the UAE could now follow international camel racing \_\_\_\_\_ and keep the traditional character of camel races.

## HOMEWORK

- 1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.
- 2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find information on the UAE. Share your findings with your class next lesson.
- 3. CHILD RACER:** Imagine you are a child camel racer. Write a letter to the UAE president to explain why you disagree with the robots. Tell him it will make your life worse.
- 4. ROBOTS IN SPORT:** Write a short article about the pros or cons of using robots in sport. Talk about your article in your next class.

## DISCUSSION:

- a. What was interesting about this article?
- b. Did anything in this article surprise you?
- c. Do you want to know more about anything in this article?
- d. Do you like camels?
- e. What do you think of camel racing?
- f. Do you agree with any other kinds of animal racing?
- g. How do you feel about robots in sport?
- h. Have you ever ridden a camel?
- i. What should be the minimum legal age for children to work?
- j. Would you like to see a camel race in the desert?
- k. Would you like to go to the United Arab Emirates?
- l. Do you ever bet / gamble on horse racing, dog racing camel racing etc?
- m. Should animals be used in sport?
- n. In which sports is it OK to use animals?
- o. Did you like this discussion?
- p. Teacher / Student additional questions.

## TEXT

### High-tech camel racing

**BNE:** The **traditional** sport of camel racing, which is very popular in the Middle East, is going to change next year. New technology will be used to **replace** child jockeys with robots. Boys under the age of sixteen usually sit on top of the camels and race them through the desert. However, on April 10<sup>th</sup>, new robot jockeys were tested in the United Arab Emirates. The high-tech robo-jockeys were carefully watched by many camel racing **fans**, including the UAE President, Prime Minister and royal family.

Engineers have been designing the robotic jockeys since 2002. Their **challenge** was to make a strong but light robot. It also had to be remote controlled. Many human rights groups have tried for many years to stop children working as camel jockeys. Camel races are very **tough** and often dangerous. There may be as many as 40,000 children racing camels in the Arabian Gulf. A UAE spokesman, Shaikh Sultan, was very happy with the first generation of robots. He said the UAE could now follow international camel racing **laws** and keep the traditional character of camel races.