

TCAP/WA

Directions

In a few moments, you will see a passage and a prompt. You are to plan and write an essay about the passage according to the instructions provided in the prompt. This activity will show how well you write. Express your thoughts clearly and make your writing interesting to the reader. Your essay will be scored as a rough draft, but you should watch for careless errors.

Before writing, spend some time reading the passage, thinking about the prompt, and planning your thoughts.

WRITE ONLY ON THE PROMPT AND PASSAGE YOU ARE GIVEN.

The time you have for writing is 60 minutes.

How the People of Mongolia Celebrate the Festival of Naadam

Adapted from an article by Claire J. Griffin

Naadam is a three-day festival that happens every July. It is celebrated all over in a country called Mongolia. Mongolia is in Asia. I have traveled to Dalanzadgad, a small town on the edge of the Gobi Desert, for Naadam.

The Horse Race

"Here they come! Here come the riders!" shouts someone from the crowd.

I turn to look. All I can see is a cloud of dust far off in the distance. Then dark shapes appear inside the dust. In a few moments, the specks turn into tiny figures on horseback. Even from far away, I can see the horses' legs moving in and out. I see the riders waving their arms and kicking their legs, urging their horses to go faster. Then I hear the pounding of the horses' hooves. As they get closer, I can even feel the pounding. It comes right through the soles of my heavy shoes.

I am standing with the rest of the crowd, close to where the horses will run past. We hope the lucky dust from the lead horses will cover us and make us lucky, too.

Young Horseback Riders

Now the lead horses are close enough that I can tell one rider from another. I look for a girl named Dolgorsuren. She is wearing pink riding clothes and a green scarf tied around her long black hair. Her horse is brown, with a light mane and tail. Like most of the other riders in this six-mile race, Dolgorsuren is nine years old.

There are more than fifty children in the race. Each rider wants to finish in the top five and win a medal. Is Dolgorsuren one of them?

A Winner

After the race, I rush to the finish line and find Dolgorsuren. She is not smiling. She has raced six miles across the hard, rocky sand of the Gobi Desert. Her muscles are sore from bouncing in the saddle.

One of the judges ties a special blue scarf around her horse's neck. I can see a medal already pinned to the bridle. Dolgorsuren has finished among the top five. Even though she is tired and thirsty, she smiles a little.

Keeping Riders Safe

Mongolia is probably the only country in the world where young riders race over such long distances. Dolgorsuren's race is not the longest. Some races go for sixteen miles! Because of the young age of the riders, there are rules to prevent accidents.

An important rule is that riders do not use stirrups. One of the worst things that can happen to a rider is falling off and being dragged behind a running horse. This can happen if the rider's boot gets stuck in the stirrup. Without stirrups, riders probably won't be seriously hurt even if they fall off.

Another safety feature is that jeeps follow the riders. The jeep drivers chase runaway horses and help if a rider gets hurt.

Archery and Wrestling

Horseback riding is not the only tradition during the festival. Naadam celebrates the special skills--traditionally called the "manly" sports--of the early Mongolians. Archery and wrestling are also a part of the festival. Mongols have been famous for horseback riding and archery for more than a thousand years. They were the first to shoot with bows and arrows while galloping on horseback.

During the festival, men and women archers aim for small rings set up on the ground. The wrestling is for men only. It is just like high-school wrestling in the United States except the contestants wear colorful costumes. But it is the horse racing that is just for children.

READ THIS WRITING PROMPT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN YOUR WRITING.

After reading the passage “Ride like the Wind”, write an explanatory essay in which you explain the festival of Naadam. Where and when does it take place? What are some of the traditions of the festival? Give examples and evidence from the text. Also, remember to use correct grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing your essay.

You may use the space below for prewriting. You will have a time limit of 60 minutes.