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Reading Level 3: Sochi Winter Olympics
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Topics: olympics, Sochi, Russia, sports
Learning points:
- vocabulary
- shortened sentences
- --ing as subject

1   Well, the Sochi Winter Olympics are finally underway, having started with a 'dazzling' opening ceremony in a

2   stadium that cost about $600m to build. These are going to be a record-breaking Games in many ways.

3

4   Firstly, the Games are being held in the warmest venue ever to have held the Winter Olympics, with

5   temperatures in February averaging a balmy 9°C in the Black Sea resort, equivalent to the Mediterranean

6   coast of southern France. Prior to this Games, just one ski-lift had existed but not a single ski run. Every

7   single venue had to be built from scratch, explaining why the Games are already the most expensive ever, and

8   not just for a Winter Olympics. With a final price tag expected to come in at over €51bn, exceeding the cost

9   of the Summer Olympics in Beijung ($40bn), the Games eventually will have cost more than all of the previous

10   Winter Olympic Games put together.

11

12   Selling the more postive records hasn't been easy – but nevertheless this will be an impressive Games in other

13   ways. Record-breaking numbers of athletes and events at 2,900 from 87 countries and 98 respectively make

14   this the biggest Winter Olympics yet. Twelve new events have been included in the programme, including

15   women's ski jumping at long last and also ski halfpipe and snowboard parallel slalom. Competing in the

16   snowboarding is Shaun White, the richest athlete, worth an estimated $20m. Hoping to win two more gold

17   medals is the biathlete Ole Einar Bjoerndalen. If he did, he would equal the 8 gold medals of the record-

18   holding Norwegian cross-country skier Bjorn Daehlie.

19

20   Finally, alpine skiing was actually not included in the first 3 Winter Olympic Games, but since then 105 alpine

21   ski medals have been won by Austria, almost more than twice as many as by Switzerland, France or the USA.

22   Assuming that Matthias Mayer's win stands, that number will have just gone up!

Level 3 questions

Shortened sentences

If making sentences longer using relative pronouns and connectives is a sign of higher-level English (see Level 2), then shortening sentences is an even more difficult challenge.

1. In this text there are several examples of where a relative pronoun and verb have been left out of a sentence.

    For example, "temperatures in February averaging a balmy 9°C in the Black Sea resort, equivalent to the Mediterranean coast of southern France" could also be written as "...Black Sea resort, **which is** equivalent to..."

    Can you find other examples of this? (Tip: look for the –ing as a connective)

--ing as subject
Using the –ing form as a subject helps to squeeze more information into a sentence.

2. Can you find examples of this?

Level 3 answers

1. For example, line 1 (which started), line 7 (which explains), line 8 (which is expected, which will exceed), line 16 (who is)

2. For example, line 12 (Selling the more positive records), line 13 (Record-breaking numbers of athletes), Line 15 (Competing in the snowboarding), line 16 (Hoping to win...), line 20 (Alpine skiing), line 22 (Assuming that...)