

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

## Steve Prefontaine: One of the Greatest Long-Distance Runners Ever

### I

Steve Prefontaine was born in 1951 in Coos Bay, Oregon, a small town in the United States, whose whole focus was on the sporting achievements of Marshall, the local high school. Steve turned out to be the greatest local star of all time.

### II

Called "Pre" by everyone who knew him, Steve was the kind of person who stood out. He became known for his remark "What I want to be is number one." However, Steve wasn't always a great runner or even very interested in sport. When he started high school, he said he didn't know why anyone would want to spend several hours a day running. Nevertheless, he decided to join the cross-country team where he discovered he had great talent for long-distance running. He didn't lose a single race in his first season of competitions and, in the same year, he received the Best Runner award in the State of Oregon.

### III

Not only did Steve win race after race during high school, but he was also known as one of the hardest workers on the track. All the time he spent on getting fit and running practice paid off and he was undefeated in his last two years of high school. Steve's parents have recalled that Steve would make himself lists of runners that he wanted to beat in future races. In addition to being a champion athlete, Pre was a warm, kind person who always had time to give advice and help to

his teammates and other athletes. He was also friendly towards his fans and after a race, he would sign his autograph for them and talk to everyone, no matter how tired he was.

### IV

Steve was one of the world's best long-distance runners ever, even though he didn't win a medal in the 1972 Olympic Games. He held all seven American records for 2,000 to 10,000 metres and he hoped to win the gold medal in the 1976 Montreal Olympics. However, he never reached those Games because he was tragically killed in 1975, at the age of 24. But he will never be forgotten.

### V

Hollywood screen writer, Peter Towne, decided that Pre had the ideal personality upon which to base a film and in 1998 *Without Limits* was produced. This film is a tribute to Pre's life and that of his coach, Bill Bowerman, who trained many world-class runners. Towne wanted to show the public that, in contrast to modern athletes, who make millions of dollars a year, here was a man who had a pure love for the sport. All Pre wanted was to run faster and be out in front. For him there was no such thing as a race plan. He wanted to take the lead and never look back. The film honours a sportsman who became a sports legend and changed the sport of distance running.

**A** Decide whether the following statements are T (true) or F (false). Find evidence in the text to support your answers.

- ..... 1. Coos Bay wasn't interested in sport.  
.....
- ..... 2. Steve started running when he was very young.  
.....
- ..... 3. Steve wasn't beaten in his first competition.  
.....

**B** Choose the best answer according to the text.

- 1. Pre stood out because he:
  - a. didn't bother about his fans.
  - b. put a lot of effort into his training.
  - c. worked hard at high school.
- 2. He didn't win a medal in Montreal because he:
  - a. didn't hold the American record.
  - b. was forgotten before then.
  - c. didn't take part in the Games.
- 3. In the film, it is made clear that Steve:
  - a. wanted to make a lot of money.
  - b. like modern athletes, had a pure love for the sport.
  - c. only wanted to be the best.

**C Find words or expressions in the text that have the same meaning as:**

1. successes (paragraph I) .....
2. made an impression (paragraph II) .....
3. not beaten (paragraph III) .....
4. but (paragraph IV) .....
5. in first position (paragraph V) .....

## Writing

**Write an essay of between 80-120 words, in which you describe a person who has had a great effect on you.**

# Steve Prefontaine – Answers

## Reading

- A**
1. This statement is false according to lines 1-4.  
“... Coos Bay ... whose whole focus was on the sporting achievements of Marshall, the local high school.”
  2. This statement is false according to lines 10-12.  
“... However, Steve wasn’t always a great runner ... . When he started high school he said ... a day running.”
  3. This statement is true according to lines 15-16.  
“... He didn’t lose a single race in his first season of competitions.”
- B**
1. b
  2. c
  3. c
- C**
1. achievements
  2. stood out
  3. undefeated
  4. however
  5. out in front

## Writing

Answers will vary. Accept all logical and grammatically correct answers.