CLASS 9 | KAVERI

Nine Gold Medals

David Roth

Complete Study Material



Nine runners finish together, expressing solidarity. AI-generated illustration.

Explore how a race becomes a lesson in compassion, inclusion and shared achievement. Learn to explain the poem closely, support interpretations with evidence and write clear examination answers.

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Explanations • Textbook solutions • Practice and answers • Rapid revision

Your learning route

Read the poem in your Kaveri textbook alongside this pack. The poetry module develops close reading, interpretation, language skills and application.

Contents

- Context and summary — pages 3–5.
- Stanza explanations and realistic visual studies — pages 6–17.
- Vocabulary, poetic craft and themes — pages 18–20.
- Textbook solutions and enrichment — pages 21–28.
- Independent practice — pages 29–34; answer keys — pages 35–42.
- Ready Reckoner — page 43; teaching and source notes — pages 44–47.

Learning objectives

- Explain the sequence and turning point of the race.
- Paraphrase each stanza without adding unsupported details.
- Distinguish empathy, sympathy and compassion.
- Analyse imagery, alliteration, contrast and symbolism.
- Support short and extended answers with relevant evidence.
- Apply inclusive values to classroom and sporting situations.

How the sources are used

The uploaded Kaveri chapter is the primary text. The slideshow supports visual interpretation, while the sportsmanship handout supplies enrichment. The uploaded Colourful Student Study Materials document guides presentation and teaching structure.

Listening limitation: the chapter refers to a teacher's transcript on page 268. That page and the audio are absent. Answers requiring them are identified rather than guessed. Practice marks and word limits in this pack are teacher-designed, not an official CBSE marking scheme.

Before you begin

If you had trained for months, would you stop during the final race to help a competitor? Keep that question in mind as you read.

Poet and situation

David Roth presents a sporting episode through an accessible narrative poem: a poem that tells a story. Nine runners prepare for a hundred-yard dash. When one falls, the others face a choice between personal success and helping another person.

Event or movement	Main distinction
Olympics	Elite international competition across many sports; athletes qualify through the relevant sporting systems.
Paralympics	Elite competition for athletes who meet sport-specific impairment and classification requirements. Eligible impairments include physical, vision and intellectual impairments.
Special Olympics	Year-round training and competition for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, with opportunities across ability levels.

These are distinct movements. Do not use their names interchangeably or assume that disability can always be seen. Competition, effort and excellence matter in inclusive sport too.

Three emotional responses

Term	Meaning and classroom example
Sympathy	Feeling sorry for someone: “I am sorry that you are upset.”
Empathy	Understanding another person’s feelings: “I can imagine how disappointed you feel.”
Compassion	Concern leading to help: “I will stay and help you prepare again.”

Empathy word bank: understanding, concern, sensitivity, kindness, respect, listening and solidarity.

How feeling becomes action

Sympathy recognises distress, empathy tries to understand it, and compassion motivates a helpful response. These can overlap in everyday life. The poem does not tell us every thought inside each runner’s mind, but their actions make their concern visible: they stop, return and help.

Follow the story through six stages

Stage	Event	Meaning
1	Training and arrival	Personal goals matter.
2	Waiting at the line	Expectation grows.
3	A runner falls	A shared moral choice arises.
4	Eight runners return	Concern becomes practical help.
5	Nine walk together	Solidarity changes the pace.
6	Medals and applause	Shared humane conduct is honoured.

Complete summary



Training makes the athletes' decision to stop especially meaningful. AI-generated illustration.

Athletes arrive from different parts of the country after weeks and months of training. They hope to win gold, silver or bronze. Spectators gather around an old field, and excitement rises as the final event approaches.

Nine determined runners wait at the starting line for the hundred-yard dash. At the pistol's signal, they charge forward. The smallest runner stumbles, loses his balance and falls onto the asphalt. He cries out in pain and frustration, feeling that his preparation and dreams have been ruined.

The other eight runners stop. One by one, they turn back and help him stand. All nine then join hands and continue together. The sprint becomes a walk, giving concrete expression to the inclusive spirit suggested by the Special Olympics banner above them.

They cross the finish line still holding hands, and the race ends with nine gold medals. The spectators rise to applaud. The runners' joyful faces and the audience's response communicate the value of compassion more powerfully than explanation alone.

Central idea

Achievement includes how we treat others. The poem honours athletes who preserve a fellow competitor's dignity and make success something they can share.

Stanza 1 Preparation and ambition

Original line	Plain English meaning
The athletes had come from all over the country	Athletes had travelled from many parts of the country.
To run for the gold, for the silver, and bronze	They wanted to compete for the three usual medal positions.
Many weeks and months of training	They had prepared through sustained practice.
All coming down to these games.	The games were the moment when their preparation would be tested.

Understanding the stanza

The opening establishes that winning matters to these athletes. Their later decision to stop is significant because they give up a real competitive opportunity. The text says “country”; it does not name a country, city or year.

Words and expressions

Athletes: people trained in sport. Coming down to: reaching a decisive point. Gold, silver and bronze suggest conventional ranked achievement.

Think and answer: How does the reference to training prepare us to appreciate the runners’ later choice?

Stanza 2 A field full of expectation

Original line	Plain English meaning
The spectators gathered around the old field	People assembled around the sports field to watch.
To cheer on all the young women and men	They encouraged the young competitors.
The final event of the day was approaching	The last event was about to take place.
Excitement was high to begin.	The atmosphere was already full of anticipation.

Understanding the stanza

The setting combines a visible place with an emotional atmosphere. The spectators' excitement helps the reader look forward to the race. At the end, the crowd's applause responds to a different kind of achievement.

Words and expressions

Spectators: people watching an event. Cheer on: encourage with shouts or applause. Approaching: drawing near.

Think and answer: Compare the spectators' expectations here with their response in the final stanza.

Stanza 3 Nine runners ready to start

Original line	Plain English meaning
The blocks were all lined up for those who would use them	Starting blocks were arranged for runners who needed them.
The hundred-yard dash and the race to be run	The event was a short sprint over one hundred yards.
These were nine resolved athletes in the back of the starting line	Nine determined athletes waited behind the starting line.
Poised for the sound of the gun.	They were ready to move as soon as the starting signal sounded.

Understanding the stanza

The stanza pauses before movement begins, creating suspense. “Resolved” indicates purpose; “poised” suggests readiness and controlled energy. A yard is not a metre: retain the textbook’s hundred-yard distance.

Words and expressions

Blocks: supports against which runners brace their feet. Resolved: determined. Poised: balanced and ready.

Think and answer: What do the words “resolved” and “poised” reveal about the athletes?

Visual study Readiness and effort



Determined competitors wait for their race to begin. AI-generated illustration.

Look closely and connect

The poised bodies and straight starting line help us imagine anticipation. In the written poem, the runners are determined and have trained for months. The illustration shows a modern track; the words of the poem remain the authority for its hundred-yard distance.

Discuss with a partner

Why does the amount of preparation matter when we assess the choice to help? Model point: it shows that the eight runners give up a genuine chance of personal success.

Stanza 4 The sudden fall

Original line	Plain English meaning
The signal was given, the pistol exploded	The starter fired the pistol to begin the race.
And so did the runners all charging ahead	The runners burst forward with sudden energy.
But the smallest among them, he stumbled and staggered	The smallest runner tripped and moved unsteadily.
And fell to the asphalt instead.	He fell onto the hard surface rather than continuing forward.

Understanding the stanza

“But” marks the abrupt change from excitement to distress. The pistol literally makes an explosive sound; the runners’ explosive movement is figurative. Alliteration in “stumbled and staggered” draws attention to his loss of control.

Words and expressions

Stumbled: tripped or lost footing. Staggered: moved unsteadily. Asphalt: the hard black material used for roads and similar surfaces.

Think and answer: How does the contrast between charging forward and falling change the mood?

Visual study A sudden change



A fall changes the course of the race. AI-generated illustration.

Look closely and connect

The runner's seated posture suggests distress, while the others' turned bodies suggest attention. In the poem, the fall is followed by a cry of frustration and anguish. We know that he falls; we are not told that he suffers a broken limb or any other specific injury.

Discuss with a partner

How do visual details help a reader understand emotion? Model point: a fall interrupts forward movement, making the sudden loss of confidence visible.

Stanza 5 Pain and apparent defeat

Original line	Plain English meaning
He gave out a cry of frustration and anguish	The boy cried because he was deeply distressed and disappointed.
His dreams and his efforts dashed in the dirt	He felt that his hopes and hard work had been destroyed.
But as sure as I'm standing here telling this story	The storyteller strongly assures the listener about what follows.
The same goes for what next occurred.	The narrator insists that the next surprising action deserves belief too.

Understanding the stanza

The fall hurts emotionally as well as physically. The image of dreams in the dirt makes disappointment tangible. The narrator's direct address creates a conversational storytelling voice and prepares us for an unexpected response.

Words and expressions

Frustration: disappointment when a goal is blocked. Anguish: intense suffering. Dashed: shattered or destroyed. Occurred: happened.

Think and answer: Why is the boy upset about more than the physical fall?

Stanza 6 Compassion changes the race

Original line	Plain English meaning
The eight other runners pulled up on their heels	The other eight stopped running.
The ones who had trained for so long to compete	These were the same athletes who had worked hard to win.
One by one they all turned round and went back to help him	Every one of them turned back to assist the fallen runner.
And brought the young boy to his feet.	They helped him stand up again.

Understanding the stanza

This is the decisive turning point. The athletes convert concern into practical help. The reminder of their training stresses the cost of their decision. “One by one” presents individual choices that become a shared act of solidarity.

Words and expressions

Pulled up: stopped. To his feet: into a standing position. Compassion is demonstrated through action rather than a speech.

Think and answer: Explain why this stanza is the turning point, using one action as evidence.

Visual study Help that restores dignity



Compassion becomes action when the runners help their fellow athlete. AI-generated illustration.

Look closely and connect

Practical help enables the boy to stand and continue. This is compassion because it moves beyond feeling concern. A respectful helper supports another person's participation without assuming that the person has no ability or independence.

Discuss with a partner

How can help preserve dignity? Model point: enable someone to take part and continue, listen to their needs and avoid making their distress a spectacle.

Stanza 7 The dash becomes a walk

Original line	Plain English meaning
Then all the nine runners joined hands and continued	All nine held hands and moved onwards together.
The hundred-yard dash now reduced to a walk	The sprint became a slower shared walk.
And a banner above that said (Special Olympics)	A banner above them identified the event as Special Olympics.
Could not have been more on the mark.	The banner's meaning seemed especially appropriate to their actions.

Understanding the stanza

The change of pace symbolises a change of priority. Reaching the finish together matters more than separating winners from losers through speed. The banner is above them; the poem does not say that they carry it. "Special" gains added emotional force through their compassionate conduct.

Words and expressions

Reduced to: changed into a lesser speed or intensity. Banner: a large sign. On the mark: exactly right or appropriate.

Think and answer: How do the joined hands and the slower pace express the same idea?

Stanza 8 Shared victory and recognition

Original line	Plain English meaning
That's how the race ended, with nine gold medals	The narrative concludes with all nine receiving gold medals.
They came to the finish line holding hands still	Their solidarity continues as they cross the line.
And a standing ovation and nine beaming faces	The crowd stands to applaud, and all nine faces shine with happiness.
Said more than these words ever will.	The actions and emotions communicate more than the narrator can explain.

Understanding the stanza

The ending makes the title meaningful: gold honours shared humanity within the poem. The final line acknowledges the limits of verbal explanation. The audience's response and the athletes' joy provide visible evidence of the value of their choice.

Words and expressions

Standing ovation: applause given while standing as a mark of strong approval. Beaming: smiling radiantly. Ovation: enthusiastic applause.

Think and answer: Why does the final line make the ending more powerful?

Visual study Joy shared by everyone



The poem ends with shared recognition and joy. AI-generated illustration.

Look closely and connect

The medals make recognition visible, while the group's shared joy expresses belonging. The poem ends with a standing ovation and beaming faces. This image is an imaginative illustration of that shared recognition, not a documentary photograph of a verified medal ceremony.

Discuss with a partner

What does shared recognition reward here? Model point: the athletes protect a fellow competitor's dignity and turn individual ambition into solidarity.

Vocabulary for close reading

Word or phrase	Contextual meaning	Fresh usage
resolved	determined	She was resolved to finish her project.
poised	ready for action	The goalkeeper was poised to dive.
charging	rushing with energy	The players came charging forward.
stumbled	lost footing	He stumbled on an uneven path.
staggered	moved unsteadily	The exhausted walker staggered briefly.
anguish	intense suffering	Her anguish was clear in her voice.
dashed	shattered or ruined	The cancellation dashed our hopes.
pulled up	stopped	The rider pulled up near the gate.
on the mark	exactly appropriate	Your explanation was on the mark.
beaming	smiling brightly	The beaming team thanked its coach.

Literal and figurative meanings

The runner literally falls onto the track. His dreams do not literally fall out of his body: their being “dashed in the dirt” conveys his sense that his hopes have collapsed. Similarly, the runners do not literally explode; they burst into rapid movement.

Useful word families

Compassion → compassionate; empathy → empathetic; sympathy → sympathetic; determination → determined; frustration → frustrated. Use each form in a grammatically suitable position.

Poetic craft and effects

Feature	Textual cue	How it works
Alliteration	“stumbled and staggered”	Repeated initial st sounds emphasise the awkward movement.
Alliteration	“dashed in the dirt”	Repeated d sounds reinforce the force of shattered hopes.
Visual imagery	“nine beaming faces”	A vivid picture of shared happiness.
Auditory imagery	“sound of the gun”	Makes readers imagine the starting signal.
Metaphorical expression	“dreams … dashed in the dirt”	Presents emotional disappointment as physical destruction.
Contrast	dash becomes walk	Opposes competitive speed and a caring shared pace.
Symbolism	joined hands	Represents unity, support and belonging.
Direct address	“telling this story”	Creates an immediate conversational link with the listener.

Form and sound

The poem has eight four-line stanzas. Long lines may wrap in the printed textbook; a wrap does not automatically create a new poetic line. The narrative moves chronologically from preparation to a shared finish.

Several stanzas use rhyme or near rhyme in the second and fourth lines, such as “men/begin”, “ahead/instead” and “still/will”. The sound pattern is not perfectly regular throughout; avoid forcing a single exact rhyme scheme onto every stanza. Variable line lengths support natural storytelling.

Be careful: the final line does not mean that faces literally speak. It means that visible feeling and conduct can communicate powerfully.

Themes tone and character

Themes supported by actions

Compassion: the eight stop and help the fallen boy. Solidarity: all nine continue hand in hand. Dignity and inclusion: the boy is enabled to complete the event with his fellow athletes. Redefined success: the medals honour a collective moral achievement within the poem.

The competitors

The fallen runner is vulnerable and deeply disappointed, but he is also someone who has trained and hoped to succeed. Do not reduce him to helplessness. The other eight are determined competitors who choose to help; their compassion has meaning precisely because they also wanted to win.

The narrator and spectators

The narrator presents the episode with warmth and admiration, occasionally addressing the listener directly. The spectators first supply anticipation, then recognise the athletes' conduct through a standing ovation.

Stage	Tone or mood	Narrative function
Stanzas 1–3	Expectant and excited	Establishes preparation and stakes.
Stanzas 4–5	Distressed and anxious	Introduces the fall and lost hope.
Stanza 6	Admiring and compassionate	Shows the decision to help.
Stanzas 7–8	Warm and uplifting	Celebrates solidarity and shared joy.

Title and message

A sprint normally suggests ranked finishers. Nine gold medals create a surprising title that the ending explains. The poem values humane conduct alongside sporting effort. It does not teach that training is pointless or that every real race must award identical medals.

Textbook understanding answers

Reflect and Respond

I. Use the three-event comparison in Before You Begin. II. Intended order: sympathy, empathy, compassion. The first statement also offers food, so everyday responses can overlap; classify it by its main expression of sorrow. III. Suitable words include understanding, concern, kindness, sensitivity, respect and listening.

Check Your Understanding I

1–(ii): dashed in the dirt → destroyed. 2–(iv): stumbled → stepped awkwardly and lost balance. 3–(i): staggered → moved with difficulty. 4 –(v): anguish → extreme suffering. 5–(iii): asphalt → hard black material used for roads and paths.

Check Your Understanding II

The stanza numbers in the order of the eight gist statements are: 2, 4, 8, 3, 1, 6, 7, 5.

Accuracy note for statement 7: match it to stanza 7, but correct “held the banner” to “joined hands and walked beneath the banner”. The primary poem, rather than that loose gist wording, controls the interpretation.

Check Your Understanding III

1. Alliteration: “stumbled and staggered”; “dashed in the dirt”.
2. Visual imagery: the lined-up blocks; a runner falling onto asphalt; nine beaming faces.
3. Auditory imagery: the starting gun or the boy’s cry.
4. Imagery makes the event immediate, allowing readers to picture movement and imagine sounds.
5. The tone changes from excited anticipation through distress to admiration and joy.
6. The overall mood is moving and uplifting, despite the moment of anguish.
7. Compassion and solidarity can make achievement meaningful for everyone involved.

Textbook extract answers

Critical Reflection I Extract 1

Context: stanza 6, when the other runners respond to the boy's fall.

(i) B — stopped running.
(ii) Compassion is common to all eight; they return to help. Empathy or selflessness is also acceptable with evidence.
(iii) The tone is admiring and warmly appreciative.
(iv) He may have felt relieved, supported and less alone. This is an inference based on their help, not a feeling explicitly stated in these lines.
(v) Yes. The competitive race changes direction when the athletes stop pursuing separate victories and act together to help him.

Critical Reflection I Extract 2

Context: stanza 8, the shared finish and the audience's response.

(i) They felt happy and united, as their beaming faces show. Pride and fulfilment are reasonable inferences.
(ii) Within the poem, the nine medals recognise their exceptional compassion and solidarity. This should not be presented as an official rule of Special Olympics.
(iii) Unity, solidarity or mutual support.
(iv) A — amazed — is the best available option. The fuller meaning of a standing ovation is enthusiastic admiration and approval.
(v) The applause and joyful faces reveal the emotional and moral importance of the runners' action more effectively than a verbal description can.

How to build an extract answer

Identify the action or phrase, explain its immediate meaning, then connect it to the poem's larger idea. For example: the runners stop; stopping enables them to help; the choice shows that compassion matters more to them than finishing first.

Textbook short answers 1 to 4

1 How does the setting create atmosphere

The athletes arrive from across the country after long preparation, so the games carry high expectations. Spectators gather around an old field and cheer the young competitors. The approaching final event creates excitement and suspense. This lively opening makes the sudden fall and the compassionate response more striking.

2 How might the youngest athlete feel

He might feel pain, humiliation and deep disappointment because the fall seems to destroy his chance of success after months of effort. His cry expresses frustration and anguish. The question says “youngest”; the poem itself identifies him as the “smallest” and later as a young boy, without giving comparative ages.

3 Why are the athletes eager to begin

They have trained for weeks and months and travelled to compete for medals. The final race gives them the opportunity to put their preparation into action. Their readiness at the starting line and their determined attitude show their eagerness to perform well.

4 What does the dash becoming a walk symbolise

It symbolises a change from individual competition to collective support. The athletes slow down so that the fallen boy can finish with them. Their shared pace and joined hands express inclusion and solidarity, showing that human dignity can matter more than being the fastest.

Answer-writing reminder

State the point in the first sentence. Support it with a precise event or short phrase. Explain its significance instead of repeating the same idea in different words.

Textbook short answers 5 to 7

5 What if individual achievement were the only focus

The runners would probably continue towards separate medal positions, leaving the boy behind. The poem would then celebrate speed and personal results rather than mutual support. Its emotional turning point, shared finish and nine gold medals would lose their purpose, and its message of compassion would be substantially changed.

6 How do language and tone engage the reader

Simple narrative language makes the race easy to follow. Visual images of the fall and smiling faces, together with sounds such as the gun and the cry, make it vivid. The shift from excitement to distress and then admiration draws readers into the emotional journey. Direct address adds a personal storytelling quality.

7 What is the poet's purpose

The poet encourages readers to reconsider what makes a person a winner. By showing determined athletes stop to help a competitor, he celebrates compassion, solidarity and inclusion. The shared finish suggests that sporting achievement becomes especially meaningful when people protect one another's dignity.

Vocabulary in Context I

Two suitable adjective–noun collocations from the poem are "young women" and "gold medals". "Old field" is another acceptable adjective–noun phrase. A collocation is a natural word partnership; its parts are not always interchangeable with similar words.

Useful answer verbs

Shows identifies evidence; suggests introduces interpretation; symbolises explains a larger meaning; contrasts connects opposing details; conveys describes the effect on the reader.

Textbook vocabulary solutions

Vocabulary in Context II

Adjective	Four suitable nouns
big	disappointment, failure, surprise, decision
heavy	rain, traffic, luggage, workload
strong	argument, wind, evidence, friendship
large	crowd, area, population, quantity
great	joy, courage, achievement, success

These are model combinations, not the only possibilities. For example, “strong rain” is less idiomatic than “heavy rain”, although both adjectives can suggest intensity in other contexts.

Vocabulary in Context III

1. The youngest athlete was moving at a steady pace.
2. The eight athletes had a positive attitude.
3. When the athlete fell, he gave a loud cry of pain.
4. The spectators saw a significant difference in the athletes who had only come to compete.
5. The noisy crowd cheered the runners enthusiastically.

Why these fit: youngest identifies age; positive describes outlook; loud describes sound; significant means important or noticeable; noisy describes a crowd making much sound. Each supplied adjective is used once.

Keep wording precise

For the vocabulary replacement exercise, use the supplied answer “youngest”. In a close explanation of the poem, retain “smallest” because size and age are different. Similarly, “significant difference” is a change in conduct, not evidence that the athletes were uncaring before the race.

Listening speaking and writing

Listen and Respond

The required Patrick Gomes transcript on page 268 is not supplied. For Section I, statements 1–3 must be checked against the recording, especially the coaching duration and household-work detail. The slideshow supports his earlier participation in track events, but cannot replace the audio.

For Section II: 1–(i), “challenge themselves”, is the ordinary meaning of “push your boundaries”. 2–(ii), “coach of special athletes”, is supported by the task introduction. 3–(ii), “turning point”, and 4–(iii), “football”, are suggested by the slideshow; confirm against the recording. Question 5 requires the audio: all three offered phrases are plausible without it.

Speaking activity Model conversation

A: In your view, how does Special Olympics promote inclusion?
B: It gives athletes with intellectual disabilities opportunities to train, compete and form friendships.
A: What can our school do to create awareness?
B: We can invite a speaker, challenge stereotypes and organise accessible activities with informed support.
A: I believe listening to athletes themselves would help us plan respectfully.

Writing task Three original slogans

- Every athlete deserves a place to shine.
- Train with purpose, compete with respect, include everyone.
- Let every finish line welcome every learner.

All three slogans stay within the textbook’s suggested eight-to-ten-word maximum. A good slogan is brief, memorable and linked to its purpose.

Poster plan

Use a clear heading such as “Inclusive Sports Day”; add one slogan, a relevant illustration and a call to participate. For a real event, include confirmed date, time, venue and organiser. Do not invent these details. The practice poster may use labelled blanks.

Learning beyond the text

Indian athletes in the supplied chapter

Athlete	Berlin 2023 achievement stated in Kaveri
Ravimathi Arumugam	Gold in the women's 400 metres, Level C.
Aanchal Goyal	Gold in the women's 400 metres, Level B.
Saket Kundu	Silver in Level B mini javelin and bronze in the men's Level B 400 metres.

Use these names and results when answering the uploaded textbook task. They illustrate sporting achievement; they are not characters in the poem.

Read the Olympics infographic critically

The chapter links the ancient Olympics with 776 BC and Greek religious tradition. Its torch section explains the flame's association with Olympia and its journey to the host city. Its rings section emphasises worldwide unity. Its Special Olympics section stresses training, competition, acceptance and inclusion.

Clarification: each Summer or Winter Olympic edition follows its own four-year cycle. The two seasons are staggered; this does not mean that a single edition occurs every two years. The Paralympics and Special Olympics are separate movements with different eligibility and competition structures.

Create your own sports infographic

Choose a sport. Include its aim, basic equipment, three rules, one fair-play principle and one accessibility consideration. Use short labels and a simple accurate drawing. Check facts before adding dates, records or named champions.

Reflection

What would inclusion look like in your classroom tomorrow? Suggest a concrete change, ask the affected learner what helps, and explain how the change protects dignity and participation.

Real sporting parallels

The uploaded sportsmanship handout connects the poem with Olympic acts of fairness and help. The examples below are separate real events; none establishes that the poem's precise nine-medal episode is a verified historical race.

Eugenio Monti Innsbruck 1964

Monti assisted rival bobsleigh teams. In the two-man event, a replacement bolt helped the British team continue; the British pair won gold while Monti and his partner took bronze. Helping a rival reflects the poem's concern for another competitor. It does not prove that the repair alone determined the entire result.

Lawrence Lemieux Seoul 1988

Lemieux interrupted his sailing race to help two Singaporean sailors in danger after their boat capsized. The example places human safety above race position. Race redress must not be confused with an overall Olympic silver medal.

Nikki Hamblin and Abbey D'Agostino Rio 2016

After a collision during a 5,000-metre heat, the runners helped and encouraged one another. Their conduct offers a close parallel with the poem's decision to assist a fallen competitor. Their event did not end with nine gold medals.

Bjørnar Håkensmoen Turin 2006

The Norwegian coach supplied a replacement pole to Canada's Sara Renner. Her team won silver, while Norway finished fourth. The handout therefore also shows that support can come from a coach, not only a fellow competitor.

The handout includes further examples. Its caution about the disputed technical-advice story involving Luz Long and Jesse Owens should be preserved: do not treat every popular sporting anecdote as settled history. The four parallels above are checked against Olympic movement sources.

Practice A Multiple choice

Choose one answer for each question. Suggested score: 1 mark each. Attempt the questions before reading the key.

1. Why does the opening mention months of training?

a) To explain the spectators' travel b) To prove that the race lasts months c) To show what the athletes have invested d) To identify the winning country

2. What is the event described?

a) A hundred-yard dash b) A relay c) A marathon d) A hurdles final

3. "Resolved" most nearly means

a) confused b) relaxed c) defeated d) determined

4. What immediately follows the starting signal?

a) The crowd leaves b) The runners charge ahead c) The medals are awarded d) The banner falls

5. Which phrase most clearly conveys emotional suffering?

a) old field b) frustration and anguish c) starting line d) all over the country

6. Which action is the turning point?

a) The spectators arrive b) The blocks are arranged c) The eight runners stop and return d) The pistol sounds

7. The joined hands chiefly symbolise

a) solidarity b) secrecy c) impatience d) rank

8. What does "on the mark" mean here?

a) painted on a track b) beyond the finish c) announced too late d) exactly appropriate

Practice A Multiple choice continued

9. Which is an example of auditory imagery?

a) nine beaming faces b) holding hands c) the sound of the gun d) the old field

10. Which pair best illustrates alliteration?

a) stumbled and staggered b) gold and silver c) country and games d) line and gun

11. What does the final line suggest?

a) Every speech is useless b) Actions and feelings can communicate deeply c) The race has no audience d) The narrator forgets the result

12. Which is explicitly supported by the poem?

a) The runners carry the banner b) The race occurs in Berlin c) The boy breaks his leg d) A banner is above the runners

13. The overall movement of tone is

a) excited to distressed to uplifting b) bored to angry to mocking c) joyful to indifferent to bitter d) fearful to comic to detached

14. Which statement best describes the medals?

a) They prove all real races end in ties b) They replace the need for training c) They recognise shared achievement in the poem d) They are given before the start

15. Which claim should a careful reader avoid?

a) The runners trained b) The poem names the youngest runner's age c) The spectators applauded d) The race ends together

Practice B Short answers

Answer in about 30–50 words each. Suggested score: 2 marks each, for a clear point and relevant support.

B1. What does the preparation reveal about the athletes?

B2. How does the boy's cry change the emotional atmosphere?

B3. Distinguish the literal fall from the figurative destruction of dreams.

B4. Why does the poet remind us of the eight runners' training?

B5. Explain the significance of "one by one".

B6. How is the banner connected to the action below it?

B7. How do the spectators help convey the message?

B8. Why should "smallest" not automatically be changed to "youngest"?

B9. Why is the ending uplifting rather than merely sad?

B10. Explain how the title gains meaning at the end.

Self-check

Underline your main point. Circle one piece of evidence. Check that an inference is signalled by language such as "suggests" or "might". Remove details about ages, injuries, place or date that the poem does not provide.

Practice C Extended answers

Write about 100–120 words per answer. Suggested score: 5 marks each. These are practice limits, not a prescribed board requirement.

C1. How does the poem redefine victory?

C2. Explain how imagery creates the poem's emotional journey.

C3. Discuss the importance of the turning point.

C4. Analyse the title and the final line together.

C5. Does the poem reject competition? Give a balanced answer.

C6. Compare compassion in the poem with a verified sporting example.

Plan before you write

Begin with your interpretation. Select two or three events or short phrases. Explain what each shows, connect them logically, and end by answering the question directly. A quotation earns its place when you explain it.

Teacher marking guide

Award 3 marks for relevant, accurate content; 1 for explanation supported by evidence; 1 for coherent organisation and clear language. Accept different defensible interpretations. Do not reward invented detail or quotation without explanation.

Practice D Reference to context

Use the short extracts with the full poem in your textbook. Suggested score: 1 mark per subpart, 15 marks in all.

D1

"These were nine resolved athletes in the back of the starting line / Poised for the sound of the gun."

(1) Identify the event and the number of competitors.

(2) Explain "resolved" and "poised".

(3) What feeling is created before the start?

(4) What happens soon after the gun?

(5) How does their readiness make their later action significant?

D2

"He gave out a cry of frustration and anguish / His dreams and his efforts dashed in the dirt"

(1) Who is "he", and what has happened?

(2) Explain the emotional meaning of the cry.

(3) Identify one example of alliteration.

(4) Explain the figurative expression about dreams.

(5) How is his apparent defeat answered later?

D3

"Then all the nine runners joined hands and continued / The hundred-yard dash now reduced to a walk"

(1) What has happened immediately before this moment?

(2) Explain the contrast between dash and walk.

(3) What do the joined hands symbolise?

(4) How does the banner above them become appropriate?

(5) State the outcome at the finish line.

Practice E Thinking and language

E1–E6: answer in about 50–70 words. Suggested score: 3 marks each for a judgment, a reason and a relevant example.

E1. A student drops presentation cards during a competition. Suggest a compassionate response that respects the student's independence.

E2. Must a caring athlete always stop in every competitive situation? Explain your judgment.

E3. Compare sympathy, empathy and compassion in the runners' response.

E4. A report says that the poem proves a historical race awarded nine gold medals. Evaluate the claim.

E5. Design one inclusive classroom activity and explain how to assess it.

E6. Is shared success less valuable than individual success? Use the poem to argue your view.

Practice F Language and creative response

F1. Complete: ___ traffic; a ___ argument; a ___ crowd. Use heavy, strong and large once each.
F2. Use "on the mark" in a fresh sentence.
F3. Identify the figure of speech in "stumbled and staggered" and explain its sound pattern.
F4. Write a slogan of no more than ten words about inclusive sport.
F5. Write a 60–80-word diary entry from the fallen runner's imagined viewpoint. Indicate the emotional change; do not invent a serious injury or named historical setting.

Answer key A Multiple choice

A Multiple choice with reasons

1. c) To show what the athletes have invested. Their preparation establishes the value of the opportunity they later sacrifice.

2. a) A hundred-yard dash. The textbook explicitly identifies the distance and sprint event.

3. d) determined. The runners are purposeful and ready to compete.

4. b) The runners charge ahead. Their forward burst precedes the smallest runner's fall.

5. b) frustration and anguish. It names the boy's distress, rather than a place or preparation.

6. c) The eight runners stop and return. Their decision changes the direction and values of the event.

7. a) solidarity. The runners visibly support and include one another.

8. d) exactly appropriate. The banner's significance fits the runners' inclusive conduct.

9. c) the sound of the gun. It makes the reader imagine a sound.

10. a) stumbled and staggered. The initial st sound is repeated.

11. b) Actions and feelings can communicate deeply. The visible joy and applause express the event's meaning.

12. d) A banner is above the runners. Only the banner's position above them is stated.

13. a) excited to distressed to uplifting. The fall interrupts anticipation; compassion creates an uplifting conclusion.

14. c) They recognise shared achievement in the poem. Their narrative role is to honour the collective act.

15. b) The poem names the youngest runner's age. The text supplies no exact age or age ranking.

Answer key B Short responses

B1. They are committed competitors who have invested sustained effort. Their training gives them a real desire to succeed and makes the later decision to stop especially meaningful.

B2. It interrupts the excitement with distress. The audience and reader are made aware of his pain and of his belief that his hopes have been shattered.

B3. His body literally falls onto the asphalt. His dreams are figuratively shattered because he feels that he has lost the chance to succeed after preparing hard.

B4. The reminder shows that they too have worked towards success. Their compassion is a choice made at a personal competitive cost, rather than an act by people with nothing to lose.

B5. The phrase shows each runner turning back. Individual choices become collective action, demonstrating that every competitor participates in helping the boy.

B6. The banner identifies Special Olympics. The joined hands and inclusive walk give practical expression to acceptance and support, making its message especially appropriate.

B7. They move from cheering a competition to applauding compassionate conduct. Their standing ovation recognises the runners' shared moral achievement and reinforces the value of solidarity.

B8. Smallest refers to size, while youngest refers to age. The poem gives no exact ages. A close reading should preserve the distinction even though a textbook question uses youngest.

B9. The boy's distress is answered by practical support. All nine finish together with joyful faces and shared recognition, so the poem resolves the crisis through compassion.

B10. Nine gold medals initially suggest an unusual result. The ending explains that the nine athletes share recognition after choosing unity and helping a fallen competitor over separate ranked success.

Marking: 1 mark for a sound main point and 1 for relevant support or explanation. Equivalent wording is acceptable.

Answer key C Extended responses 1 to 2

C1

The poem first presents victory in familiar sporting terms: athletes train hard and compete for gold, silver and bronze. The smallest runner's fall disrupts this expectation. The other eight then stop and help him, despite their own investment in the race. By joining hands and walking together, they choose a shared finish over separate rankings. The nine gold medals give visible recognition to that decision within the poem. The standing ovation and beaming faces show that their conduct has moved the spectators. Victory therefore includes compassion, dignity and solidarity, alongside the discipline of sporting effort.

Essential points: Conventional ambition; fall and choice; shared finish; meaning of medals; audience response.

C2

The poem lets readers picture a lively field, aligned starting blocks and runners ready to move. The sound of the gun makes the start immediate. This energy changes sharply when the smallest runner stumbles and falls onto asphalt. His cry conveys distress, while his dreams being dashed in the dirt gives disappointment a concrete image. Later, joined hands create a picture of mutual support. At the finish, the nine beaming faces and standing spectators replace the earlier image of pain with shared joy. Visual and auditory details therefore guide the reader from anticipation through anguish to an uplifting recognition of compassion.

Essential points: Starting scene; sound; fall and cry; joined hands; joyful ending and effect.

Answer key C Extended responses 3 to 4

C3

The decisive turning point occurs when the eight other runners stop and return to help the fallen boy. Before this moment, they are competitors moving towards individual success. Their preparation makes the decision costly because stopping risks their own chances. The action restores the boy to his feet and changes the direction of the narrative. All nine can now continue together, and the sprint becomes a walk. This new pace symbolises a shared priority: no competitor is to be abandoned in distress. Without the decision to help, the joined hands, nine medals and standing ovation would not carry the same meaning.

Essential points: Identify stanza 6; explain competitive cost; practical help; change of pace; link to ending.

C4

The title raises a question because one sprint would usually be expected to produce ranked finishers. The final stanza answers it: all nine athletes reach the line together after helping a fallen runner. Their medals recognise an exceptional shared achievement in the world of the poem. Yet the narrator also suggests that the meaning exceeds what words alone can capture. The audience's standing applause and the athletes' radiant faces embody gratitude, unity and joy. The title gives this moral achievement a memorable form, while the final line directs attention back to the actions and emotions that make the nine medals significant.

Essential points: Unusual title; shared finish; symbolic recognition; applause and faces; limits of words.

Answer key C Extended responses 5 to 6

C5

The poem does not dismiss competition. It begins by respecting the athletes' months of training, determination and hopes of winning medals. These details make their effort clear. However, the fall creates a situation in which they must choose how to treat a person in distress. By stopping, they show that compassion can take priority over finishing first. Their decision gains importance because they are serious competitors, not because sporting effort has no value. The poem therefore asks readers to judge achievement by conduct as well as results. Competition can inspire discipline while still allowing concern, fairness and inclusion.

Essential points: Respect for training; genuine ambition; exceptional choice; moral priority; balanced conclusion.

C6

In the poem, eight runners stop to help a fallen competitor and complete the race with him. Their compassion creates a shared finish and nine gold medals. A real parallel is Lawrence Lemieux's decision at Seoul 1988 to interrupt his sailing race to help sailors whose boat had capsized. Both situations involve people placing another person's immediate need above competitive progress. There are also important differences: Lemieux's action concerned a dangerous rescue at sea, and it did not produce the poem's nine-medal result. The comparison supports the value of humane conduct without treating the poem as a factual record of that event.

Essential points: Accurate poem account; accurate real example; common principle; difference; no historical conflation.

Answer key D Extract responses

D1

(1) A hundred-yard dash with nine competitors.

(2) Resolved means determined; poised means ready to move.

(3) Anticipation, excitement or suspense.

(4) The runners charge forward and the smallest runner falls.

(5) They have invested effort in winning, making their decision to stop a meaningful sacrifice.

D2

(1) The smallest runner; he has stumbled and fallen onto asphalt.

(2) He feels intense disappointment and suffering, believing his chance is lost.

(3) “dashed in the dirt” repeats the initial d sound.

(4) His hopes seem shattered; dreams are not literally physical objects lying on the track.

(5) The other eight help him stand and finish with them, replacing isolation with solidarity.

D3

(1) The other eight have stopped, turned back and helped the fallen boy stand.

(2) A fast competitive sprint becomes a slow shared walk.

(3) Unity, mutual support and inclusion.

(4) Their conduct gives practical expression to the inclusive spirit associated with Special Olympics.

(5) They finish holding hands; the race ends with nine gold medals and a standing ovation.

Answer key E Reasoned judgments

E1. Ask whether help is wanted, gather the cards if invited and allow time to continue. Avoid taking over the presentation. This combines practical support with respect for the student's ability and choice.

E2. No single response fits every situation. Consider urgency, safety and available official help. The poem celebrates a humane choice in its particular crisis; it does not replace the rules or judgment needed in every real sport.

E3. Sympathy would mean sorrow for the boy; empathy would mean understanding his distress. The runners demonstrate compassion by turning their concern into action: they stop, return and help him stand.

E4. The poem establishes this result within its narrative. The supplied materials do not identify a verified race record proving the precise event. A factual report needs independent evidence, so the claim should be qualified.

E5. For a group oral presentation, offer accessible preparation materials and flexible roles chosen with learners. Assess both individual contributions and respectful collaboration. Inclusion should widen participation without assuming that a learner cannot perform.

E6. A defensible answer is no: the runners' shared achievement expresses courage and compassion. Individual success can also be valuable when earned fairly. The poem shows why the quality of conduct matters, rather than requiring all achievement to take one form.

These are model directions, not compulsory opinions. Award marks for a supported judgment, sensible reasoning and a relevant example or application. Respectful disagreement can earn full marks.

Answer key F Language and writing

F1. Heavy traffic; a strong argument; a large crowd. These are idiomatic combinations.

F2. Example: “Your suggestion about giving everyone a speaking turn was on the mark.” The phrase means exactly appropriate. Accept another accurate sentence.

F3. Alliteration. The repeated initial st sound in “stumbled” and “staggered” draws attention to the runner’s awkward movement.

F4. Example: “Make room for every athlete to shine.” Accept an original, clear slogan of ten words or fewer that supports inclusion.

F5 Model diary entry

Dear Diary,
I thought my chance had vanished when I fell. Months of preparation seemed wasted, and I felt terribly disappointed. Then the other runners turned back. Their help gave me the courage to stand again. We held hands and walked to the finish together. The applause was wonderful, but their kindness mattered most. Today I learnt that being supported can help a person find strength again.

Writing criteria: first-person reflection; fall and disappointment; help and shared finish; convincing emotional change; clear language. The diary is an imaginative response, not additional factual evidence about the poem.

A model poster text

INCLUSIVE SPORTS DAY
Every athlete deserves a place to shine.
Join us to celebrate effort, respect and participation.
Date: [confirmed date] Time: [confirmed time]
Venue: [confirmed venue]
Organised by: [school or club]
Ask the organiser about access and participation support.

Ready Reckoner

Remember	Quick revision
Poem and poet	Nine Gold Medals by David Roth.
Form	Narrative poem; eight four-line stanzas.
Setting	A sports field; Special Olympics banner; final event of the day.
Event	A hundred-yard dash with nine competitors.
Crisis	The smallest runner falls and cries in anguish.
Turning point	The other eight stop, return and help him stand.
Resolution	Nine runners walk hand in hand and finish together.
Ending	Nine gold medals, beaming faces and a standing ovation.
Core values	Compassion, solidarity, inclusion and dignity.
Two devices	Alliteration in “stumbled and staggered”; symbolism in joined hands.

Five things you must not forget

- The banner is above the runners; they do not carry it in the poem.
- Smallest does not necessarily mean youngest.
- A hundred yards is not a hundred metres.
- The nine-medal outcome belongs to this narrative; it is not a general competition rule.
- Explain how an action supports a theme; do not merely list moral words.

Last-minute checklist

Can I explain the turning point? Distinguish empathy and compassion? Name two devices with their effects? Trace the tone change? Support an answer without inventing a date, place, injury or exact age?

Classroom extension and source notes

A 40-minute lesson route

Minutes 0–5: discuss the opening choice and clarify emotional vocabulary.
Minutes 5–15: read aloud and trace the eight-stanza story.
Minutes 15–23: examine the fall, turning point and joined hands.
Minutes 23–32: pairs answer one extract and one short question.
Minutes 32–38: compare a verified sporting parallel and discuss inclusion.
Minutes 38–40: write one evidence-based sentence explaining true victory.

Independent study route

Read the poem and explanations; close the notes and retell the sequence. Attempt the practice without the key. Mark your answers, correct one misconception and revisit the Ready Reckoner the following day.

Sources consulted

- CL 9 KAVERI Nine Gold Medals.pdf — primary poem and exercises; printed pages 157–168 and the opening page.
- Nine Gold Medals Slide show .pdf — supporting teaching interpretation.
- Olympic Examples of Selflessness and True Sportsmanship.pdf — enrichment and its historical cautions.
- 15. Colourful Student Study Materials(1).docx — teaching architecture and presentation instructions.

Editorial note: explanations and practice are original teaching material grounded in the uploaded texts. Short quotations and stanza text are attributed to David Roth. The poem is studied as a literary narrative; no unverified event date or location has been supplied. Images are AI-generated educational illustrations, not documentary photographs or portraits of identified athletes.

Further sources and visual credits

The official movement sources below clarify the sports distinctions and selected real-life parallels. Consulted 29 October 2026. URLs are provided for reference; the textbook remains the authority for poem-specific answers.

Special Olympics British Columbia — Special Olympics, Paralympics, Olympics: What's the Difference?

https://www.specialolympics.bc.ca/news-and-stories/special-olympics-paralympics-olympics-what-s-the-difference/

International Paralympic Committee — Classification

https://www.paralympic.org/classification

International Olympic Committee — First World Fair Play Day

https://www.olympics.com/ioc/news/first-world-fair-play-day-honouring-the-spirit-of-sportsmanship-at-the-olympic-games

Canadian Olympic Committee — Amazing Olympic Moments: Stories of sportsmanship

https://olympic.ca/2017/10/15/amazing-olympic-moments-stories-of-sportsmanship/

Visual register

Six realistic illustrations support the cover, training context, race preparation, fall, assistance and shared recognition. Each is proportionally scaled without cropping and includes editable caption text and descriptive alt text. The following appendix records the production prompts for reuse.

Important: a generated scene may use a modern athletics track for visual clarity. Use the written poem for its exact distance, language and events. The illustrations do not establish a historical venue, appearance or medical condition.

Illustration prompts 1 to 3

Visual 1

Placement and purpose: cover; introduces solidarity.

Prompt: Cover scene: exactly nine diverse young adult athletes, men and women, walking hand in hand shoulder to shoulder across a running track finish line. Full bodies visible, believable human anatomy, dignified and joyful, stadium spectators softly blurred.

Shared specification: photorealistic natural light; landscape 16:9; fictional educational illustration; dignified diverse young adult athletes; no text, logos, watermarks or Olympic rings; all important subjects inside the frame.

Caption: Nine runners finish together, expressing solidarity. Alt text: Nine athletes walking hand in hand across a track finish line.

Visual 2

Placement and purpose: summary; establishes investment in training.

Prompt: Training scene: three young adult runners practising on a quiet athletics track at dawn, coach watches, visible effort and concentration, sports clothing, respectful natural candid moment.

Shared specification: photorealistic natural light; landscape 16:9; fictional educational illustration; dignified diverse young adult athletes; no text, logos, watermarks or Olympic rings; all important subjects inside the frame.

Caption: Training makes the athletes' decision to stop especially meaningful. Alt text: Runners practising on a track while a coach watches.

Visual 3

Placement and purpose: stanza 3; shows anticipation.

Prompt: Race anticipation: exactly nine diverse young adult athletes standing at a straight 100 metre starting line, natural standing sprint starts, track lanes extending ahead, spectators watching, wide view.

Shared specification: photorealistic natural light; landscape 16:9; fictional educational illustration; dignified diverse young adult athletes; no text, logos, watermarks or Olympic rings; all important subjects inside the frame.

Caption: Determined competitors wait for their race to begin. Alt text: Nine athletes gathered at a straight track starting line.

Illustration prompts 4 to 6

Visual 4

Placement and purpose: stanza 4; explains the crisis.

Prompt: Turning point: a young adult runner has stumbled and sits on a red track looking disappointed, no blood or serious injury; eight fellow competitors further ahead turn back with concern, wide full body view.

Shared specification: photorealistic natural light; landscape 16:9; fictional educational illustration; dignified diverse young adult athletes; no text, logos, watermarks or Olympic rings; all important subjects inside the frame.

Caption: A fall changes the course of the race. Alt text: A fallen runner on a track as other competitors turn back.

Visual 5

Placement and purpose: stanza 6; makes practical compassion visible.

Prompt: Compassion scene: two fellow young adult athletes gently help a fallen runner to stand on a red athletics track, warm encouraging expressions, natural hands and body positioning, other runners in soft background.

Shared specification: photorealistic natural light; landscape 16:9; fictional educational illustration; dignified diverse young adult athletes; no text, logos, watermarks or Olympic rings; all important subjects inside the frame.

Caption: Compassion becomes action when the runners help their fellow athlete. Alt text: Two athletes helping a fallen runner to stand.

Visual 6

Placement and purpose: stanza 8; shows shared recognition.

Prompt: Celebration scene: exactly nine young adult athletes stand together at trackside wearing plain gold coloured medals, applauding spectators in background, shared quiet pride, no podium hierarchy.

Shared specification: photorealistic natural light; landscape 16:9; fictional educational illustration; dignified diverse young adult athletes; no text, logos, watermarks or Olympic rings; all important subjects inside the frame.

Caption: The poem ends with shared recognition and joy. Alt text: Nine athletes celebrating together with gold coloured medals.