1. Read the text.

**The Paralympic Games.**

A. The Paralympic Games were started by a doctor called Ludwig Guttmann who worked in a London Hospital. He organized sport as part of a programme for people with certain injuries to improve their self-esteem. The “Games for the Paralysed” were first held in 1948 to coincide with the London Olympics. It was after this that the idea really took off.

B. The first official Paralympics took place in Rome in 1960, when athletes from twenty-three countries took part in wheelchair sports. Blind and visually impaired sports were included for the first time in the 1972 Heidelberg Games. Gradually, disabled people in different categories were invited to take part. Today, there are six categories and fifty levels of disability.

C. Since the 1988 Seoul Games, the Paralympics have always been held in the same venues as the Olympics and Paralympics in the same place. When countries want to host the games, they have to consider the Olympics and the Paralympics as a single event.

D. The Paralympics are sometimes confused with Special Olympics which is a programme that focuses on year-round sports and training for all people with an intellectual disability, not only talented athletes. The Special Olympics strongly encourages participation as much as competition. Their motto is: “let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

E. The Paralympics has a much greater age range than the Olympics. In the 2004 Games, for example, 11-year-old Chinese swimmer Qing Qing Xu was the youngest athlete, while 66-year-old Canadian sailor David Williams was the eldest. At Sydney 2000, the competitors’ ages ranged from 11-year-old Polish table-tennis player Natalia Partyka to 65-year-old Australian sailor Noel Robbins.

F. Today, the Paralympic Summer Games are the second largest sporting event in the world, the first being the Summer Olympics. The rise in its status is excellent news for disabled athletes, since it isn’t just athletes that benefit. Organised sport has changed the lives of all disabled people. Technical improvements, such as sports wheelchairs and lightweight limbs for athletes have become part of everyday designs and now make life easier for a huge number of disabled people.

2. Are these statements about the Paralympic Games true or false?

1. They take place at a different venue from the Olympic Games. _________
2. The Paralympics and the Special Olympics are the same.______________
3. Children can take part in the Paralympics.________________________
3. Match headings 1-6 to paragraphs A-F in the text.

1. Involving people with different disabilities._________________
2. Becoming as important as the original Games. ______________
3. Helping the athletes helps other disabled people too.__________
4. Building people’s confidence.______________________________
5. Taking part is as important as winning._______________________
6. Crossing the generations.__________________________________

4. Discuss these questions:

1. How important are the Paralympics in Russia?
2. Do you know if the Paralympics have ever been held in Russia? When? When are they next going to happen in Russia?

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