

30<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Tomorrow is the big day! Ben and the rest of the team seem excited at the prospect of finally starting the Tour. I don't know if I expected them to be nervous at all but they don't appear to be. There's a lot of banter between themselves and us guys in the support crew, which is good for team morale I think. We'll need as much camaraderie as we can get over the next few weeks!

Dusseldorf has been very welcoming. The city's residents stop and cheer whenever they see the Zoltec Racing support car, or any of the riders. People seem to really know their cycling here in Germany, so I think it's a great choice of location for the Grand Depart! It has been fun and interesting for the riders too to get to see a different country and city at the start of the tour. Riders like Ben and Owen are veterans of the Tour and have seen a lot of France in their time competing so it's going to bring a nice freshness to the race this year to begin in a different country.

We spent most of the afternoon today doing final checks on the bikes and tool kits before rigging up the support vehicles. They're looking in good shape, which is great news considering the lead car is going to be my home for the next three weeks!

1<sup>st</sup> July 2017

Today was, as expected, *crazily* busy. I was up at 5am to run some early morning checks and to recheck some of the gear from yesterday. I found it really difficult to sleep. I was running different problems and scenarios through my head for what felt like hours before I dropped off. I'm shattered now. The race today was the shortest one of the whole tour but as I knew from previous years, that didn't mean I was in for an easy day!

After I'd finished the early morning maintenance, it was time for the team breakfast. The athletes obviously need plenty of energy to keep them going but so do we! It was a good one today; lots of protein to keep us full and strong and lots of carbohydrates to keep our energy up!

The race today was a 14km time trial; the cyclist with the fastest time over the distance would be the Tour's first leader! The team performed fairly well overall, with Steve riding the best sprint of all of them. Not quite fast enough for the yellow jersey but as a team we are in contention.

No problems with bikes or riders today, but we and the physio/health team were busy enough just making sure everyone and everything were working at the highest

level. Onto the first proper length race tomorrow!

6<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Vesoul to Troyes today. 216km of flat, fast racing. The big news today was that Owen had a problem with the gear set-up on his bike. We had to do a bike exchange mid-race. They are always so difficult to time well, and even the smoothest swap wastes precious time. As far as exchanges go, it was a fairly slick one. Probably took about ten or fifteen seconds to get him off the old bike, onto the new bike and back up to race speed. It was a hot day though, and even those few seconds of pushing him off again left me sweating!

To make matters worse, the new bike had its brakes knocked out of line in the rush, so I had to do a moving adjustment. Secretly I love fixing things on the go, even though it would be better to never have to do it. Leaning out of the window while cruising alongside the rider, sorting out a problem while they pedal half a metre away from the car. We were probably going at about 25 mph while this was going on. It's always exhilarating!

No problems after that, and we replaced the gearing late tonight, so Owen's first-choice bike will be ready to go for him tomorrow!

10<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Gosh, the Dordogne region is beautiful!

Today was the first rest day of the Tour. It was great for the athletes to get a chance to recover a bit from all the riding they've smashed through over the past week or so. No such luck for us! We had all our prep to do for the coming races, but at least we had more time than usual to do it as we didn't have to drive anywhere.

The Dordogne area is full of castles, and some amazing rivers and mountains. It's been lovely to actually have time to appreciate the landscape around us. I hardly notice anything on race days; I'm much too focused!

Ben won the first real mountain race yesterday. Well, he was first to the top. That means that he'll be wearing the King of the Mountains jersey tomorrow! I've never seen him in red polka dots before! If it wasn't such an honour to wear it, I might have made a few jokes!

**classroomsecrets.com**

My Time on the Tour – Y5/P6/G4 – Text

Like this? Find more  
differentiated Tour de France  
resources [here](#).

Ben did it! He's King of the Mountains! He won the final large mountain stage today. That got him the maximum 25 points and has put him too far in front to be caught! A massive win for the whole Zoltec team!

He was pushed all the way by Alberto Rossi but it is beyond doubt now. The Italian just didn't seem to have the legs for the big climb today. He needed to finish ahead of Ben to have any chance of winning the polka-dot jersey and Franksy was just too strong and too fast today!

Not many days left of this Tour. It's gone so swiftly! We've got the longest ride of them all to do tomorrow; 222.5km over hills from Embrun to Salon-De-Provence. Rather the riders than me! I have no idea how they manage to complete even one of these stages.

The Tour itself hangs in the balance. Rossi, despite failing to capture King of the Mountains from Ben, still holds the overall lead and wears the yellow jersey. However, he's only a minute or so ahead of Franksy and looked vulnerable today. Three days of racing to make up just over a minute of time! Will Ben and the team manage it? It's going to be such a tense few days!

Section A

1. What job does the writer of this diary do?

2. How do you know that the word 'Tour' is a name people use instead of saying 'Le Tour de France'?

3. Thinking about all you have read, why is the writer the one who had to swap Owen's bike and adjust the brakes?

4. Would you rather be a member of the support crew or a rider on the Tour? Why?

## Section B

5. Where is Dusseldorf?

6. Who gets to wear the yellow jersey?

7. Explain what 'protein' and 'carbohydrates' are.

8. Have the athletes raced between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July? Find a phrase which explains how you know.

9. Do you think Ben will win the Tour? Why?

## Section C

10. 'Secretly I love fixing things on the go, even though it would be better to never have to do it.' Explain what this sentence tells you about the writer's feelings and loyalties, making reference to particular words and phrases in your answer.

11. From reading the first three diary entries, summarise what the job of a support team member involves.

12. What do you have to do to be allowed to wear the red polka-dotted jersey?

13. What do you think Ben's surname might be? How do you know?

## Section D

14. What is 'camaraderie'?

15. Do you think the riders and support team enjoy good friendships with each another? Explain your answer with reference to the text.

## My Time on the Tour – Challenge Activity

### Section A

These words have been taken from the story. Match each word to the correct meaning.

<u>Word</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
1. prospect	a) susceptible
2. veteran	b) an act of contending
3. scenario	c) move at full speed over a short distance
4. vulnerable	d) an account of a possible course of actions or events
5. stage	e) possibility
6. contention	f) a person who has had a lot of experience in a particular field
7. sprint	g) a step in a process

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

### Section B

Choose the word with the closest meaning.

The word *camaraderie* means...

	Tick one
teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/>
friendship	<input type="checkbox"/>
enthusiasm	<input type="checkbox"/>

The word *focused* means...

	Tick one
appreciative	<input type="checkbox"/>
interested	<input type="checkbox"/>
fixated	<input type="checkbox"/>

The word *exhilarating* means...

	Tick one
thrilling	<input type="checkbox"/>
comforting	<input type="checkbox"/>
interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>

The word *tense* means...

	Tick one
upsetting	<input type="checkbox"/>
moving	<input type="checkbox"/>
anxious	<input type="checkbox"/>

## My Time on the Tour – Challenge Activity

### Section C

Today was, as expected, *crazily* busy. I was up at 5am to run some early morning checks and to recheck some of the gear from yesterday. I found it really difficult to sleep. I was running different problems and scenarios through my head for what felt like hours before I dropped off. I'm shattered now. The race today was the shortest one of the whole tour but as I knew from previous years, that didn't mean I was in for an easy day!

Find the words in the excerpt that match the following meanings.

Definition

Word

equipment

exhausted

preceding

potential situations or circumstances

fell asleep

### Section D

Write the meaning of each of these words.

residents	
morale	
maintenance	
carbohydrates	
protein	
gearing	
suspenseful	
mechanic	