

Reading Olympics

• Keep 'em Reading •

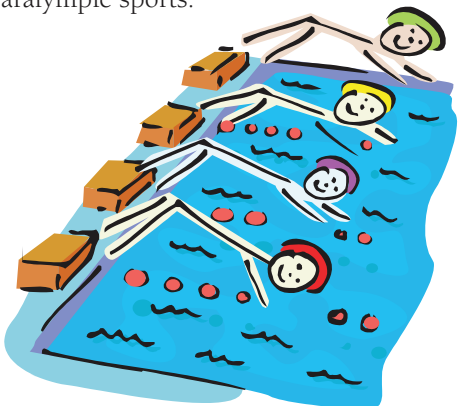
by | Pat Miller

Years of training have gone into the performances of those who will compete in the Summer Olympics. In late summer, we will be able to watch the captivating and courageous performances of archers, gymnasts, swimmers and readers. Athens will be the site of most of the Olympic events, but the events for readers will be held in your very own library media center. Capitalize on the television coverage of the Summer Olympics to introduce a year-long reading promotion for your students. The events that follow are designed for grades three through five, but you can add your own events for younger readers. Students can earn their own gold, silver and bronze medals that are awarded at a ceremony in May.

Introduction to Students

Before beginning your Reading Olympics, give students some historical background of the real Olympics. Post the results of the summer games on the your bulletin board along with information on the upcoming Reading Olympics.

The first of the Ancient Olympic games took place in Greece in 776 BC. Athens was the host of the first modern Olympics in 1896, and Athens hosts the Summer 2004 Olympic games. The official Web site can be found at www.athens2004.com/athens2004. It is written in British English and is also available in Greek and French. By clicking on "Youth 2004," you can access the forty-nine page Olympic Games 2004 Activity Book for 6–9 year olds. A 64-page activity book is also available for ages 10–12. The site is very informative, and includes succinct information on each of the Olympic and Paralympic sports.



Resources

Display and share books from your collection about the Olympics, Ancient Greece and the various sports represented. Some worth sharing are:

- ***The Ancient Greek Olympics*** by Richard Woff. Oxford University Press, 1999. (4–6) Learn about the history, traditions and competitive events connected with the ancient Greek Olympic games.
- ***The First Olympic Games: A Gruesome Greek Myth With a Happy Ending*** by Jean Richards. Millbrook Press, 2000. (2–4) Pelops, son of Tantulus and grandson of the Greek god Zeus, wins a chariot race. In his enthusiasm, he decrees that Olympic games are to be held every four years.
- ***Mount Olympus Basketball*** by Kevin O'Malley. Walker and Company, 2003. (3–5) O'Malley takes a wacky look at the Greek mythical characters via a basketball game between the gods and goddesses and the mortals. The immortals' starting lineup is announced in true television hype, and stars Zeus, Hera, Poseidon ("slippery when wet"), Athena and Hades. The "crazy kids from planet Earth" are Hercules, Achilles, Jason, Theseus and Odysseus. Students and adults will remember these characters in a new and funny way, and will want to not only reread this one several times, but will want to read the original myths to understand the allusions.

Other books are:

- *Eyewitness: Ancient Greece* by Anne Pearson. DK Publishing, 2000.
- *The Gods and Goddesses of Olympus* by Aiki. HarperCollins, 1997.
- *The Greek News* by Anton Powell and Philip Steele. Candlewick Press, 1999.
- *Olympia: Warrior Athletes of Ancient Greece*. Walker and Company, 2001.

Resources on the Web:

- *Ancient Greece: History for Kids*.
www.historyforkids.org/learn/greeks
- *BBC Schools: Ancient Greece*.
www.bbc.co.uk/schools/landmarks/ancient-greece/main_menu.shtml

The Reading Olympics Events

Throughout the year, you will host more than forty events. Students choose which medal they want to earn for each event. Monthly events (except time-sensitive ones) will remain available year-round and five more will be added each month.

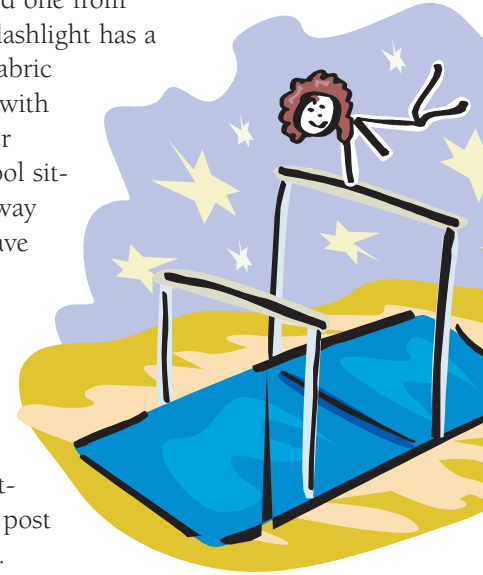
Set up an award system before publicizing your Olympics. For example, complete ten events, earn a bronze and get your name in the library newsletter; complete fifteen events, earn a silver and get a three-book pass good for the rest of the school year; complete twenty events, earn a gold and get a free book (from book order, book fair or book prize box).

How to Compete

Students read to complete each event. They should complete the simple paperwork (see included pages) and turn it in to the library. I have an Olympic collection box, and each week I mark off the completed events on students' record pages. Have the students put their names on the forms and keep them in a binder or folder in alphabetical order by teacher. Before the deadline in May, ascertain which students have earned each award. Students who complete ten events earn a bronze medal. Those who complete fifteen events will earn a bronze and a silver. Twenty completed events earn all three medals.

Reading Olympics Kick-off

Your imagination will come up with an appropriate all school event and various publicity ideas. One suggestion is the carrying of the Olympic torch that passes between all the grade levels (this could be accomplished by representatives at a school assembly, or among classes at the school lunches). Pass the torch from grade to grade with the help of a battery-operated one from Upstart (\$2.95). The torch flashlight has a built-in fan that makes the fabric flame "flicker" and operates with batteries you supply. Another event could involve the school sitting in lines against the hallway walls of their classrooms. Have the entire school read for fifteen minutes at the same time. Minutes read could be computed for the entire school (don't forget teachers, staff, custodians, administrators and even visiting parents). Announce and post this Olympic reading record.



Completing the Event

Duplicate the event pages for each month. Interested students can pick up the forms from the library or you can distribute them to each class. Students can keep the forms in their reading folders and cut them apart as needed to complete the various events. There will be forty events (more if you add your own), and students are required to complete half to earn the gold medal.

Award Ceremony

You may want to plan an awards ceremony in each class for the medalists. Invite parents, the community and the press. Parents may want to provide refreshments, and you will want to take pictures for the library Web page and other publicity means.

Upstart (www.highsmith.com) has 3½" die cut medals with yellow ribbons. Each says, "I Am a Gold Medal Reader." They cost \$3.00 for 12 if five sets or more are ordered. They also have 1½"

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plastic gold medals on tricolor ribbons (12 for \$5.95). Demco (www.demco.com) carries 2½" gold, silver and bronze colored plastic medals (10 for \$14.99, \$12.99 for ten or more sets). The ribbons are sold separately.

Take advantage of additional colorful materials in Upstart's Go for the Gold promotion. Promotional materials include posters, bookmarks, book bags, stickers, certificates, buttons and bulletin board materials

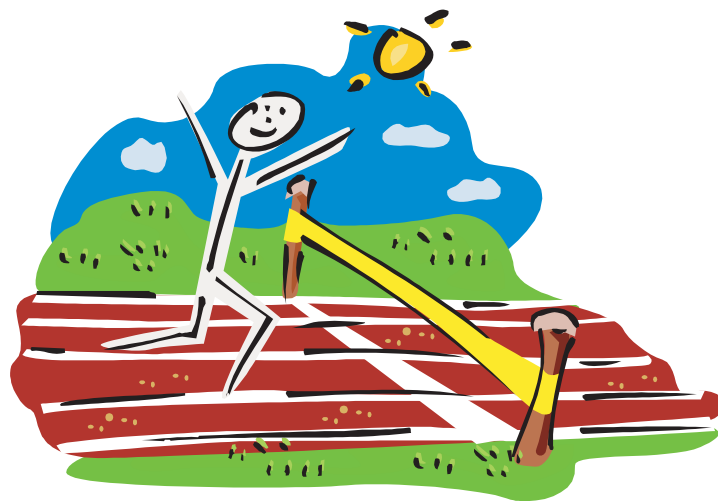
The Events

The events on pages on the following pages can be used as is, or you can select the ones best suited to your students and add others of your own.

Other events could be centered on the various genres or Dewey numbers. They could also involve use of the automated library catalog or various online library resources. Finally, you could design events that dovetail with curriculum topics in your school during that month.

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September Reading Olympics

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1. **Library Card**—Get a public library card. Show it to your librarian.

Name _____ Verified by: _____

..... **Cut here**

2. **Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader**—Earn six (6) points. Use the back of this slip if you need more space. I have earned _____ points by reading and passing quizzes on these books:

Title	Points
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

3. **Autographed Book**—Purchase an autographed book by a visiting author and, if it is a picture book, read it to someone.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title of Book: _____

Read to: _____ On: (date) _____ Verified by: _____

..... **Cut here**

4. **Good Manners**—September is National Good Manners Month. Read a book about good manners. Write one good manner that is a habit with you, and one you want to make a habit.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title of Book: _____

Manner that is a habit for me: _____

Manner that I want to make a habit: _____

..... **Cut here**

5. **Grandparents' Day**—Celebrate your parents' parents. Use the computer catalog to search for books on the topic of "grandparents." Select one to read, perhaps to your grandparent!

Title of Book: _____

I read this book to: (can be yourself) _____

The grandparent(s) in the book are named _____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

6. Book Drive—Donate a great book from your own collection for a book drive (or to the library) to encourage reading for others.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title of Book: _____

Verified by: _____

..... **Cut here**

7. Realistic Fiction—Read a realistic fiction book. Fill out the sentences below.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title of Book: _____

My character, _____, is like me because _____

and not like me because _____

..... **Cut here**



October Reading Olympics

..... **Cut here**

8. Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader—Earn six more points. (12) Use the back of this slip if you need more space. I have earned _____ points by reading and passing quizzes on these books:

Title	Points
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

9. Horror Book—Read a scary book. Use at least three sentences to tell which part you think was most suspenseful. Use the back if needed.

Title: _____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

10. Poetry—Locate a poem about one of the following topics. Practice the poem until you can read it clearly and with feeling. Share it with a class or read it to your family.

trees autumn Halloween your family animal October

Title of poem: _____
Author: _____
Book: _____
I read it to: _____
Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

11. Book Share—Read a nonfiction book to someone younger than you. Have him or her tell you three facts that he or she learned. Write them down here.

I read to: _____ (child)
I read this book: _____
Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

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12. Author Web Site—Tell three things you learn about a favorite author by reading his or her Web page. Go to www.yahooligans.com/School_Bell/Language_Arts/Author to find an author.

Author: _____

I learned: _____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**



November Reading Olympics

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13. Reading or Accelerated Reader—Earn six more points. (18) Use the back of this slip if you need more space. I have earned _____ points by reading and passing quizzes on these books:

Title	Points
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

14. Benefits of Reading—As we count our blessings this month, being able to read is surely one of them. Without reading, we couldn't read a map or the recipe for making chocolate chip cookies. Not counting schoolwork, can you think of five things you can do because you can read? Use the back if you need more room.

Name _____ Teacher _____

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15. Book Fair Scavenger Hunt—Complete the scavenger hunt slip from the book fair and turn it in to the librarian.

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16. Compose a Song—Write a song about a favorite book. It must tell something about the plot of the story and have at least six lines. Make it to fit the melody of a song you know already, like "Old McDonald" or "Twinkle, Twinkle." Sing it to the librarian. (You can bring friends to sing with you.)

Song Name _____

Book Title _____

Name _____ Teacher _____

Librarian Signature _____

..... **Cut here**

..... Cut here

Book Fair Scavenger Hunt

(Distribute at a Book Fair Preview session.)

Name _____ Teacher _____

Locate a book in the fair that fits each genre or book type below. Write the book title. Turn this slip in to the librarian when you finish:

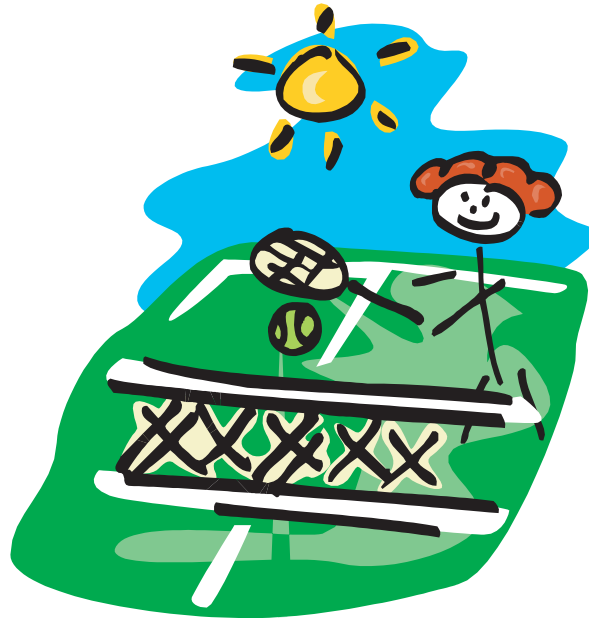
Fantasy: _____

Realistic Fiction: _____

Science: _____

History or Biography: (circle one) _____

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December Reading Olympics

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17. Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader—Earn six more points. (24) Use the back of this slip if you need more space. I have earned _____ points by reading and passing quizzes on these books:

Title	Points
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

18./19.

Choose an Author (counts for two events)—Select an author who has written a number of books (not in a series). Read two of his or her books. Compare the two books in the chart you get from the library.

..... **Cut here**

20. Holiday Readings—Read a holiday book (Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Kwanzaa). It may be a picture book, but must be one with a lot of text. In three or more sentences, write a summary of the plot. Use the back if needed.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title: _____

..... **Cut here**

21. Following Directions—Use a cookbook to make something good to eat. It should have at least four ingredients. Bring a sample and the recipe to the library. Explain how you made it. (No need to copy the recipe, just bring the cookbook or card.) **Or** use written directions to make something. Bring the directions and the item to the library. Explain how you made it. If you like, we can display your item in the library for a few weeks.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Recipe/Craft Name _____

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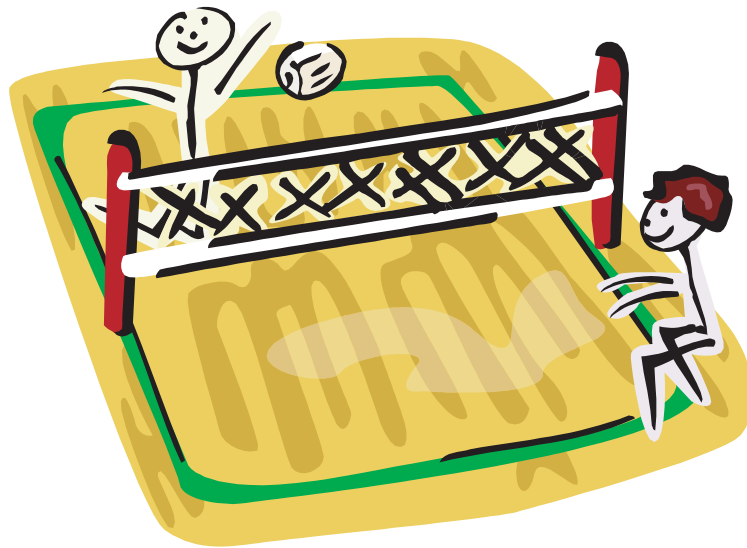
22. Best Book Contest—Name a book that is one of your favorites. Write a description of the book that would make a classmate want to read your book. All suitable entries will be entered in a drawing. The books with the most mentions as favorites will be in the _____ (school name) Top Ten. The winner of the drawing will get to check out an extra book for three weeks!

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title _____

Description: _____

..... **Cut here**



January Reading Olympics

..... **Cut here**

23. Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader—Earn six more points. (30) Use the back of this slip if you need more space. I have earned _____ points by reading and passing quizzes on these books:

Title	Points
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

24. Something New in the New Year—Try a book in a section you've never chosen before. For example, transportation, cooking, religion, careers, etc. Read this new book and record your information below.

Name _____ Teacher _____

New topic: _____

Book title: _____

One thing I learned from reading this book: (Use sentences) _____

..... **Cut here**

25. Martin Luther King Jr. Day—We have a holiday to honor this great American. Use an encyclopedia, almanac or biography of Dr. King to answer the questions.

Why was Dr. King put in jail? (Use sentences) _____

Why do we honor him with a holiday? _____

Write the name of your information source here (book title, Web address, etc.).

..... **Cut here**

..... **Cut here**

26. January Author Birthday—Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm have their birthdays this month. They were German collectors of folk and fairy tales. Read two of their tales and then compare and contrast the two tales.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title of #1 Story _____

Title of #2 Story _____

These stories are similar in these 3 ways:

These stories are different in these 3 ways:

..... **Cut here**

27. January Author Birthday—Bill Peet writes picture book fantasies for older students. Read one of them and write its title below:

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title: _____

Draw (don't trace) a sketch of your favorite Bill Peet character and fill these blanks about the character:

Name _____

Personality _____

Likes _____

Dislikes _____

Good at _____

Sketch:

February Reading Olympics

..... **Cut here**

28. Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader—Earn six more points. (36) Use the back of this slip if you need more space. I have earned _____ points by reading and passing quizzes on these books:

Title _____	Points _____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

29./32.

Favorite authors—Read a book by up to four of the authors below. Give it a score of 1–10, with 10 being the highest, to show your opinion of the book. Each book counts as a separate event.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Author	Title	Score
Louis Sachar		
Judy Blume		
Roald Dahl		
Ellen Conford		
Jamie Gilson		
Barbara Park		
Lois Lowry		
Seymour Simon		
Betsy Byars		
Gordon Korman		
Beverly Cleary		
Matt Christopher		
Avi		
Jack Prelutsky		
Patricia Giff		
Phyllis Naylor		
Donald Sobol		
Jean Fritz		
James Howe		

March Reading Olympics

..... **Cut here**

33. Reading Counts or Accelerated Reader—Earn six more points. (42) Use the back of this slip if you need more space. I have earned _____ points by reading and passing quizzes on these books:

Title	Points
_____	_____
_____	_____

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... **Cut here**

34. Read a “Color” Book—In March, on St. Patrick’s Day, you may hear about “the wearing o’ the green,” an Irish tradition. Select a fiction or nonfiction book that has a color word in the title. Read it and complete the information below:

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title _____

Author _____

This book is (circle one)

mystery adventure fantasy science fiction nonfiction realistic fiction

..... **Cut here**

35. Best First Line—The first line of a book is often the one that grabs you and keeps you reading. Find one you think has a grabber first line. Then read the whole book. Complete the following:

Name _____ Teacher _____

First Line _____

Title _____

Author _____ Pages _____

Was the rest of the book as good as the first line? Yes No

..... **Cut here**

35. Spring Into Reading—Spring begins on March 20 or 21. Find a true book about spring, baby animals, spring flowers or a fiction book with a spring setting.

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title _____

Author _____ Pages _____

..... **Cut here**

..... **Cut here**

36. Book a Winner!—Read a book that has won a gold or silver medal. If it is a picture book, you must read two for this event. Remember that nonfiction has won awards as well. (Put a second picture book's information on the back.)

Name _____ Teacher _____

Title _____

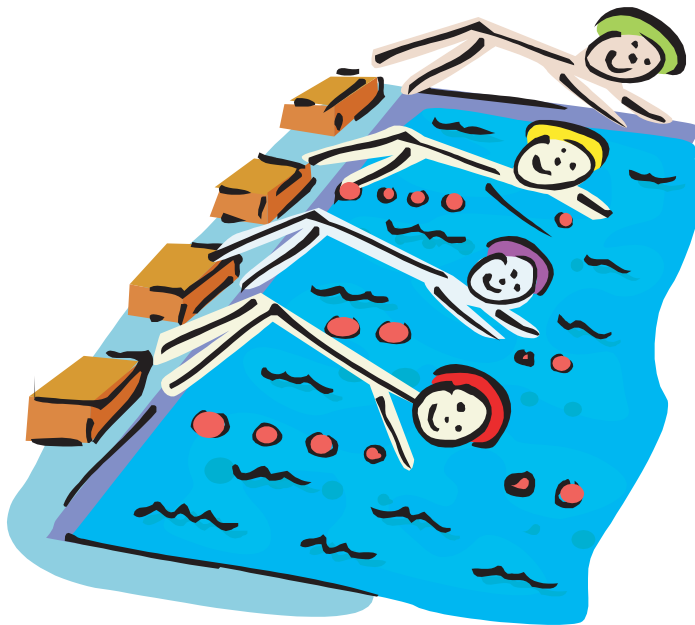
Author _____ Pages _____

Award _____ Year _____

Do you think this book deserves this award? Yes No

Why or why not?

..... **Cut here**



April Reading Olympics

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This month, you get to choose the events. You may complete up to five events. Choose an event to complete each day. If you do it, put the date you do it in the box and tell where you found the item.

Complete 4 dates to equal 1 event; 8 dates = 2 events; 12 dates = 3 events; 16 events = 4 events

ALL READING OLYMPIC EVENTS ARE DUE BY MAY _____.

Name _____ Teacher _____

..... Cut here



April Events

Read all the events on this calendar today	Make a bookmark	Share a book with a sister, brother, or pet	Read a chapter of a book to your Mom or Dad	Listen to one of your friends read	Read a graph today	Read the newspaper headlines
Read the comics	Read a map	Read a joke to your teacher or librarian	Read during part of your recess	Read the nutritional information on a food product.	Read the back of the cereal box during breakfast.	Read a set of game instructions
Read all the street signs when you are in the car	Look up a word in the dictionary and read all its meanings	Look up the number and address of your favorite fast food restaurant.	Read a recipe of your Mom's or in a cookbook.	Read an Internet page today	Read the TV listings for this evening	Read a book that was a favorite when you were younger
Read a children's magazine	Read 3 poems from a poetry book.	Read through a catalog.	Read the closed captions on your TV.	Read something that came in today's mail.	Read to one of your friends.	Read the weather forecast in the newspaper.
Read the ingredients on a health product in your medicine cabinet.	Read the summary on the back of two video movie boxes.					Example Read a graph today Chronicle, p. 35 4/10

Olympic Record Page

Name _____

Teacher _____

September	1	2	3	4	5
October	6	7	8	9	10
November	11	12	13	14	15
December	16	17	18	19	20
January	21	22	23	24	25
February	26	27	28	29	30
March	31	32	33	34	35
April	36	37	38	39	40