

A game of polo with a headless goat background

[Entertainment](#), [Games](#)



This extract comes from a book that was written as a spin-off from Emma Levine's television series about strange and unusual sports. It is a travelogue (a book which describes travel in a foreign country) in which she describes these sports, the people involved and her experiences of filming them. In doing so, she gives an insight not just into the sports themselves, but into the lives and culture of the people who take part in (and watch) them.

Understanding the text Emma Levine's purpose in writing her book was to describe and inform.

She obviously has to engage and hold the reader's interest. As you study this text, you need to think about how she does this. On the surface, the passage seems a straightforward description and narrative of the race, but it isn't.

First of all, there is not just one race happening, but three: The donkey race? The spectators' race? The writer's race to get the best pictures Emma – a journalist – wanting to capture the epic moment of the race Yaqoob – an unskilled driver (danger) – he love the risk that donkey race give him Iqbal – partner/ helper – was send to find our who was the winner of this race

Plot During a seven-year journey around India spent immersing herself in the cricket subculture, author Emma Levine heard about the wonderful game of buzkashi, a kind of anarchic rugby on horseback where teams of men wrestle and race to grab a headless goat and propel it towards goal. This sparked a desire to explore Asia's unique traditional sports. A Game of Polo with a Headless Goat is Emma Levine's absorbing account of her epic adventure, which took her from camel wrestling in Turkey through bull racing in India to traditional gymnastics in Iran, performed topoetry and the beat of a drum.

Sometimes she travelled so far off the beaten track that her journeys sometimes took days and she discovered places where western women are such a rare sight that she was mobbed by onlookers. And everywhere she went she met people who act as the guardians of their ancient sports, protecting the traditions that have evolved over generations. While they recount the folklore that surrounds their local pastimes, Emma Levine examines the status of indigenous sports in a world dominated by satellite TV, the web and the likes of Manchester United.

Are they sports of the past or sports of the future? Illustrated with stunning photography, *A Game of Polo with a Headless Goat* evocatively portrays sporting ways of life rarely seen in the western world in such a way as to reveal what it is about sport that makes it so universally inspiring. What can I say about language? Most newspaper reports of sports races are serious in tone, and try to give the facts of the race and what it was like. Emma Levine's purpose is much more complicated. In this passage there is a real mixture of the comic and the serious, with a lot of information given as well.

You need to consider each part of it carefully. The passage can be defined as a series of linked paragraphs, describing events in a sequence of time and concluding with the end of the race and the writer's overview of what happened. The internal structure is much more complex than this simple outline suggests

Paragraph by paragraph

Paragraph 1-3 / Build up

Paragraph 1 - Optimism, author promotes her own, Yaqoob and Iqbal's excitement. ' We'll open the car boot... we'll join the cars. ' ? Brief description of what will happen and Levine's expectations.

Builds immediate excitement and enthusiasm for race and the reader's expectation of instant action. Works effectively with Paragraph 2 - Contrast in tone between "The two lads...suddenly fired up with enthusiasm" in which Levine narrates the creation of new enthusiasm within locals (her guides) to reflect on the reader and the rest of the paragraph Use of "eternity" - hyperbole to exaggerate impatience and derived emotions such as boredom "the only action was... gazed around at us." Hopeless tone, at the point of giving up, is a let down to the reader

The contrast emphasizes the climax in paragraph 7 Paragraph 3 - Alternatively, Levine builds hope and optimism in paragraph three, "coming, coming" the locals replied Line 12: "I was beginning to lose faith... lads remained confident" holds elements of first-hand pessimism/ loss in faith and witnessed optimism in the form of reassurance. The effect creates suspense further building the impact of the Climax. Paragraph 4 & 5 / Climactic Beginning Paragraph 4 - Climax appears as an explosion of activity Choice of diction "revved" prominent v sound creates imagery and the impression of speed.

Develops the moment of frisson Change in tone from narrative to informative and factual, now not narrating their journey but provoking the reader's interest. "The Kibla donkey is said to reach speeds of up to 40kph" "Although not cruelly" at the end of paragraph four seems out of place, this is where Levine reveals that she is conscious of her effect on travelers and corrects the imagery she has introduced. She protects the culture and the tradition in order to promote the sport and the traditions. Paragraph 5 -

Change in punctuation to speed up the pace of Levine's writing, overall generating excitement.

She begins to use lists and triads (" horns tooting, bells ringing, and the special rattles used just for this purpose") and again incorporates an informative tone in order to introduce different aspects of culture. Long, disjointed sentences imitate the excitement, pace, and disorder of the event: " men standing on top of their cars and vans" Paragraph 6 / Levine Enters Race Use of analogies like " Formula One" (fast-paced, seemingly chaotic), " City center rush hour" relates to reader and creates understanding of speed and " anarchic" disorder. Paragraph 7

Illustrates danger in order to provoke different kind of excitement, " Survival of the fittest"? Creates a life and death situation, introduces the animal, hunt theme. Choice of diction creates a sense of importance, desperation, and danger. e. g. " Depended" creates a sense of necessity Animal theme: " sharp flicks" " quick reflexes" " nerves of steel" all phrases associate with an animal during a chase or a hunt. All instinctive. " Horn" could be interpreted as a pun - car horn or animal horn/ impression of danger, competition, tension even battle " Yaqoob loved it. Tone is enthusiastic, describing the fun, excitement.

Link to ending. " Growing more colourful" Euphemistic impression of tension Paragraph 8 / End of Race Levine describes scenery(??????) to reflect the atmosphere. " Road straightened and leveled" Tone is calmer, pace has been slowed, longer sentences, wider distribution of punctuation. Effective ending " The race was over. " Mixture of long sentences with short blunt

ending implies immediate end of race and excitement. Paragraph 9 / Another Beginning " I assumed the winner was the one who completed the race but it was not seen that way by everyone. Emphasis on alien culture and traditions, so exotic that even common reasoning differs.

" Voices were raised, fists were out and tempers rising" Levine reuses lists and triads to speed up the pace, rebuild the excitement lost at the end of the race. Ending Irony, incorporated humour to reflect on the reality of the danger. Links back to " Yaqoob loved it. " Where the tone was still expressing shared enjoyment and fun, new realization and understanding is born to recreate an adapted impression of the entire extract