Inspirational British Female Athletes

In 2019, in the IAAF World Athletics Championships, Great Britain won lots of medals. Now, with the Olympics in 2020 approaching, discover four of Britain's most inspirational female athletes.

Denise Lewis

Denise Lewis was born on 27th August 1972 in West Bromwich. Denise was a competitor in the heptathlon. The heptathlon has seven events: the 100 metre hurdles; the high jump; the shot put; the 200 metres sprint; the long jump; the javelin throw; the 800 metres.

In 2000, in the Olympics in Sydney, Denise performed exceptionally well and won a gold medal for Great Britain. Incredibly, during the 800 metres, which was the final event, Denise had to run with part of her leg bandaged due to an injury.

After retiring from athletics in 2005, Denise became a successful television presenter and has been the commentator for many high-profile athletics events.

Did You Know...?

The men's heptathlon contains different events to the women's and is held indoors instead of outside.

Dina Asher-Smith

Dina Asher-Smith was born in London on 4th December 1995. She is a sprinter and is the British record holder for the 100 metres and 200 metres. Dina is now described as being the fastest British woman in history.

In 2016, Dina won a bronze medal in the Olympics in Rio with her team in the 4 × 100 metres relay. Unfortunately, in February of 2017, Dina broke her foot. However, this didn't slow her down; just six months later, she was able to help her relay team to win silver in the IAAF World Athletics Championships. Then, in the 2018 European Athletics Championships, Dina won an incredible total of three gold medals for Great Britain.

Dina is still competing and is now training to compete in Tokyo for the Olympics in 2020.

Did You Know...?

As well as being an amazing runner, Dina has also earnt a degree in history.

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Jessica Ennis-Hill

Jessica Ennis-Hill was born on 28th January 1986 in Sheffield. She is a gold medal winning heptathlete. In London in 2012, Jessica was one of the six star Olympic athletes to win gold for Great Britain on the same day.

When she was younger, Jessica and her sister would regularly attend athletics camps outside of school hours. Before her success in the Olympics in London, Jessica had already won a number of gold medals, including a gold in the IAAF World Championships in Athletics in 2009.

Did You Know...?

Jessica's first ever prize at an athletics competition was a pair of trainers which she won when she was 10.

After winning silver in Rio in the 2016 Olympics, Jessica announced that she was going to retire from athletics. Today, she continues to inspire many young athletes and has even co-authored a book for children.

Katarina Johnson-Thompson

Katarina Johnson-Thompson was born on 9th January 1993 and grew up in Liverpool. She is the current British record holder for the heptathlon after earning first place in October 2019 in the IAAF World Athletics Championships. Katarina won lots of the events, including the 100 metre hurdles and the 800 metres.

From a young age, Katarina competed in long jump and high jump competitions before making her first Olympic appearance in 2012 in London. Since Jessica Ennis-Hill's retirement, many people have looked to Katarina to continue Britain's heptathlon success.

Did You Know...?

Katarina is accident-prone while training and her new coach has given her the nickname 'Katastrophe'.

After winning gold in the IAAF World Athletics Championships, Katarina is now training for the next Olympics, which will begin on 24th July 2020 in Tokyo.

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Questions

1. Where was Dina Asher-Smith born? Tick one.

   ○ West Bromwich
   ○ London
   ○ Sheffield
   ○ Liverpool

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

   ☐ Katarina is training for the Olympics in 2020.
   ☐ Katarina attended her first Olympics.
   ☐ Katarina became a British record holder in the heptathlon.
   ☐ Katarina was born in Liverpool.

3. Look at the section on **Jessica Ennis-Hill**.
   Find and copy one word which means the same as **told everyone**.

   _____

4. Which **two** athletes are still competing in athletics competitions?

   _____ and _____

5. Who currently holds the British record for the heptathlon?

   _____

6. Why do you think the author has chosen to use the word **inspirational** to describe these athletes? Explain your answer.

   _____

   _____

   _____

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7. Imagine that you are **Dina Asher-Smith**.
   Write about how you felt after the European Athletics Championships in 2018.
   Use the text to help you.

8. Do you think that Katarina Johnson-Thompson will be successful in the Olympics in 2020?
   Explain your answer.

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Answers

1. Where was Dina Asher-Smith born? Tick one.

   ○ West Bromwich
   ✓ **London**
   ○ Sheffield
   ○ Liverpool

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

   [4] Katarina is training for the Olympics in 2020.
   [2] Katarina attended her first Olympics.
   [3] Katarina became a British record holder in the heptathlon.
   [1] Katarina was born in Liverpool.

3. Look at the section on **Jessica Ennis-Hill**.
   Find and copy one word which means the same as **told everyone**.

   announced

4. Which **two** athletes are still competing in athletics competitions?

   Dina Asher-Smith and **Katarina Johnson-Thompson**

5. Who currently holds the British record for the heptathlon?

   Katarina Johnson-Thompson currently holds the British record for the heptathlon.

6. Why do you think the author has chosen to use the word **inspirational** to describe these athletes? Explain your answer.

   Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author has used the word inspirational because all of these athletes have achieved amazing things in sport by working hard and that might inspire other people to do the same.

7. Imagine that you are **Dina Asher-Smith**.
   Write about how you felt after the European Athletics Championships in 2018.
   Use the text to help you.

   Pupils' own responses, such as: Wow! That was such an amazing few days. I can't believe that I won three gold medals! I feel really proud of myself for working so hard and I look forward to the next event.

8. Do you think that Katarina Johnson-Thompson will be successful in the Olympics in 2020? Explain your answer.

   Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Katarina Johnson-Thompson will be really successful during the Olympics in 2020 because she holds the British record for the heptathlon and is the world champion.