

The Gumball 3000



Before Reading

- Take a look at the picture. What do you see?
- What is a supercar?
- What do you think the Gumball 3000 is?

London, England

It's a warm, sunny spring day in London, and 120 cars are lining up to participate in the most unusual road adventure in the world. Over the next five days, some of the fastest and most expensive cars on earth will be driven over a 3,000 mile (4,800 km) course in a rally called the Gumball 3000.

The Gumball 3000 started thirteen years ago in London. Maximillion Cooper, a British race car driver and fashion designer decided to take a road trip with 55 of his rich friends from London, south to Rimini, Italy, and back up to London. The friends all had a great time, and Cooper decided to take his love for cars and driving and turn it into a business.

So, what is the Gumball 3000 exactly? It is a week-long celebration of cars and driving, and it is a big party for rich people! There are many Lamborghinis, Ferraris, Bentleys, and other high end automobiles driving in the event, but there are also some trucks and camping cars for the drivers who value comfort over speed. The drivers who take part in the Gumball 3000 pay a lot of money to join in the rally (from \$50,000 to more than \$100,000), and a portion of the profits from the rally go to charity.

Gumballers (as the participants are called) drive in long stages of roughly 500 miles (800 km) each day. Their cars are often tuned and are covered in racing numbers and Gumball logos, so they are easy to see. They drive along public roads where speeding is illegal, but the Gumballers usually drive very fast! Many Gumballers get into trouble with highway police officers, and often get several speeding tickets in a day. Luckily, drivers in the Gumball rally have lots of money to pay their traffic fines!



Some Gumballers are having a talk with the police...

One of the most interesting **aspects** of the Gumball 3000 is the **game of cat and mouse** going on between Gumballers and police. Even though Gumballers have enough money to pay their speeding tickets, avoiding those tickets and the police is a big part of the Gumball 3000. Gumballers use **radar detectors**, **police scanners**, and **CB radios** to try to find out where the police are. The police also know about the Gumballers and try to work together to catch them driving dangerously. Getting stopped by police slows the Gumballers down, and if they get too many tickets in one area they sometimes have to stay in jail for a night!

The Gumball 3000 takes a different course every year, and sometimes the rally takes place on more than one **continent**. When the Gumballers can't drive to their next destination, they simply rent a plane or a boat for themselves and their cars and take off! The Gumball 3000 has traveled all over Europe, the United States, Canada, and parts of Asia. In 2008, the Gumball 3000 stopped in Pyongyang, North Korea before driving to the finish line in Beijing during the summer Olympic games.



Gumballers travel by boat to their next stage.

While the Gumball 3000 seems like a lot of fun, there has been some controversy surrounding its rich drivers and their sometimes dangerous driving. For example, in 2003 a Gumballer driving a Koenigsegg CC8S got a speeding ticket in Texas for driving 242 mph (389 km/h) in a 75 mph (120 km/h) zone. This ticket gave the driver the world record for the fastest speeding ticket.

While the fastest speeding ticket may seem funny, there have been some serious accidents in the Gumball 3000. In the 2007 rally, a Porsche 911 driven by a Gumballer smashed into a small Volkswagen while driving through Macedonia. The two Gumballers were unhurt, but the two elderly people in the Volkswagen were killed. The Gumballers claimed that the Volkswagen driver made a mistake that led to the crash, but many believe that the Porsche was driving too fast.

Maximillion Cooper has tried to make it clear though that the Gumball 3000 is not a race; it is a road rally. The goal of the Gumball 3000 is not to finish first, it is to finish in style and have fun. The Gumball 3000 ends with a big

party at a fancy hotel, and Mr. Cooper hands out awards at the ending party with names like "The Sprit of the Gumball" and the "Bad Behavior" awards.

As of this story's writing, the 2016 Gumball 3000 is just getting underway and there has already been a crash on the second day. A rare supercar called a Gumpert Appolo slid off a wet road on its way to the first checkpoint in Manchester, England. Luckily no one was hurt!

Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with the vocabulary words below.

getting underway in style stage continent CB radio
radar detector police scanner game of cat and mouse
elderly value comfort over speed portion rally

1. To do something _____ is to do something while looking good.
2. There are seven _____s on the earth.
3. When something is starting we say it is _____.
4. A _____ is a game of hiding and chasing.
5. Senior citizens are also called _____ people.
6. At the end of a _____ in a race, the racers take a break.
7. A _____ means a piece or a part of something.
8. People who _____ would rather drive a luxury car than drive a sports car.

9. A _____ is often used by truck drivers to communicate with each other.

10. _____s allow people to hear what the police are doing in different areas.

11. A _____ is a kind of motoring competition.

12. Some people use _____s to avoid being caught speeding.

Short Answers

Try to answer each question in a full sentence.

1. Why do you think that many Gumballers drive fast?

2. Why do Gumballers sometimes go to jail?

3. Why is there controversy surrounding the Gumballers and their driving?

4. Do you think Gumballers are trying harder to compete or to have fun?

5. What do you think "finish in style" means?
