

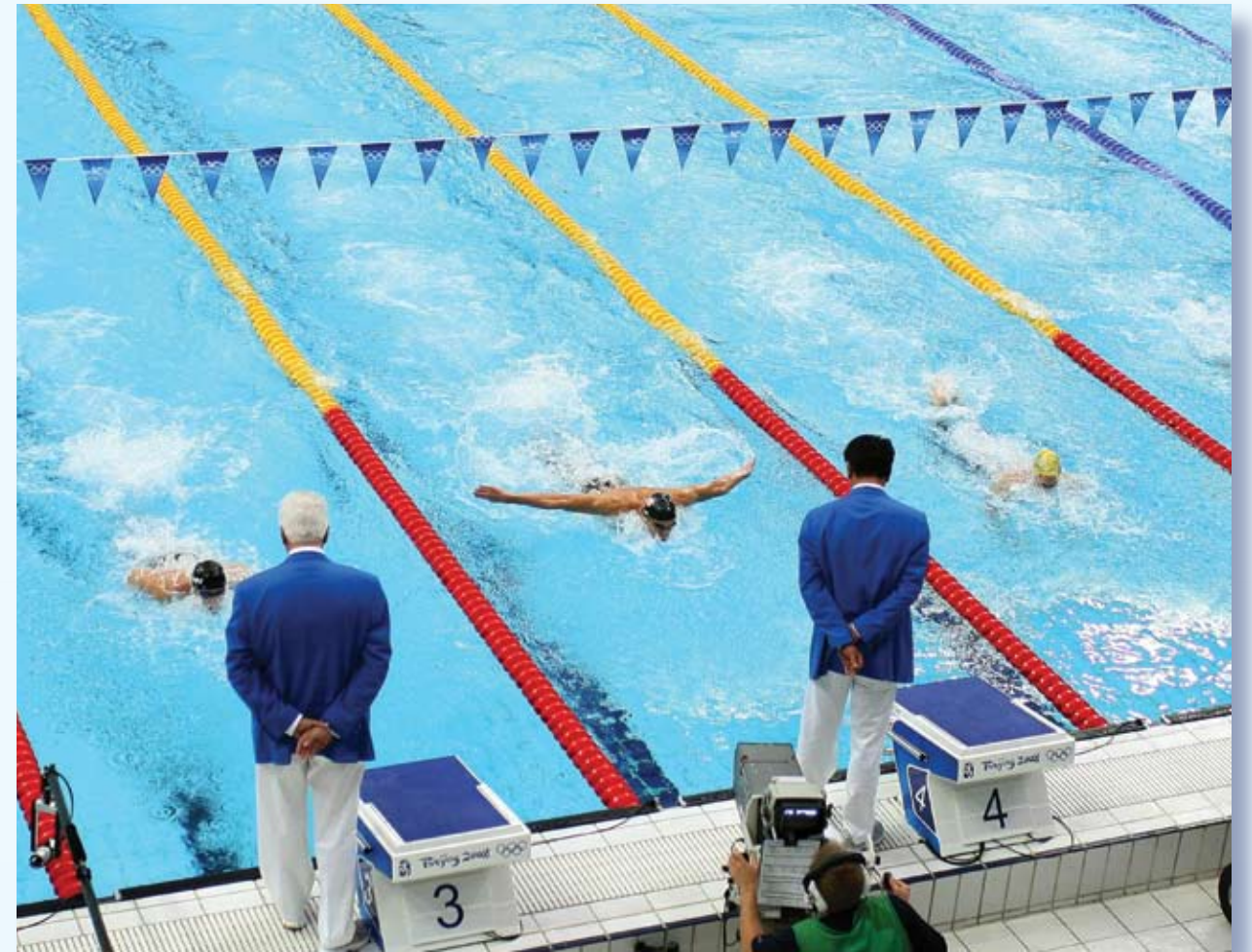
# The 2008 Beijing Olympics

Michael Phelps shot through the water like a bullet through the air. If the U.S. Olympic swim team won this 4 x 100-meter medley **relay**, Michael would get another gold medal. He had already won seven. Another one would break American swimmer Mark Spitz's 1972 record. Spitz had won seven gold medals—the most ever at a single Olympics.



*Michael cut through the water with amazing speed in his part of the relay race.*

When Michael began his **leg** of the relay race, however, his team was behind. Swimmers from Japan and Australia were in the lead. Michael fought extra hard to catch up. Could he swim fast enough for his team to take the lead and win?



*Michael, middle, swimming the third leg of the 4 x 100-meter relay race*

In an Olympic relay, each member of the winning team receives a gold medal. However, the win counts as only one gold medal for the country that the athletes represent.