

Sporting traditions

Task 1 Types of sport

Write as many sports as you can under these headings

Extreme sports	Traditional sports	Blood sports

- Have you ever tried one of these sports?
- Which is your favourite?
- Do you dislike any of them?
- Are any of them popular in your country?

Task 2 Sports challenge

Many sports played today have their origins in the UK. Read the clues and guess the sport

Clues

This game was started in Scotland and the rules were decided by a Scottish club set up in 1877. Now there are over 2,000 places where you can play this sport in the UK. The number of players can vary. You have to hit a small ball into a hole.

The Association which decides the rules of this game was founded in 1863. There are eleven players on each team and a game lasts ninety minutes. The team has to try and get their ball in to the net of the opposing team to score a goal. The team with the most goals wins.

This game has been played since the 1500s and is known as the English National Game. Many countries that were once part of the British Empire still play this game from India to Australia. Two teams dressed in white use a batsman who must hit a very small, very hard ball. The opposing team throws the ball and must try to hit a wicket behind the batsman.

This game originated in an English Public school of the same name. The ball used in this game is not round in shape. There are 15 players on each side. The Welsh are very keen players of this sport. New Zealand, Australia and South Africa have good teams.

You can play this on a grass or on a hard court. One of the most famous competitions is held every year at Wimbledon in London. The first Championship was played at Wimbledon in 1877 but it is an English sport that has been played in various forms for centuries. The players use a racket to hit a small ball over a net and the opposing player must hit the ball back with his racket.

- How many did you guess?
- Make a clue to challenge your class.

Task 3 Sporting traditions in the UK

Read these descriptions of sporting customs in the UK. Some of the customs or rules might seem strange but they have been practised for hundreds of years.

- Which sport is practised throughout the UK?
- Which sport is not usually played by men?
- Which sport has an incredible number of players?
- Which sport is the most dangerous?
- Which sport requires the most physical strength?
- Which sports involve throwing something?

Sporting traditions in the UK

Forty-one days before Easter Sunday is a special day for Christians. All over England people used to celebrate the start of this period before Easter known as Lent by using up all their milk, flour and eggs. They made pancakes with the ingredients and then held pancake races in the streets. Each town has its own rules for the pancake races. The oldest and most famous is held in Olney in Buckinghamshire. The players must be women over the age of 16 and they wear a hat and an apron. They must run for nearly 400 metres with a frying pan with a pancake in it. They must throw the pancake in the air (toss it) at least 3 times during the race. The first woman to the finish line with a pancake in her pan is the winner. It is a great skill to toss a pancake and run at the same time.

The Highland Games is a Championship which began in the middle of the 19th century in the Scottish Highlands. Games are traditionally held in September. One of the most popular sports is 'tossing the caber'. Tossing means throwing. Players have to throw a long and extremely heavy wooden pole, like a tree trunk. The average caber weighs 68 kilos and is usually about 6 metres long. The heaviest caber in the history of caber tossing weighed an incredible 127 kilos. The player who throws his wooden caber the furthest is not necessarily the winner. The style of throwing is more important than the distance. Players are usually very big and strong!

St John's Ambulance and first aid volunteers are always present at the two day football match held in Ashbourne in the Midlands every Spring. The Ashbourne street football game is one of many street football matches played out all over the UK. The town is divided into two teams, depending on where you live. There can be hundreds of players in each team and the two goal posts are nearly five kilometres apart. The ball is not kicked but 'hugged' close to the chest. The shopkeepers in the centre of town have to cover their windows with wooden boards to stop the crowds of players smashing in to the glass. All locals, young and old, enjoy this very lively and sometimes violent game. The match ends with a few broken arms or injuries but it is all so much fun say the locals. They have been playing this game every year for more than two centuries. It is a bit difficult to get the ball from one end of town to the other and this year they played until 10 in the evening. Unfortunately, nobody was able to score a goal.

- Which sport do you think is the silliest?
- Which do you think is the most difficult?
- Which sport would you like to try?

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Task 4 Local customs

Take an important custom, sporting event or competition in your town or region. Describe its origins, the rules and the traditions involved.

- Do you enjoy celebrating local customs?
- Are any customs starting to disappear?
- Have you 'adopted' any sports or customs from other countries? Which?

Task 5 Are you a good sport?

A person is said to be a 'good sport' in the UK if they:

- Follow the rules of the game and never cheat
- Do not change the rules to suit themselves
- Don't mind losing and don't make a fuss if they lose
- Help other players in difficulty
- Have fun playing the game

Make questions to find out if people in your class are good sports.

Example question: '**Have you ever shouted or cried when you lost a game?**'

Task 6 Sporting terms and phrases

Think of any English sporting words or terms that you use in your country

- Compare words
- Why do you think we borrow words from other languages?

Task 7 Sporting improvisations/role plays

Improvisation 1

You are playing cards with friends and suspect that one of the players is cheating. Challenge this player and see how they explain their behaviour.

Improvisation 2

You want to try an extreme sport but your parents are against this idea. Try to convince your Dad that it will be a positive experience.

Improvisation 3

Pick your favourite sport or sporting moment. Imagine you are a commentator on the radio. Tell us what is happening and make it sound exciting.

Improvisation 4

Speak for one minute on blood sports like shooting animals and birds or fox hunting. You can be for or against this type of sport. Give your opinion.