

# Sports and Games

Sports are one of the most popular leisure time activities. This is mainly due to the fact that they help one to keep fit both physically and mentally. Such a form of relaxation as sports is refreshing, can help take off some weight, and makes use of one's skills and strength. Last but not least, during sports events one can meet a lot of new people and see how it feels to be a winner or a loser.

The increase of interest in sports is best illustrated by the appearance of ever new sports facilities. It is important to note that besides taking an active part in sports it is also possible just to watch sports events as a spectator or play the pools (bet money on certain sports results).

Usually all sports and games are further differentiated into two groups according to where they can be practised. Indoor sports include for example gymnastics, table tennis, boxing, wrestling etc. On the other hand, among outdoor sports are skiing (down-hill, cross-country, slalom, ski jump), sledding, hiking, rock climbing, horse riding, golf, and some aquatic sports such as rowing or windsurfing. Non-professional cycling, or riding a (mountain) bike, which is one of the most popular activities, is also enjoyed out of doors (on the roads or paths). But most sports and almost all games can be done both indoors and outdoors. Meetings in all the track and field events (sprints, middle and long distance runs, hurdling, high and long jump, pole vault, shot put, javelin and discus throw) take place in summer stadiums as well as in athletic halls. Also one of the healthiest sports, swimming, and figure skating do not actually demand a roofed room. One can easily recognize that those sports which can be done only on ice or snow (skating, skiing etc.) are winter sports whereas all the rest we call summer or all-season sports.

The games are usually all-season activities, and they are practised both indoors and outdoors. The most numerous group of games are the ball games. Let us mention the individual games in the order in which they are popular in Great Britain, the United States, and the Slovak Republic. The British are great lovers of competitive sports, and when they are neither playing nor watching games they like to talk about them. England was also the first home of many popular modern games. Among these, football is the most wide spread. As is commonly known, in this collective game two teams of 11 members play with a ball on a grass playing field. The purpose is to kick the ball so as to get it into the opposite goal. In Britain there are a great number of clubs (some of them are Aston Villa, Crystal Palace, Manchester United, Arsenal, Queens Park Rangers), and in London there is one of the world's biggest football stadiums – the Wembley Arena. Football is played all over the world. In the United States, however, it is called soccer (derived from the name Association Football).

Rugby football is also very popular. This game was first played at Rugby (a town) School, England. Thus the name. In this game the ball is oval. While golf is of Scottish origin, cricket was and still remains an English national game. Next to soccer the chief spectator sport is horse-racing. The best known steeple-chase race is the Great National, run at Aintree near Liverpool. Another annual sporting event that the British look forward to eagerly is the famous university rowing race between Oxford and Cambridge, which is held on the river Thames. The lawn tennis season reaches its peak every year at the Wimbledon tournament which is played in London in early June. For relaxation squash is also played.

In the USA most sports and games have been to a great extent commercialized. The four foremost professional games there are American football, baseball, basketball, and ice-hockey (it has its roots in Canada, though). These games are turned into big shows in which the sports stars make a lot of money. American football differs from European mainly in the shape of the ball (oval), the way in which it is carried by the players (in the hands), and the form of scoring (touchdowns at field goals). Other sports such as the former Indian game lacrosse or field hockey are also popular.

In our country ball games rank among the most popular ones. They include especially football, volleyball, basketball, handball, and tennis. Besides this ice-hockey is played at a very high level here too. Our country has produced many sportsmen who have achieved success in top international competitions.

In our town there are rather many sports facilities available. We can visit both the summer stadium which serves as a track and football field, and the ice-rink where one can skate. Next to the summer stadium a few clay tennis and volleyball courts and a handball playground can be found. For indoor activities there is a modern sports hall and several fitness centres around the town. The only fault is that we have no indoor swimming pool yet. Besides many other small fields elsewhere in the town and a few gymnasiums near the schools there is a ski-tow on a nearby hill at the skiers' disposal.

Our physical training lessons are twice or three times a week. Usually before the lesson starts we change into sports wear such as T-shirts, shorts, track pants, sweatshirts, and sneakers in a dressing room. When the weather is good, our lessons are usually filled with running, jumping or simply playing games. But first we must always do a little warm-up exercise (for those who do not do morning exercises it is especially necessary). In winter or in bad weather, though, we go to the gym and do gymnastics. Our gym is fully equipped – there are many apparatuses there (wallbars, horizontal bar, parallel bars, beam, rings, vaulting horse, mats, springboards, climbing rope and pole).

The Olympic Games (the Olympics) were already held in ancient Greece. At that time they put emphasis on the ideal of an all-round developed person. The Olympics were renewed by Pierre de Coubertin about a hundred years ago and today as well as in ancient times they take place every four years. Since 1924 there are two parts to the games – the winter part and the summer part – which alternate once every two years.

## My Attitude to Sports

Sports and games have always played an important role in my life and even now they are my number one hobby. Since my early childhood I was keen on such sports as running, tennis, table tennis, and badminton. I used to play just for the sake of playing and it was great fun. I also learned to swim when I was very young. Since then swimming is my most favourite sport. When I was six I received my first bike from my parents and up to now I go cycling for long distances at least once a week. I used to go with my parents almost every winter to the mountains where I soon got a good opportunity to ski. My parents also took me skating when the lake was frozen over.

Later I became more interested in various ball games. I started to play football in a club and I kept playing for 5 more years. We had practices three times a week and it always meant a lot of running so I finally gave up. Then it was volleyball and basketball that attracted me as I was growing taller and taller. Every Friday my friends and I had a volleyball session in one of the local gyms. In my everyday life, though, I only sometimes do morning exercises, sometimes a few push-ups, sit-ups or knee-bends and from time to time I go jogging around the pond in the evenings. Although I never really got any prize or award in sports, I still like to do them just for fun. I also tried body building which has become fashionable in these days but I haven't the patience and persistence to go to the fitness centre regularly. I almost forgot one game which gives me a lot of pleasure – chess. Although the number of games I've lost and won are in balance, I don't consider myself an extremely good player.

As for watching sports, I love to go to see the matches of our ice-hockey team and besides that there is always something on TV like tennis tournaments or world championships in all kinds of sports and games.

### Questions on the text:

1. Why is sport a good way to relaxation?
2. Can you name any indoor and outdoor sports and games?
3. What sports events can be practised in summer/in winter/all the year round?
4. What sports and games are popular in Great Britain?
5. What sports and games are popular with the Americans?
6. What sports and games do people in our country enjoy?
7. What sports facilities are described in the text?
8. What is the structure of a PE (physical education) lesson?
9. What sports and games did the writer do in his childhood?
10. How did his interests concerning sport develop later?

### Vocabulary:

contest, competition, tournament, championship, Olympic Games, match, compete, record, record breaker/holder, top-level sportsman, runner, racer, jumper, jogger, event, discipline, ball games, athletics, winter/summer sports, indoor/outdoor sports, gymnasium (hall), sportsfield, sportsground, playground, sports stadium, ice-rink, do/play/take up sports, games; apparatus, professional/amateur sportsman

### Exercises:

#### 1. Describe sports facilities in your town:

winter/summer stadium, sports hall, sportsground, ice-rink, tennis court, golf/ski (down-hill, cross-country) race course, (indoor) swimming pool, fitness/bowling/ski centre, ski jump, sauna [saunə]

#### 2. Describe the equipment of your gym. What sports and games can you play there? What does your PE lesson look like? Which of the exercises can you do and what is your record?

dressings room (T-shirts, shorts, track pants, track suit, sweatshirts, gym shoes, plimsolls, sneakers, spikes), warm-up exercises, apparatus work, horizontal bar, parallel bars, (balance) beam, rings, (small) vaulting [vo:ltiŋ] horse, mats [mæts], springboards, climbing rope, pole, wallbars, clubs, push-up, knee-bend, sit-up, head stand, head spring, hand stand, bend the trunk backwards/forwards, stride vault, stretch the arms sideways

#### 3. Are all of these aquatic sports?

(indoor) swimming pool, swimming (backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, crawl, freestyle), water polo, spring-board/platform diving [daivɪŋ], boating, rowing [rəʊɪŋ], water skiing, windsurfing, sailing, canoeing [kə'nu:ɪŋ], yacht [jɒt], sail [seɪl], underwater diving

#### 4. Describe a football/rugby/ice hockey/tennis game.

football field/pitch, toss a coin, kick-off, pass, attack, score a goal, goalkeeper, hit the cross bar (goalpost), equalize [i:kwəlaɪz], eliminate [i'limineɪt], win/lose/tie/(draw), cup final, who's playing who?, 2 : 0 (two to nil), 2 : 2 (two both), drop to the 10th place

ice-rink, puck [pʌk], stick, helmet, strip, tennis court, racket, net, serve, set, game, love game

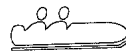
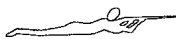
**5. Do you know how/where some of these games are played? What equipment do you need?**

cricket, baseball (bat, base), basketball, volleyball, handball, golf (golf course, golf club, hole), bowling (bowls, bowling centre), squash, curling, billiards [biljədz]/pool, chess (chess board, figures)

**6. Which of these sports and games do you play/have you played/do you like/are you a fan of/do you watch on TV? Are they summer/winter, indoor/outdoor sports and games? Can you form verbs from the nouns? Do you know the top-sportsmen in any of these events?**

athletics [ætʰletiks], boxing, wrestling [restlɪŋ], weight lifting, track and field events, 100-metre run, 10,000 metre walk, 110 metre hurdles [hædlz], 400 metre relay [ri:lei], marathon [mærəθən], high/long/tripple jump, discus [diskəs] /hammer /javelin [dʒævlin] throw, shot put, decathlon [di'kæθlən], track/starting line/start/finish/On your marks-get set-go/ Ready-steady-go, winner, loser, fencing [fensiŋ], cycling, rock climbing/mountaineering [maunti'niəriŋ], hiking, (horse) racing, greyhound racing [greihaund], archery [a:tʃəri], judo, karate [kə'ra:ti:], yoga, [maunti'niəriŋ], rowing, motor racing, sky-diving, gliding [glaidiŋ], skateboarding, skiing (down-hill, cross country, slalom), ski jump, go skating, speed/figure skating, ice dancing, free skating, compulsory figures, bobsledding [bobsledɪŋ], tobogganning [tə'bogəniŋ], curling, squash, lacrosse

**7. Name the sports and games:**



**8. Describe your sports/skiing course and the equipment which you needed (how long the course lasted, where it was, what your every day schedule was)**

**9. What do you know about the Olympic Games?**

(history (Greece, modern), aim, symbol of 5 rings, participants (professionals?, amateurs?, paid?), next summer/winter Olympic Games)

## 10. What kind of sports and games do you need this equipment for? Match them together.

archery, body building, canoeing, cross-country skiing, cycling, discus throw, fencing, football, gymnastics, horse racing, hurdle race, ice-hockey, jogging, judo, modern gymnastics, motor racing, platform diving, pole vault, greyhound racing, rowing, running, shooting, shot put, skating, swimming, table tennis, tennis, windsurfing

a pack of hounds –  
arrow – bow – target  
balance beam –  
bar bells –  
bat –  
bike –  
crash helmet – goggles

discus –  
goal –  
gun –  
hoop [hu:p] –  
hurdles –  
mat –  
oar –

paddle [pædl] –  
pole –  
puck –  
race course –  
racket –  
rink –  
shot –

ski sticks/binding –  
spikes –  
surfing board –  
swim suit/trunks –  
swimming pool –  
track suit –  
wire mask –

## 11. Have you got a favourite sportsman/sportswoman? Say more about him/her.

(what sports discipline does he/she do, how long, his/her beginnings/best achievements, medals, personal qualities, why you like him/her)

## 12. Topics for discussions:

1. Various forms of getting fit.
2. Football rowdies.
3. Renowned sports events (championships, contests, tournaments).
4. Prestigious football and ice hockey clubs in our country, abroad.
5. Sports harmful to your health (give reasons).
6. Explain the rules of a game you know best.
7. What sports terminology is taken from English?
8. What sports and games do the Slovak people excel in?
9. Do you know any famous record holders?
10. Should sport be professionalized and commercialized?
11. Comment on the sports clubs and their results in your town.

## 13. Describe your attitude to sport and sports facilities in your home town. (What sports did you begin with, which of them do you do now, how long, for fun or in a team, what sports and games are you good at/do you do in summer/in winter/would you like to take up if you had more free time/do you watch on television/on what occasion, what equipment do you need, describe your PE lesson in summer/in winter).