

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

Your teacher will give you a clue. Read it and try to guess which sport it is describing.

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?

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
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- 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 improvisations/ Role plays**Improvisation 1**

You are playing cards with friends and suspect that one of the other 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.