

UNIT

4 Sports

You are going to read three texts about sports. First, answer the questions in the boxes.

READING 1



Do pro athletes make too much money?

This magazine article deals with how much professional athletes in the United States earn in comparison with other professions.

1. Who is your favorite athlete? Do you know how much he or she earns?
2. Are athletes worth a lot of money in your country? If so, who is worth the most?

READING 2

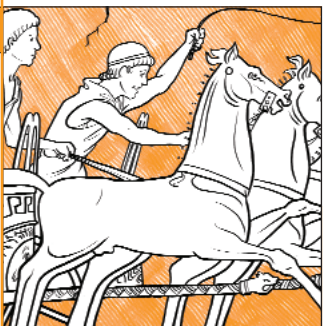


Extreme sports

In this newspaper article, find out why extreme sports are becoming more and more popular.

1. Are you an adventurous person, or are you afraid to take risks?
2. What are some examples of dangerous sports? Why do you think people like to take part in these sports?

READING 3



Frequently asked questions about the ancient Olympic Games

Read from this website to learn about, among other things, who could compete in the ancient Olympics and what the prizes were.

1. Do you enjoy watching the Olympic Games? Why or why not?
2. Would you rather see the athletic skill of the world's greatest athletes or see athletes from your country win?

Vocabulary

Find out the meanings of the words in *italics*. Then check (✓) the statements that are true about you.

- ___ 1. I don't know of any professional athlete who has *cheated*.
- ___ 2. I like to *compete* in *team* sports.
- ___ 3. I'm a soccer *fan*.
- ___ 4. I know the *rules* of all the major sports in my country.
- ___ 5. I have been the *victor* in many games I have played.



DO PRO ATHLETES MAKE TOO MUCH MONEY?

Profession	Average salary (per year)	Minimum starting salary
basketball player	\$2.2 million	\$220,000
baseball player	\$1.37 million	\$109,000
hockey player	\$892,000	\$125,000
football player	\$795,000	\$131,000

1 In contrast:

- The average pay for classroom teachers in the United States is \$38,000 per year. At that rate, a teacher would need a little more than 27 years to make \$1 million — less than half what a basketball player makes, on average, in just one year.
- The average pay for firefighters in the United States is around \$40,000.
- The starting salary for police officers in the United States is around \$29,000.

Do athletes deserve more money than firefighters or teachers — people who hold what many consider to be more valuable jobs?

2 YES! They're worth it!

Many people, including sports fans, say athletes deserve high salaries.

- Sports fans are willing to pay increasingly higher ticket prices and watch TV sports events in large numbers. That means more money is going to the teams.
- There are only a few of these superstar athletes, and the fans' demand for them is high. The demand raises the price of athletes' services.
- Some also say that athletes are paid fairly when compared with others in the entertainment industry. It is not unusual for

movie stars to make between \$15 million and \$20 million per movie.

- “People forget that sports is entertainment,” says Leonard Armato, a sports agent.
- Top athletes believe they are worth a lot of money because they make millions of dollars for team owners. The team owners make money from ticket sales, television deals, and sales of team T-shirts, caps, and other items.

3 NO! They are not worth it!

People who think pro athletes are overpaid say other, more important professions are more worthy.

- Police officers, firefighters, and doctors save lives — sometimes while risking their own — for a fraction of what sports stars make. Soldiers defend and protect the country, sometimes giving their lives. Teachers are responsible for educating the country's children.
- The president of the United States earns \$200,000 a year. Should the leader of the country make less money per year than a basketball player who is just starting out?



Before you read

How much is it? Change these amounts from U.S. dollars to the currency of your country.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1. \$2.2 million | _____ | 5. \$200,000 | _____ |
| 2. \$1.37 million | _____ | 6. \$40,000 | _____ |
| 3. \$892,000 | _____ | 7. \$38,000 | _____ |
| 4. \$795,000 | _____ | 8. \$29,000 | _____ |

Reading

Scan the text to find out which professions earn the amounts of money above. Then read the whole text.

After you read

A Which is the best description of the article? Check (✓) the correct answer.

- _____ 1. The article begins with facts and then gives the opinion of the writer.
- _____ 2. The article is about the writer's opinion.
- _____ 3. The article begins with facts. Then it explains the opinions of different groups of people.
- _____ 4. The article has the writer's opinion and the opinions of different groups of people.

B Circle the answers that are *not* mentioned in the text.

1. Why do some people think athletes deserve so much money?
- They make a lot of money for their teams.
 - They work very hard to become professional athletes.
 - Movie stars make more money than professional athletes.
 - Fans are willing pay to see the superstar athletes.
2. Why do some people think athletes make too much money?
- Athletes do not usually have a lot of education.
 - People who risk their lives do more valuable work than athletes.
 - People who do important jobs should make more money than athletes.
 - Nobody needs millions of dollars to live.

C Answer these questions.

- Which of the arguments in the article do you agree with? Which do you disagree with?
- Do you think professional athletes make too much money? Why or why not?
- Should money earned reflect the importance of a job to society? For example, should a firefighter make more than a businessperson? Why or why not?



Extreme sports

- 1 Rock climbing, white-water rafting, and skydiving used to be considered dangerous sports, suitable for only a few bold people — the unusually fit. Not so today, when it is common for families to take up such activities.
- 2 Why do people want to take part in dangerous activities? Some experts say it's the innate human desire to test the limits of their courage and physical abilities.
- 3 Sports psychologist Frank Farley of Temple University in Philadelphia calls people who do dangerous sports "Type T"



people. They are thrill seekers and risk takers. Farley has been studying such people for 35 years. "They're the mountain climbers, the hang-gliders, the people who sail around the world in a ten-foot sailboat," says the sports psychologist.

- 4 What are the reasons behind the popularity of high-risk activities? Some say it's due to more wealth, the development of

high-tech equipment, and even the absence of traditional risks such as war. Others argue that the self-centeredness and relative ease of modern life are part of the reason. In addition, thrill seekers want to display a youthful, rebellious attitude, whether they're 16 or 46.

- 5 "Much of that has to do with the affluence and boredom of America's upper and middle classes," wrote Andrew Exum in his college newspaper. "Many Americans today can simply afford to do things that used to be done only by professional adventurers."

- 6 "But being able to pay for a trip to the top of Everest — the going rate is about \$60,000 — doesn't explain why you would risk your life and actually go. Many Americans seem to need to take risks and be adventurous. If given the opportunity to take risks, we will."



- 7 Farley says such activities almost always involve individual expression — even creativity. "I don't know how extreme sports are going to end," Farley says. "They're hot and getting hotter."

READING TIP

If you know one form of a word — for example, the adjective *easy* — you can guess the meaning of another form of the word — for example, the noun *ease* (par. 4).

Before you read

Look at the pictures on the opposite page and the phrases below. Find out the meanings of any words you don't know. Then check (✓) those you think you will read in the text.

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ 1. <i>unusually fit</i> | _____ 7. <i>famous athletes</i> |
| _____ 2. <i>element of danger</i> | _____ 8. <i>high-risk activities</i> |
| _____ 3. <i>exercise and talent</i> | _____ 9. <i>advice of doctors</i> |
| _____ 4. <i>desire to test courage</i> | _____ 10. <i>affluence and boredom</i> |
| _____ 5. <i>physical abilities</i> | _____ 11. <i>high-tech equipment</i> |
| _____ 6. <i>fear of accidents</i> | _____ 12. <i>hundreds of years</i> |

Reading

Scan the text to check your predictions. Then read the whole text.

After you read

A Find the words in *italics* in the reading. Circle the meaning of each word.

1. *Bold* people *fear* / (*don't fear*) doing something dangerous. (par. 1)
2. Something *innate* is something you are *born with* / *learn*. (par. 2)
3. *Thrill seekers* are looking for a *quiet* / *an exciting* life. (par. 3)
4. A person who is *self-centered* has a *high* / *low* opinion of himself or herself. (par. 4)
5. If you are *rebellious*, you try to be *different from* / *similar to* others. (par. 4)
6. If something is *hot*, it is getting *more* / *less* popular. (par. 7)

B Check (✓) the statements that are true.

- ✓ _____ 1. The people who did extreme sports 30 years ago are similar to the people who do them nowadays.
- _____ 2. High-tech equipment makes extreme sports less dangerous.
- _____ 3. People who have difficult lives are not interested in extreme sports.
- _____ 4. People who do extreme sports are young.
- _____ 5. It can cost a lot of money to do extreme sports.
- _____ 6. There have always been people who want to take a lot of risks.

C Answer these questions.

1. Imagine a trip to the top of Mount Everest. If you had the money, would you like to go? Why or why not?
2. Which of the extreme sports mentioned in the article would you like to try? Which would you never do? Why?
3. Do you think that only Americans enjoy extreme sports? Do you know someone who does extreme sports? If so, do you think this person likes to take risks? Is this person wealthy or bored with modern life?



Frequently asked questions about the ancient Olympic Games

- 1 Today, the Olympic Games are the world's largest show of athletic skill and competitive spirit. This was also true in the ancient Greek world.
The ancient Olympic Games were part of a major religious festival honoring Zeus, the most important Greek god. The Games were the biggest event in their world, and were the scene of political rivalries between people from different parts of the Greek world.

Who could compete in the Olympics?

- 2 The Olympics were open to any free-born Greek in the world. There were separate men's and boys' divisions for the events. The judges divided athletes into the boys' or men's divisions according to physical size, strength and age.
- 3 Women were not allowed to compete in the Games. However, they could enter equestrian events as the owner of a chariot team or an individual horse and win that way.

Were women allowed at the Olympics?

- 4 Not only were women not permitted to compete, but married women were also forbidden to attend the games, under penalty of death. (Unmarried women were allowed to attend.)

What prizes did the Olympic winners get?

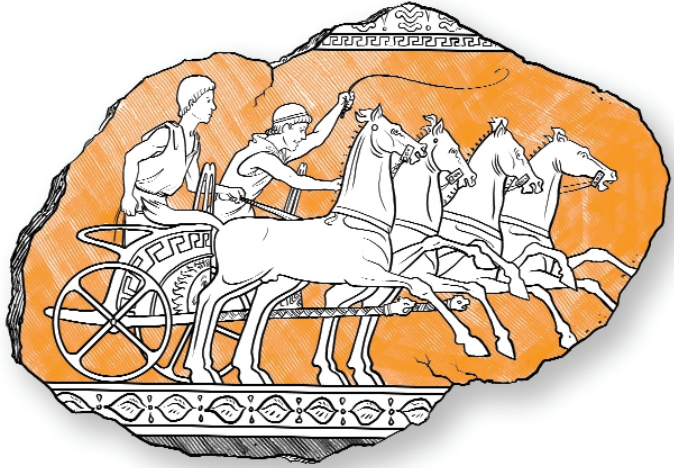
- 5 A winner received a crown made from olive leaves, and he could have a statue of himself set up in Olympia.
- 6 Although he did not receive money at the Olympics, the winner got much of the same treatment from his home city as a modern-day sports celebrity. His success increased the fame and reputation of his community in the Greek world. It was common for winners to eat all their meals at public expense. In addition, they would also have front-row seats at the theater and other public festivals. One city even built a private gym for their Olympic-wrestling champion to exercise in.

Who were the Olympic judges?

- 7 Unlike the modern Olympics, judges did not come from all over the world. They were Eleans, or from Elis, a local region that included Olympia.
- 8 Even though the judges were all Eleans, local Elean Greeks were still allowed to compete in the Olympics. The Elean people had such a reputation for fairness that an Elean cheating at the Games was a shock to other Greeks.

What was the penalty for cheating?

- 9 The judges fined anyone who violated the rules. The money was used for statues of Zeus.



Before you read

How much do you know about the ancient Olympics? Answer these questions.

1. Who could compete in the Olympics? _____
2. Who were the Olympic judges? _____
3. What prizes did the Olympic winners get? _____
4. What was the penalty for cheating? _____
5. Were women allowed at the Olympics? _____

Reading

Scan the text to check your answers. Then read the whole text.

After you read

A Find the words in the text related to the words in column A. Then match the words in column B with their meanings in column C.

A	B	C
1. <i>athlete</i> n. (par. 1)	<i>athletic</i> adj.	a. (the quality of) following the rules
2. <i>divide</i> v. (par. 2)	n.	b. (the state of) being very well-known
3. <i>strong</i> adj. (par. 2)	n.	c. the cost of something
4. <i>famous</i> adj. (par. 6)	n.	d. trained or skilled in a sport
5. <i>expensive</i> adj. (par. 6)	n.	e. physical power
6. <i>fair</i> adj. (par. 8)	n.	f. separate

B Read the sentences about the modern Olympics. Then write sentences about the ancient Olympics.

1. Nationalism, commerce, and politics are part of the modern Olympics.

Religion and politics were part of the ancient Olympics.

2. Women compete in a lot of different events in the modern Olympics.

3. Women attend the different events in the modern Olympics.

4. Winners in the modern Olympics receive medals as prizes.

5. Judges in the modern Olympics come from all over the world.

6. Anyone who cheats in the modern Olympics has to leave the games.

C Answer these questions.

1. Which Olympic events do you like the best?
2. What do you think ancient Greeks would find most surprising about the modern games?
3. Is it important for the Olympic Games to continue? Why or why not?

Vocabulary expansion

A The words in each column refer to a sport. Write the name of the sport under the box.

1. a ballpark a bat catch a homerun an inning an umpire	2. a basket a court a game a point a referee shoot	3. a ball a club a course a hole swing a tee	4. a ball a field a game a goal kick a referee	5. a court a match a net a point a racket swing	6. a lane an official a race run running shoes a track
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baseball

B Complete the blanks with words from the columns. Write at least three words that refer to:

1. a place where people play a sport

a ballpark, a court, a field

2. equipment that people use to play a sport

3. a person who makes sure the players in a game follow the rules

4. something that players need to score in order to win

5. an action that players do in different sports

6. a way that a sport is divided or organized

C Now write a similar list of words for another sport you know. Can other students guess the sport you chose?

Sports and you

Plan the sports page of a newspaper. Decide the following:

1. How many articles will appear on the page?
2. What will the subject of each article be?
3. What should the headline of each article be?