Reading **Read the text and answer the questions that follow.**

(Bloque 3 Comprensión escrita: 1. Comprender instrucciones; 5. Comprender el sentido general en noticias y artículos periodísticos; Bloque 4 Producción escrita: 3. Tomar notas; 4. Escribir notas, anuncios, mensajes y comentarios)

Polo, Anyone?

I The game of polo spans centuries and cultures. Some historians call it the oldest horse sport, and it may also be the most ancient team sport. It's believed to have begun in Persia (today's Iran) in the 6th century BC, as a military training exercise.

II Over time, it became popular in the Arabian peninsula, China, Tibet, Japan and India. By the 1870s, it was being played in Britain, Australia and the US, and later reached South America. Today, it's played in more than 50 countries.

III Although the game has varied during its long history, the basics have remained: Players – today, usually four in each team – use a long "mallet" to hit a wooden or plastic ball that's about 8 cm in diameter. Goals are scored by hitting the ball between two goalposts.

IV It sounds simple, but remember – players hit the ball while riding horses, and getting control of the ball isn't easy because ball speeds can reach nearly 180 kph. Also, up to 70% of a player's performance depends on the horse's speed and agility.

V There are also variants of the game. One is camel polo, which is played in Mongolia as a tourist attraction and to promote preservation of endangered two-humped Bactrian camels. In Dubai, tourists can try the game on dromedaries, or camels with one hump. And in Thailand, Nepal and Sri Lanka, there's elephant polo, although accusations of elephant mistreatment have made this sport quite controversial.

VI Then, there's the most popular variant – bicycle polo. Invented in 1891 in Ireland by Richard Mecredy, it was played on grass with teams of five players and became popular, especially in Ireland, Britain and the US. And then, about a decade ago, a new version of the game began in Seattle, Washington: "Hardcourt" bike polo, which can be played on any hard surface. This caught on quickly, especially among young people in cities, and is usually played in teams of three players. As you might imagine, falls are common. But then again, for more than 2,000 years the possibility of falling hasn't discouraged people from playing polo on horses!

1 Choose the correct answer. (2 x 2 = 4 points)

1. Polo has varied over the years, but today ..... .
   a. only plastic balls are used
   b. a team usually consists of four players
   c. the "mallet" is about 8 cm in diameter
   d. wooden or plastic "mallets" are used
2. "Hardcourt" bike polo ..... .
   a. has fewer people in a team than original bicycle polo
   b. is played on grass
   c. was invented by Richard Mecredy
   d. has been popular for more than 20 years

2 **Write T (true) or F (false). Find evidence in the text to justify your answers. (3 x 3 = 9 points)**

..... 1. To score a goal, a polo player's mallet must be between two goalposts.

.....

..... 2. Polo horses move at almost 180 kph.

.....

..... 3. Bicycle polo originated in Ireland.

.....

3 **Complete the sentences. (3 x 3 = 9 points)**

1. A polo horse's abilities .....

   ..... .

2. Elephant polo is controversial .....

   ..... .

3. Seattle, Washington, is .....

   ..... .

4 **Find words in the text that mean: (3 x 1 = 3 points)**

1. extends across a period of time (paragraph I) .....
2. essentials or fundamental principles (paragraph III) .....
3. caused someone to lose motivation (paragraph VI) .....