



History of tennis

56

Read the text about the history of this sport

Tennis is a very popular sport all over the world. Every year, tennis fans watch the Wimbledon Championships, the French Open, the US Open or the Australian Open to see their favourite players. Tennis is also an Olympic sport.

How did the game of tennis begin?

In the 12th century, people in France played a game called "Paume". At first, they hit a ball with the palms of their hands. Later, they started wearing a leather glove to hit the ball.

In the 16th century, people used simple rackets to play Paume. They started to call the game "Tennis", because the players shouted the French word "Tenez!" ("Let's play") at the start of each game. Many kings in Europe played tennis. King Henry VIII of England loved the game. He built an indoor tennis court at his favourite palace.

The first tennis balls were wooden!

Wimbledon was first on TV in 1937.

In 1873, people started to play tennis outside. They called the outdoor game "lawn tennis". There were new rules and a different court. Lawn tennis is the same as modern tennis.



In 1877, 22 tennis players entered the first World Tennis Championship at Wimbledon in the UK. The first winner was Spencer Gore. At first, only men played tennis at Wimbledon, but in 1884, women started playing in the championships, too.

Venus and Serena Williams were the first sisters to win Olympic gold medals in tennis.



Read and match using the correct letter (a-h)

a) In 1873...

b) Spencer Gore...

c) The first tennis balls...

d) In 1877...

e) Venus and serena Williams...

f) In 1884...

g) King Henry VIII

h) "Tennis" comes from the french word

☐

22 players entered the 1st World Championship

☐

were made of wood.

☐

"tenez" that means "Let's play!".

☐

women played in the championships for the first time.

☐

built an indoor tennis court at his palace.

☐

people started playing this sport outside.

☐

were the first sisters to win Olympic gold medals.

☐

was the first winner at Wimbledon.