



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 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 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.



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...

22 players entered the 1st World Championship

b) Spencer Gore...

were made of wood.

c) The first tennis balls...

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

d) In 1877...

women played in the championships for the first time.

e) Venus and serena Williams...

built an indoor tennis court at his palace.

f) In 1884...

people started playing this sport outside.

g) King Henry VIII

were the first sisters to win Olympic gold medals.

h) "Tennis" comes from the french word

was the first winner at Wimbledon.