8 Back to the Future



Pre-Reading

Think about the following questions.

1. Look at the title of this story. What do you think it means?
2. What are some current popular sports? Do you participate in any of them?
3. Do you like to skate? If so, where? Can you do any jumps or spins on your skates?

Vocabulary Preview

Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word.

a. for leisure or fun only	d. brothers or sisters
b. fascinated; made interested	e. enthusiastic; devoted
c. side by side, not touching	f. dependable; trustworthy

1. ___ I have two <u>siblings</u>: an older brother and a younger sister.
2. ___ Two <u>parallel</u> lines can never meet.
3. ___ That new equipment <u>intrigued</u> me. I really wanted to try it.
4. ___ He is an <u>avid</u> inline skater. I see him every weekend in the park.
5. ___ Are those skates <u>reliable</u>? The ones I have now don't work well.
6. ___ I'm only a <u>recreational</u> skater. I don't like competing against other people.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Back to the Future

Track 15

Sometimes the road to the future leads through the past. Such was the case for Americans Scott and Brennan Olson, who used an old idea to launch a hot new trend in sports: inline roller skating.

In 1979, these siblings found a pair of **antique** roller skates while checking out bargains at a used sporting-goods store. The skates they found had four wheels in a single row instead of the traditional parallel pairs of wheels in front and back. This single row of wheels **intrigued** the Olsons. They were avid hockey players, and they immediately noticed the similarity between the inline wheels and the long, single blade found on the bottom of ice skates. Could these unusual skates somehow be used to practice hockey off the ice?

The Olsons set about trying to modify the design of the antique skates that they had found. First they tested out the antique skates to see how well they worked. From those tests, they tried to come up with ways to improve the old design. One improvement involved using special materials to make the skates stronger and easier to **steer**. The Olsons also added reliable **brakes** to their inline skates. In 1980, the Olsons founded a company called Rollerblade to make and sell their "new" invention. Sales skyrocketed, and soon millions of people worldwide were "rollerblading," as inline skating was mistakenly called.

At first, inline skating was recreational. People enjoyed skating in parks and on streets, and some even danced on skates at giant roller **discos**. Today, inline "group skates" are popular all over the world. In cities such as San Francisco, Paris, and Berlin, as many as 20,000 skaters might meet on a free day and skate together through the streets. Many people see inline skating as a great way to exercise and socialize.



By the mid-1990s, inline skating had become more than just a recreational sport. It had developed into several competitive sports. One of the most popular, even today, is aggressive skating. This involves performing tricks and jumping over objects such as boxes, ramps, and rails. Other kinds of competitive skating include speed skating, artistic skating, downhill racing, and skating **marathons**.

So, what about hockey? Well, the Olsons achieved their goal. Inline hockey leagues **sprang up** almost immediately. Then in 1999, inline hockey joined the **lineup** at the Pan-American Games. There are **rumors** that inline skating may even become part of the Summer Olympics someday.

Reading Time _____ minutes _____ seconds 411 words

4 *antique*: very old; historic
7 *intrigue*: to interest; to make curious
14 *steer*: to control the direction
15 *brake*: a device used to stop something
20 *disco*: a nightclub for dancing
29 *marathon*: a contest to see who can do something the longest
31 *spring up*: to grow quickly; to start quickly
32 *lineup*: a list of activities or competitors
32 *rumor*: an unofficial but widely spread story

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Reading Comprehension

Choose the best answer.

1. What is the main idea of this reading?

a. Why inline skating is popular
b. The history of inline skating competitions
c. How inline skating developed
d. The story of Scott and Brennan Olson

2. According to the reading, what is true about the Olsons'?

a. They wanted to make a new invention.
b. They did not succeed with their original goal.
c. They were motivated because they loved a sport.
d. They were not very good businessmen.

3. What was a problem with the early inline skates?

a. They were too heavy.
b. They were uncomfortable.
c. They were not easy to stop.
d. They were made of expensive metal.

4. What is NOT true, according to the passage?

a. At first, only hockey players were interested in the Olsons' skates.
b. The Olsons started a new company.
c. In the 1980s, most people called inline skates rollerblades.
d. Rollerblades became very popular almost from the beginning.

5. What can be inferred about the antique inline skates found by the Olsons?

a. They were not widely sold.
b. They were used mainly by Europeans.
c. They were more popular than bicycles.
d. They were used by hockey players in the summer.

Idiomatic Expressions

Find these idioms in the reading.

- **launch** [to start something]
  Now that she has her MBA, she's ready to launch a new career.
- **skyrocket** [to increase, expand or improve very quickly]
  The singer's new song is skyrocketing toward the top of the charts.
- **spring up** [to appear suddenly, like a new flower from the ground]
  Since 2000, new highways have sprung up all over the country.

Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.

1. Coca Cola will _____ its new advertising campaign next week.
2. My English marks _____ after I got a tutor.
3. McDonald's restaurants seem to _____ everywhere.

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Summary

Scan the passage and complete the timeline with the correct information.

The siblings found a pair of 1 _____ roller skates.

The brothers 5 _____ a company called 6 _____ to sell their "new" invention.

Inline skating is popular as a 8 _____ sport.

1980 — 1984 — 1988 — 1992 — 1996

They tried 2 _____ the design by making them 3 _____, easier to steer, and by adding 4 _____ brakes.

People enjoy 7 _____ skating and dancing on skates.

Inline 9 _____ becomes part of the 10 _____ Games.



Listening

Skating in the Park

Track 16

Listen to the dialog and complete each sentence.

1. The woman paid _____ for her _____.
2. The man is part of a _____.
3. They will skate together _____ at _____.

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Discussion

Discuss the following questions.

1. What are some health benefits of skating?
2. Can you think of an old idea or product that was modified to create something new? Have you used this product?
3. Inline skaters wear special equipment to protect themselves. What is another sport or activity that uses special equipment? Have you participated in this sport or activity?

Grammar

Past Perfect

Past perfect tense is used to talk about what happened before a point in the past.

The Olsons set about trying to modify the design of the antique skates that they (have found / had found).
By the mid-1990s, inline skating (has become / had become) more than just a recreational sport.

Writing

Write your own short paragraph by answering the questions below.

Equipment for a Sport

(1) What is a sport or activity that needs special equipment? **(2)** What kind of equipment does it require? **(3)** Why do people need this equipment? **(4)** How much does the equipment cost? **(5)** Do you have this equipment?

Example

Soccer does not need much equipment. It only requires special shoes called cleats and shin guards. People need cleats to run well and shin guards to protect their shins. Good cleats can cost over $70, but shin guards are not expensive. I have cleats, but I do not have any shin guards.

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Vocabulary and Idiom Review

A. Choose the best word or phrase to fill in the blank.

1. Did you know that President Kennedy was a(n) _____ baseball fan?
a. avid b. oral c. recreational d. thriving

2. The girl's parents often ask her to look after her two younger _____.
a. means b. rumors c. sequences d. siblings

3. Complaints about spam have _____ over the past few years.
a. extended b. launched c. skyrocketed d. steered

4. Two lines that are _____ will never touch or meet.
a. impaired b. parallel c. reliable d. standard

5. I can't _____ a time when I was more embarrassed.
a. accuse b. buckle c. recall d. spring up

6. You should have a mechanic check the _____ on your car.
a. brakes b. captions c. opportunities d. spools

7. I am honored that the committee has _____ me to receive this award.
a. acknowledged b. crashed c. intrigued d. selected

B. Choose the correct form of the word to fill in the blank.

8. The title of the author's latest book is _____ mysterious.
a. intrigue b. intrigued c. intriguingly

9. By decreasing our _____ on cars, we can reduce traffic congestion in the city.
a. reliance b. rely c. reliable

10. Students are allowed to use any of the _____ equipment for free.
a. recreations b. recreational c. recreationally

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