Sport and Leisure: Reading Comprehension

The Changing Face of Sport

Sport and leisure have always played a central role in human society, but the way we spend our free time has evolved dramatically over the centuries. In ancient times, sport was often linked to military training or religious festivals. The ancient Greeks, for example, founded the Olympic Games, where athletes competed for the honour of their city-states. These events were not just about physical **prowess**; they were major cultural gatherings.

In the 19th century, Britain played a **pivotal** role in the history of sport by **codifying** the rules for many games we play today, including football, rugby, and tennis. This period marked the transition from chaotic village games to organised sports with standardised regulations. Public schools and universities championed the idea of 'fair play' and the **amateur ethos**—playing for the love of the game rather than for money.

However, the 20th century saw the rise of professionalism and the **commercialisation** of sport. Elite athletes became global superstars, and major tournaments like the FIFA World Cup turned into multi-billion pound industries. Television brought live sports into living rooms, turning local matches into global spectacles. Suddenly, being a **spectator** became a major leisure activity in itself, with millions of fans passionately following their teams from the comfort of their sofas.

Today, in the 21st century, we are witnessing another shift with the emergence of eSports. Competitive video gaming has exploded in popularity, with professional gamers competing in **prestigious** tournaments for huge cash prizes. While traditionalists might argue that sitting in a chair isn't 'sport', the reaction times and **strategic** thinking required are undeniable. Nevertheless, this digital shift has raised concerns about **sedentary** lifestyles among young people. As technology occupies more of our leisure time, the challenge for the future will be finding a balance between the digital and the physical worlds.

Vocabulary Focus

*1 Match the words from the text in **bold** to their correct definitions below.*

	Definition	Word
1.	Arranging laws or rules into a systematic code.	
2.	A person who watches a show, game, or other event.	
3.	Inspiring respect and admiration; having high status.	
4.	Tending to spend much time seated; somewhat inactive.	
5.	Skill or expertise in a particular activity or field.	
6.	The characteristic spirit or beliefs of a culture or community.	
7.	Of crucial importance in relation to the development of something.	
8.	A person who engages in a pursuit on an unpaid rather than a professional basis.	
9.	The process of managing or running something principally for financial gain.	
10.	Relating to the identification of long-term aims and the means of achieving them.	

2 Now, use some of the words to complete the sentences below. Ensure the word fits the context of the sentence.

1.	Successful teams often rely on _____ play to outsmart their opponents on the field.
2.	The school's sports _____ is built on the foundation of fair play and inclusion.
3.	The _____ of the Olympic Games has led to a massive increase in global sponsorship.
4.	Early sports fans found it necessary _____ the rules to prevent arguments during matches.
5.	The noise from every _____ in the arena was deafening as the runner crossed the finish line.
6.	Doctors are concerned that children are becoming too _____ because of an increase in screen time.

Reading Comprehension

3 Choose the correct answer based on the text provided.

1.	**According to the text, what was the primary purpose of sport in ancient times?**	a) To earn money for the city-states. b) To provide entertainment for television. c) It was often connected to military training and religion. d) To codify rules for future generations.
2.	**What significant contribution did Britain make to sport in the 19th century?**	a) Britain invented the Olympic Games. b) Britain established standard rules for many popular sports. c) Britain introduced huge cash prizes for athletes. d) Britain banned amateur sports in universities.
3.	**What does the 'amateur ethos' mentioned in the text refer to?**	a) Playing specifically to become a global superstar. b) Playing for the enjoyment of the activity rather than financial gain. c) Refusing to follow the standardised rules of the

		game. d) Only watching sports on television rather than participating.
4.	**How did television influence sport in the 20th century?**	a) It discouraged people from watching sports. b) It transformed local matches into global spectacles. c) It made sports less commercialised. d) It prevented athletes from becoming global superstars.
5.	**Why are eSports considered controversial by some traditionalists?**	a) Because they involve too much physical exertion. b) Because there is no strategy involved. c) Because the participants are physically inactive (sedentary). d) Because the prize money is too low.
6.	**What skills does the author acknowledge are required for eSports?**	a) Physical endurance and strength. b) Military training and prowess. c) Quick reaction times and strategic thinking. d) Knowledge of ancient Greek history.
7.	**What is described as the 'challenge for the future' at the end of the text?**	a) Eliminating video games entirely. b) Making the Olympic Games more religious. c) Finding a balance between digital and physical leisure activities. d) Stopping the commercialisation of the World Cup.
8.	**What was the main reward for athletes competing in the ancient Olympic Games?**	a) Professional contracts and multi-billion pound deals. b) Honouring their city-states. c) Modern military equipment. d) A television appearances.
9.	**How are village games described before they became organised in the 19th century?**	a) They were highly commercialised. b) They were played mostly on television. c) They were chaotic. d) They were strictly sedentary.
10.	**What was a major result of the rise of professionalism in the 20th century?**	a) The return to military-only sports. b) The disappearance of the FIFA World Cup. c) Athletes became global superstars. d) A total ban on amateur games in schools.

*4 Read the statements below. Choose **T** (True), **F** (False), or **NG** (Not Given in the text).*

1. The ancient Greeks allowed women to compete in the original Olympic Games.

2. Public schools in Britain helped promote the idea of fair play.

3. Being a spectator became less popular after the invention of television.

4. eSports players require quick reaction times.

5. In ancient times, sports were often connected to military training.

6. Before the 19th century, village games were highly organised and followed strict rules.

7. Professional video gamers can win large sums of money in prestigious tournaments.

8. The author believes that eSports do not require any strategic thinking or skill.

9. The transition to professional sport occurred during the 19th century.

10. The ancient Olympic Games were considered significant cultural events, not just athletic ones.