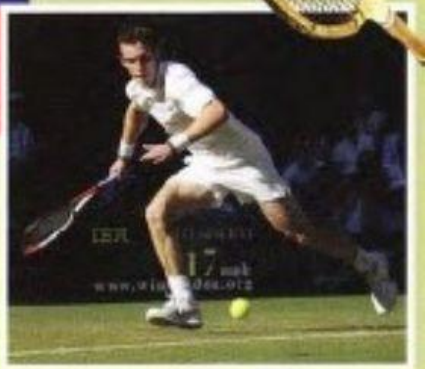
1 What do you know about tennis?

2 Listen and read. 34

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.

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.

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.

3 Underline these words in the text. Guess their meanings and then check them in the Workbook 4 Dictionary.

fans medals championship leather court hit rules

4 Read again and complete the sentences.

1 The game of "Paume" came from _____.

2 People wore leather _____ to hit the ball.

3 "Tenez" is a _____ word.

4 Henry VIII built a tennis _____ at his palace.

5 In 1873, people played tennis _____.

6 Spencer Gore was the first _____ of Wimbledon.