

3A Do we need competition?

LESSON GOALS

- Understand an online discussion about competition in sports
- Identify supporting examples
- Reflect on the idea of competition

READING

1 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- Which of these sports do you enjoy doing? Which do you enjoy watching?
 - skiing • baseball • basketball
 - cycling • soccer • swimming
 - boxing • running • gymnastics
- Do you think competition is necessary in sports? Why or why not?

2 Read the question and replies on page 37 quickly. Who thinks competition is necessary in sports? Circle the correct answer.

- a Lisbet and Shen b Lisbet and Adriana

3 Read the question and replies again. Match each idea (1–7) with a writer. Write J (Jan), L (Lisbet), S (Shen), or A (Adriana).

- You can enjoy playing sports without competing. _____
- Competition improves the quality of a sport for people who don't compete. _____
- I'm not sure about the definition of sports. _____
- Sports without competition aren't interesting. _____
- Having a winner is important. _____
- A sport is an activity that includes exercising your body. _____
- Working well on a team is an important part of many sports. _____

4 Look at the Reading Skill box. Answer questions 1–5 in pairs.

READING SKILL

Identifying supporting examples

Writers often use examples to support their ideas or to show that something is true. Words or phrases that signal examples include *for example*, *the best / an / another example is...*, *like*, and *such as*, but not all examples are introduced with signal words.

- What sports or events does Lisbet use as examples of competition?
- How does she introduce each example?
- What sports does Shen use as examples of not competing?
- Does Shen use any special words to introduce his examples?
- What sport does Adriana give as an example of teamwork?

5 Work in pairs. Answer the questions.

- Whose reply—Lisbet's, Shen's, or Adriana's—do you agree with the most?
- What other examples can you think of that support their ideas?
- Has your opinion about competition in sports changed since reading the posts?

SPEAKING

6 Look at the Critical Thinking Skill box. In pairs, discuss questions 1–4.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILL

Reflecting on ideas

When you reflect, you think deeply about ideas and what's important or not important about them. You explore them from different angles and ask questions to understand what they mean to you as an individual and to society. When you reflect, ask:

- What does this idea mean to me personally?
- What opinions do I have about it?
- How does it connect with my personal experience?
- How can I apply the idea to other areas of life?
- How can the idea be applied in the wider world?

- What does the word *competition* make you think of?
- In what other areas of life do people compete?
- Do you like competing? If so, in what areas?
- Do you like people who enjoy competing?



Jan K.

IS COMPETITION NECESSARY IN SPORTS?

I've looked up sports in a few dictionaries, and they all say that it's a physical activity in which people or teams *compete*. But what about sports like running that people do for fun or *fitness*? Are those *not* sports because people don't compete, or are the dictionaries wrong?

Replies:



Lisbet J.

Competition is at the heart of sports. For me, the best example is soccer. It's the most popular sport in the world. People in every country have a favorite team, watch *matches* on TV, and go to live games. Without the winning and the losing, no one would care—there would be no point. Another example is the Olympics. They're all about competition and who gets the gold medal. Or what about Formula One racing? It's just *incredible* to watch *car makers*, drivers, and support teams compete to be the fastest of the day. If people aren't competing, it isn't a sport—it's a hobby. And it's probably boring to watch.



Shen F.

Sports have to include physical activity, but they don't have to include competition. I love winter sports—skiing, snowboarding, ice climbing. I never compete and I never want to, but I'm totally sure these are sports. Here's why: you have to make a *physical* effort to practice them and they require *skill*, *training*, special *equipment*, and certain types of clothing. You can take lessons and *improve* in them. Of course, it's possible to compete in any of these sports, but it isn't necessary. Maybe Lisbet is talking about watching sports rather than actually doing them? Maybe competition makes a sport more interesting to watch, but it isn't necessary for participating in a sport and enjoying it.



Adriana S.

For me, the most interesting sports have a *mix* of competition and people working together. In soccer, teamwork such as passing the ball around the field makes the game exciting. And as Lisbet says, the competition between the teams is also exciting. But competition is important even in sports where teams aren't fighting each other to win. Take *winter sports*, for example. Shen says he doesn't compete, but the equipment he uses, such as skis, has been developed and improved because people wanted to ski (or snowboard or climb) better and more safely—even if they were just competing against themselves to do the best. The *skiing* and *snowboarding* equipment has improved so much that trying to do new things on skis or snowboards is now a sport in itself. It's not just about winning. So, although Shen doesn't compete, he does benefit from others' competition.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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