

Ball Games



A ball is really simple, isn't it? It's round, it rolls on the ground, you can throw it, you can kick it and you can hit it with something. Balls come in all sizes from a small ping pong ball to a large beach ball. Balls can be hard objects or soft and balls can be solid like a baseball or hollow like a basketball. Have you ever thought about how many kinds of balls and ball games there are?

People have played ball games for centuries.

Ancient people devised ball games but without written language we don't know how those games were played, who was able to play them or what the rules were. We know that the Mayan people of Central America invented a ball game 3,000 years ago because archaeologists have found statues of ball players. Excavations of Mayan ruins have unearthed the remains of stadium seating like we have today. From the layout of the stadium we know that two teams played and fans for each team sat together on one side. From other statues we know that the athletes wore helmets.

Think about the different kinds of ball games and how they are similar and different. Hitting games include, for example, tennis and baseball. Games with goals include basketball, soccer and polo. Are you aware that there's lots of science in ball games? For example, when you kick a soccer ball harder, it travels further. This is one of the laws of the science of physics. If you learn more about physics you could become a better ball player!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. Archaeologists have found statues of what people playing ball?
 - a. Mohawk
 - b. Mexican
 - c. Mayan
 - d. Mudhens

2. Which of the following statements are true?
 - a. A football stadium is a modern idea.
 - b. A ball game with two teams is a modern idea.
 - c. Only modern ball games have rules.
 - d. None of these statements are true.

3. Which of the following games is not a ball game?
 - a. Monopoly
 - b. Tennis
 - c. Polo
 - d. Soccer

4. What kind of scientist excavates ancient ruins?
 - a. Physicist
 - b. Astronomer
 - c. Archaeologist
 - d. Astronaut

5. A person who plays a ball game should understand which science?
 - a. Botany
 - b. Physics
 - c. Chemistry
 - d. Astronomy

Answer Key

1. c
2. d.
3. a.
4. c
5. b