

SPORTS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IN THE USA

1. *Прочитайте текст, сделайте краткий конспект*

SPORTS IN GREAT BRITAIN

Sport is a very important part of life in Great Britain. Thousands of people devote their leisure time to outdoor and indoor games, athletics, cycling, mountain climbing, boxing and other sports. Horse-racing, dog-racing and motor racing are among the most popular sports in Britain. They gather many spectators. The number of participants and spectators shows that the most popular of the team games are football and cricket, and the most popular individual game is lawn-tennis.

Football: Rugby and Soccer. Although Englishmen played a kind of football in the Middle Ages or even earlier, as an organized game it dates from just over a century ago.

One type of football, in which the players carried the oval ball in their hands, appeared in 1859 at Rugby School. That is why the game took the name of Rugby, or "rugger". The rules of the game are different from football (known as "soccer"), and there are 15 players instead of 11, in a team.

Soccer matches get big crowds. The Cup Final is one of the most important football matches of the year in England; it is always played at the Wembley stadium, near London, which holds 100,000 spectators.

Cricket. Cricket is England's national summer game. Nobody knows exactly how old the game is, but some form of cricket was being played in England in the 13th century. That game was probably quite different from the one which is known now, as the rules of the game have changed over the years.

Most matches last one day, but important matches (such as international ones) can last six days.

The oldest series of international matches (Test Matches) is between England and Australia, and the team that wins takes home a famous trophy called The Ashes. The trophy has this odd unusual name because it contains the ashes of the stumps and bails that were used in the Test series of 1882, and then burnt. And even today for cricket lovers in England and Australia winning The Ashes is like winning the World Cup for football!

In England cricket is played in schools and universities, and almost all villages and towns have their cricket teams which play regularly at least one match a week during the season - from May to September. There are many thousands of cricket grounds all over England.

Lawn tennis. The number of people who play lawn tennis is great. The tennis championships held at Wimbledon for two weeks at the end of June and beginning of July are the main events of the lawn tennis season in Britain and, in fact, in the world. These championships, in which men and women of many nationalities compete, gather large crowds.

Swimming. Many children in Britain learn to swim at school, or during holidays at the seaside, and swimming as a summer pastime is enjoyed by millions of people. There are also indoor swimming pools which makes swimming possible all-the-year round. Swimming championships and competitions are widely reported in the press, over the radio and on television. Attempts to swim the English Channel which separates Great Britain from the Continent, are made by swimmers of many nationalities every summer. Some of the attempts are

successful.

Notes:

Rugby - a town in central England best known for the public school (Rugby School) where rugby football was first played.

Wembly - a place in London with a large stadium where important sports events such as the FA CUP final are held every year. There is also a large hall there used for popular music concerts.

Wimbledon - an important tennis competition which takes place every summer in the All England Club, in the part of London called Wimbledon. Wimbledon is considered to be typically English and rather old-fashioned and is an important social occasion as well as being a sporting event.

SPORTS IN THE USA

Hockey, baseball, football and basketball are the four most popular sports in the USA. There are many other sports and sports activities which Americans like. Among them are golf, swimming, tennis, marathons, track-and-field, skiing, skating, squash and badminton, rowing and sailing, boxing and wrestling.

The size of America and the different climates found in it have provided Americans with a large choice of summer and winter sports. The American statistics show that swimming, bicycling, fishing, jogging, gymnastics and bowling are Americans' favourite participatory sports.

American Football. Football is a very popular outdoor team sport in the USA. American football is rather like rugby, played between two teams of 11 players using an oval ball that can be handled or kicked. But it still differs from European rugby and soccer. The difference is not only in the size, speed and strength of the players, but in the specific rules which the game has. The countless rules of American football which state what each player in each position may or may not do and when, make people call American football the most "scientific" of all outdoor team sports.

Baseball. Baseball has a reputation of being a "typically American" sport. It is played with a wooden bat and hard ball by two teams of nine players. The game is played on a field with four bases at the corners of a square called a diamond. Each player from one team hits a ball with a bat and then tries to run round all four bases before the other team can get the ball back. Many people think that baseball has developed from cricket. But it is a different game with its own rules. Baseball draws huge crowds. A typical game lasts between three or four hours.

Basketball. Basketball which is undoubtedly one of the most popular sports in the world today is American in origin. The first basketball game was played in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1891. Basketball games in the USA are attended by large numbers of fans. Live television broadcasts of basketball matches at state, national and international levels have a wide television audience.

Basketball is among the favourite sports of American young people. There are basketball teams in almost all American schools and universities, and "shooting baskets" with friends is a pastime many young people like most.

1. Ответьте на вопросы

- 1 When did Englishmen begin to play football?
- 2 What is the difference between "soccer" and "rugger"? -
- 3 How long does the cricket season last in England?

- 4 Which championships draw large crowds of spectators?
- 5 What is a favourite summer pastime for Englishmen?
- 6 Which sports are called typically American?
- 7 Which sports are Americans most interested in?
- 8 What is the difference between European and American football?