Let's ski!
How sport skiing started

Ski acrobatics

Ski trips

LOCATION SKI
SKI RENTAL

Ski resort

Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

understand • key words • summarise • sequencing • AF2–3 • AF4–5 • AF6–7 • discuss • create

The British are skiing

The idea of skiing as a sport and holiday is not a Swiss idea, as you might imagine. It is not even a Norwegian idea, although they designed the best skis. It was a British idea. In fact it was an idea to entertain the British upper classes in Victorian times. These daring Britishers even founded the Alpine Ski Club.

Modern skiers and Sir Henry Lunn

The founder of skiing as a sport was one Sir Henry Simpson Lunn, who had been a missionary and was a Methodist minister.

Sir Henry was very keen on Christian groups getting together and as part of this he founded the Co-operative Educational Tours in 1893.

They all met in a place in Switzerland called Grindelwald. Soon he was organising tours including hotels and travel to these meetings. This started the trend for wealthy British visitors combining a religious/health retreat with winter sports. That is why many Anglican churches are found in fashionable winter resorts like San Moritz.

In 1905 he formed the Public Schools Alpine Sports Club and in 1908 he founded Alpine Sports Limited, which was the first business to bring gentlemen ski-mountaineers to the Alps in winter for skiing. Later the company went on to be called Sir Henry Lunn Travel and grew to become one of the largest travel agents in Britain.

One of his sons was Sir Arnold Henry Moore Lunn who became a famous skier, mountaineer and writer. He was introduced to skiing by his father and become a great enthusiast.

In 1921-2 Arnold invented the idea of a competition for skiing downhill around obstacles such as poles – slalom skiing as well as jumping and cross-country skiing. He was also the one who got downhill and slalom racing made official sports in the Olympic Games in 1936.

Today, the millions of people who go skiing owe much to these two generations of gentlemen pioneers from the same family.

Murren, where slalem skiing began

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'trend'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'trend' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'trend'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'trend'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'trend' means.

Try this for other words, too.

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: pioneer	start

Summarising
(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence. e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

Finally, can you rewrite your summary to make it better?

1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.

2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.

3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.

4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?

There is nothing wrong with rewriting; even the best authors rewrite their work.

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Sir Henry's son, Arnold, became a world class skier.

Sir Arnold got skiing introduced as an Olympic sport in 1936.

The Alpine Sports Club was founded by Sir Henry in 1908.

While discussing religious matters they also had fun skiing.

Lots of wealthy religious people got together to talk in Switzerland.

This is why there are Anglican churches in many alpine towns.

The idea of skiing for tourists was invented by Sir Henry Lunn in 1893.

Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.

1 Who founded the idea of a skiing holiday?

2 Which country did they come from?

3 Where did the first skiers meet?

4 When was skiing first introduced to the Olympic Games?

5 Which of the Lunns was a famous skier?

Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.

1 Which class did the first British skiers come from?

2 What was their real purpose in meeting in Switzerland?

3 How did places like San Moritz get Anglican churches?

4 What is meant by the word 'gentleman' in the article?

7 Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

1 What is surprising about the British inventing skiing competitions?

2 What else was on offer for the British who did not want to go skiing?

3 Sir Henry was a minister, but he was also good at business. Do you think these two things go together?

4 Why do you think skiing towns in Switzerland might be very different today from what they were like in Victorian times?

5 Are you interested in how sport came to be? Explain your reasons.

Off piste.

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.

Discussion topic: What to wear

When you go skiing, you are in high mountain country in the middle of winter. So you have to make sure you are wearing the right clothes. You might also fall over, so without some padding, you could hurt yourself. Discuss what would be the best materials to wear for all of these tasks.

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Left dangling

It was going to be a fantastic day. They had got up early and they were some of the first on the ski lift. The snow was sparking below them as they sat 20m in the air. Then, suddenly, there was a jolt and the ski lift stopped... Now continue the story.

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