

## BACKGROUND

**Lori Calabrese** worked as a TV producer for ten years before deciding to become a writer after the birth of her children. Her first book was the well-received picture book *The Bug That Plagued the Entire Third Grade*. She also has written many nonfiction articles for young people, including "It's Not Just a Game!" Calabrese says that she is "forever probing people and places in search of information." "I love research," she admits—"in fact, I can't get enough."



## IT'S NOT JUST A GAME! Informational Text by Lori Calabrese

### SETTING A PURPOSE

As you read, think about what you like and dislike about sports. How does the information the author presents give you more insights into the wide world of sports—and into your own experiences with them?

**1** Whether you run a race, bounce a basketball, or hurl a baseball home, you do it because it's fun. Some scientists claim play is a natural instinct—just like sleep. That might explain why sports are likely to be as old as humanity.

**2** Some claim sports began as a form of survival. Prehistoric man ran, jumped, and climbed for his life. Hunters separated themselves by skill, and competition flourished. Wall paintings dating from 1850 B.C., that depict wrestling, dancing, and acrobatics, were discovered in an Egyptian tomb at Bani Hasan.<sup>1</sup> The Ancient Greeks

<sup>1</sup> Bani Hasan (bān'ē hä-sōn'): ancient Egyptian burial site, located along the Nile River.

## NOTICE & NOTE



### Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.

### ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

**Annotate:** In paragraph 2, mark references to three groups of people from the past.

**Analyze:** Review the entire paragraph. How does the author use time order to organize information?

## TEACH

### BACKGROUND

After students read the Background note, explain that nonfiction writers spend much of their time doing research so they will make accurate statements and find new information to share with their readers.

### SETTING A PURPOSE

Direct students to use the Setting a Purpose prompt to focus their reading.

### ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

Remind students that the descriptive pattern of organization is flexible. The writer can use any type of order within a paragraph because he or she is not following a more formal pattern of organization.

**(Answers:** The author organizes information chronologically; She starts with prehistoric people; then refers to ancient Egypt, followed by ancient Greece; then goes to the early nineteenth century; and finally discusses the sports today.)



## ENGLISH LEARNER SUPPORT

**Understand Word Play** Have students locate the sentence in parentheses in paragraph 2. Discuss the meaning of the word *pun* (using a word in a way that suggests more than one meaning). Then point out the idiom *came into play*. Explain that it means “to have had an effect.”

**ASK STUDENTS** to read the sentence before “Pardon the pun.” Point out the word *sports*. Ask students why the word *play* is a pun. (People play sports, but the author is humorously apologizing for using the word *play* in the idiom in the same sentence as the word *sports*.)

**LIGHT**

## SET A PURPOSE

Suggest that students look for the qualities that describe a serious activity. (Answers: Students probably will mention times when they have had to follow rules and to exhibit skill and strategy—if not in a traditional organized sport, then in informal play and even in board games.)

## QUOTED WORDS

Explain that quotations have value in proportion to the authority being quoted. Students should always consider the source of information that is quoted. (Answers: There are many organizations that evaluate the impact of various activities on the health of children. Finding experts who do not have a vested interest in sports or a personal bias about the value of sports is important. Many experts have examined the “well-being of children and youth” in relation to organized sports.)

## CRITICAL VOCABULARY

**accomplishment** Succeeding in an effort to do



## NOTICE & NOTE

### SET A PURPOSE

**Annotate:** In paragraph 3, mark the evidence that supports the idea that organized sports are serious play.

**Connect:** Did you already know this information? Explain.

### accomplishment

(ə-kŏm'plīsh-mənt) *n.* An accomplishment is a task that you succeed in doing.

### QUOTED WORDS

**Notice & Note:** Mark the source of the quotation in paragraph 5.

**Evaluate:** Why would this source be a valuable one to quote?

### negotiate

(nī-gō'shē-ār) *v.* When you negotiate, you work with others to reach an agreement.

revolutionized sports by holding the world's first Olympic games at Olympia in 776 B.C. But it wasn't until the early nineteenth century, that sports as we know them came into play. (Pardon the pun!) Modern sports such as cricket,<sup>2</sup> golf, and horse racing began in England and spread to the United States, Western Europe, and the rest of the world. These sports were the models for the games we play today, including baseball and football.

- 3 All organized sports, from swimming to ice hockey, are considered serious play. There are rules to obey, skills and positions to learn, and strategies to carry out. But Peter Smith, a psychology professor at Goldsmiths, University of London, and author of *Understanding Children's Worlds: Children and Play* (Wiley, 2009), says, “Sport-like play is usually enjoyable, and done for its own sake.”

## Different Sports for Different Folks

- 4 Sports come in many shapes and sizes. Both team and individual sports have advantages and disadvantages, but most people find that from an early age, they are drawn toward one or the other. In a team sport like soccer, you're part of a group, striving to be a winning team. That means putting the team ahead of your own **accomplishments**. You must learn to get along with your teammates and share responsibility. In an individual sport like tennis, you're usually only concerned about your own performance. That can make these sports more challenging.

## The Ultimate Value of Sports

- 5 Whether it's football or golf, there's little doubt about the value of sports. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), “play is essential to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth.” Play not only exercises our bodies, it also exercises our minds. Sports teach us about ourselves and our world. We learn how to **negotiate** plans, settle disagreements, and how to monitor our attitude. The skills we learn playing can be applied to school and work. Since organized sports are a hands-on, minds-on learning process, they stimulate our imagination, curiosity, and creativity. The growing science of play is armed with research claims that play, and thus sports, is important to healthy brain development. We use language during play to solve problems, we use thinking when we follow directions to a game, and we

<sup>2</sup> cricket (krīk'īt): English team sport, played with a bat, ball, and wickets.



NOTICE & NOTE



TEACH

use math skills to recognize averages and odds of each sports play.

Sports also raise our energy level and act as antidepressants. Activity increases the brain's level of chemicals called *endorphins*, which boost mood. When we start moving and having fun, we feel good about ourselves.

**Forgetting the Fun**

In a perfect world, everyone would have fun playing sports. But that's not always the case. Sports can get aggressive and cause scrapes, bruises, and broken bones. They can also hurt us psychologically. David Elkind, professor emeritus of Child Development at Tufts University and author of *The Power of Play*, says that when young children play self-initiated games such as tag or hide and seek, "misunderstandings and hurt feelings are part of the learning process, and happen in a context of **mutual** respect. Those that arise in organized team sports, don't have the same supportive network, the sense of competition outweighs the sense of cooperation, and can be hurtful to the child's sense of self and self-esteem." Playing sports is usually fun, but sometimes we can get frustrated. It might be because of the pressure to win, parents who yell and scream from the stands, or coaches who treat us unfairly. Sports are supposed to bring people together, but they can also drive people apart. When sports are separated into skill level, gender, or ethnicity, some players feel **isolated**, begin to forget the fun in sports, and even want to quit. Sports may not always be a

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

**Annotate:** The last sentence of paragraph 6 is a complex sentence, made of an independent clause and a subordinate clause. In each clause, mark the subject and its verb.

**Identify:** How do you know that each verb agrees with its subject?

ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

**Annotate:** Mark the subheading that introduces paragraph 7.

**Analyze:** Review the first few sentences of paragraph 7. How does the subheading help readers understand the author's change in focus?

**mutual**

(myoo'choo-əl) *adj.* Something is *mutual* when everyone treats each other the same way or shares the same feeling.

**isolate**

(i'sa-lāt') *v.* When you *isolate* something, you separate it so that it is apart or alone.

**LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS**

Review subject-verb agreement in complex sentences. Remind students to identify the independent and dependent clauses and look for the subject and verb in each part of the sentence. **(Answers:** In each clause the subject is *we*, which is plural, so the verbs, *start and feel*, have the form that agrees with a plural subject.)

**ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS**

Remind students that the author is using a descriptive pattern of organization. This pattern allows the writer to address topics in whatever order he or she wishes.

**(Answers:** Up to this point, the author has focused on the positive—"fun"—aspect of sports. Now, she will explore some possible negative aspects. The subheading signals this shift in focus.)



For **listening and speaking support** for students at varying proficiency levels, see the **Text X-Ray** on pages 392C–392D.

## TEACH

### SET A PURPOSE

Discuss the task to be sure that students understand that they are to mark only the facts they have not previously known. (**Annotations will vary.** Students may mark the Elkind quotation, for example, or the reference to play as “a right of every child.” **Answers to the skill question will vary depending on the fact chosen.** For example, the Elkind quotation is valuable because it shows how play can address many aspects of a person’s life; the reference to play as a “birthright” shows that many forms of it are valued for a variety of reasons.)



### ENGLISH LEARNER SUPPORT

**Identify Quotations** Draw quotation marks on the board. Remind students that these are used to show someone’s exact words. Have students look for quotation marks on the student page. Ask them to point out where they occur (at the end of paragraph 8). Ask students to identify who said the words. If they have difficulty identifying the name *Elkind*, explain that the name of the person being quoted is usually near the quotation. **MODERATE**

### ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

Point out to students that a descriptive organizational pattern allows the writer to present information in any order. (**Answers will vary, but students probably will focus on the entertainment value and/or social aspect of being a sports fan.**)



### NOTICE & NOTE

#### SET A PURPOSE

**Annotate:** Mark new information that you learned from reading paragraphs 8 and 9.

**Critique:** Why do you think this information is valuable for everyone to know?

#### utilization

(yooŕ'1-ı-zā'shən) *n.* Utilization is when you put something to use in an effective way.

#### ANALYZE ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

**Annotate:** In paragraphs 11–13, mark three positive effects of sports when people watch others play them.

**Connect:** Which effect means the most to you? Why?

positive experience, but even when they’re not, they give us a dose of how to face life’s challenges.

### Making Sports Work for Us

8 Playing sports doesn’t mean you have to play on a varsity team. And very few people have what it takes to be a professional athlete. But your school basketball coach or gymnastics teacher has found a way to make play their work. And in doing so, they’ve found the work best suited to who they are. According to Elkind, “Whenever we combine play with work, as in our hobbies, cooking, gardening, sewing, and carpentry, it is the full utilization and integration of all our interests, talents, and abilities. It’s an activity that makes us feel whole.”

9 Play is so important to our development that the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights has included it as a right of every child.<sup>3</sup> In other words, it’s your birthright to play! And there’s no better place to play and learn about the world than on a sports field. So regardless of your sport—from swimming to soccer—play to have fun and you’ll automatically win!



### Keep Your Eye on the Ball

10 Are your eyes glued to the TV when a basketball superstar takes the court or a baseball superstar steps to the plate? While fans fill arenas, even more click their TVs on at home to watch athletes slam a puck into a net or hit a ball with a fat stick. Play is not only something to do, it’s something to watch others do.

11 Sports are a form of entertainment. The joy you and your teammates get by working together is the same joy your family, friends, and other spectators get when they watch. Fans experience the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat,<sup>4</sup> just like the players on the field. Think of all the applauding, shouting, and yelling that happen at sporting events. It’s a way for many of us to live vicariously through the players’ actions.

12 Sports are also social events, opportunities for strangers to cheer together and debate outcomes. A Saturday morning game is a great way to spend time with family.

13 Sports involve learning, too. Fans research players, teams, and the sports themselves. How many fans do you know who are walking encyclopedias of sports trivia?

<sup>3</sup> United Nations High Commission for Human Rights: In 1989, the United Nations passed the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, a treaty that protects the human rights of every child.

<sup>4</sup> the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat: This common sports phrase was originally part of the introduction to *Wide World of Sports*, a popular TV program that ran from 1961 to 1998.

14 Why do so many of us watch sports and have a favorite team? Studies show that it fills both emotional and psychological needs. We feel self-confident and experience joy when our favorite team wins. Sports fulfill our human need to belong, and many fans, whether their team wins or loses, enjoy the suspense that allows them to release their emotions. Where we live, our family background, peer pressure, and our own sense of self (*identity*) all determine which baseball cap we wear and why we root for *our* team.

15 So the next time you put your Red Sox cap on and tune in to the game, remember it's not just about the amazing pitchers and batters, but about the way you feel when you watch *your* team play.

#### NOTICE & NOTE



## TEACH

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Have students answer the questions independently.

#### Answers:

1. D
2. H
3. B

If they answer any questions incorrectly, have them reread the text to confirm their understanding. Then they may proceed to ANALYZE THE TEXT on page 400.



For **reading support** for students at varying proficiency levels, see the **Text X-Ray** on page 392D.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these questions before moving on to the **Analyze the Text** section on the following page.

- 1 The author includes information about the Greeks in order to —
  - A explain how we know which sports ancient peoples played
  - B prove that "sports" was once a means for survival
  - C encourage readers to play the games the Greeks once played
  - D show that an ancient people had a high regard for sports
- 2 According to paragraph 7, why can a negative experience in sports still have a positive effect?
  - F It encourages people to work together to solve problems.
  - G It can make people more compassionate toward their enemies.
  - H It can help people learn to deal with other difficult experiences.
  - J It teaches people to think carefully about their priorities.
- 3 What does the section **Keep Your Eye on the Ball** contribute to this text?
  - A It explains why entertainment is the greatest benefit of sports.
  - B It explains that sports benefit spectators as well as players.
  - C It quotes experts about the various benefits of sports.
  - D It outlines the physical benefits that result from playing sports.

## APPLY

### ANALYZE THE TEXT

#### Possible answers:

- DOK 2:** Even though there is a "fun" element to sports, there are significant health benefits from participation.
- DOK 2:** In team sports, the team shares responsibility. In individual sports, one person bears all of the responsibility, making that situation more challenging.
- DOK 2:** Sports can help people learn to negotiate, to control their attitude, and to become more curious and imaginative. Sports can also help develop language and math skills. Playing sports releases endorphins that can decrease pain and create an overall "good" feeling.
- DOK 3:** By "win," the author means "be successful." She supplies quotations from experts and provides verifiable facts to explain the various benefits of sports.
- DOK 4:** The quotation states that sports can be for fun, or for "serious play." In the final two sections of the text, the author provides readers with a perspective on the importance of sports around the world.



## RESPOND

### ANALYZE THE TEXT

Support your responses with evidence from the text. NOTEBOOK

- 1. Interpret** How does the title "It's Not Just a Game!" reflect the main idea of this text?
- 2. Cause/Effect** According to the author, why can individual sports be more challenging than team sports?
- 3. Summarize** How does the author support the idea that sports can build our brains, not just our bodies?
- 4. Evaluate** In paragraph 9, the author tells readers, "[P]lay to have fun and you'll automatically win!" Do you agree with this statement? Why?
- 5. Notice & Note** Reread the quotation in paragraph 3. How does it contribute to a greater understanding of sports?

### RESEARCH

In "It's Not Just a Game!" the author includes a little information about sports history in general. Now it's time to get specific. Choose a sport that you enjoy or are curious about. Do some research to learn about its history and complete the graphic organizer below.

Basketball (NAME OF SPORT)

#### When and Where It Began

*Invented by James Naismith late in autumn 1891, at the YMCA Training School in Springfield, MA, where Naismith was an instructor meant to*

#### RESEARCH TIP

Don't believe everything you read online. It's always a good idea to get information from sites you know are reliable—and from more than one site. It's especially smart to check multiple reliable sites if you have any doubts about whether a piece of information is correct.