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Complete

First Language English

Third Edition

Dean Roberts

Alan Jenkins

OXFORD

Sports

From Ancient Greece through to the 21st century, it has generally been agreed that sports involve some sort of physical exertion and that participating in a sport helps people lead healthier lifestyles. However, the traditional understanding of what constitutes a sport is changing with the advent of esports. This unit will investigate some of the questions raised by the changing sporting landscape while also exploring different aspects of more traditional physical sporting activities.

On completing this unit, you will have:

- learned about the growth of esports in Africa, and practised your understanding and use of implied meaning
- read about the history of esports, developed an alternative method for creating a summary and practised using figurative language for effect
- reacted to an article criticising the inclusion of esports in future Olympic Games, reflected on the use of bias and satire in opinion pieces and practised using emotive language to generate reader response
- contrasted two articles with differing viewpoints regarding Paralympians while practising summarising, using skimming and scanning skills
- considered a view that money has become too big an influence in certain sports and practised evaluating a response to a short extract
- read an emotional speech calling for unity and peace while considering whether famous sportspeople should try to use their popularity to influence society
- examined how writers create atmosphere in descriptive writing by evaluating a report of the first FA Cup final and an extract describing a visit to the world-famous Maracanã Stadium in Brazil. You will practise using sensory imagery to create descriptive writing
- learned about a famous incident between two heavyweight boxers and considered the use of informal language in an appropriate narrative context. You will practise building a story and identify how to write a successful short story
- evaluated a four-minute talk on one person's passion for football and understood the need for a strong structure when creating a talk. You will have learned about the use of both written and spoken linguistic devices, and practised their use in preparing for a discussion.

1. Let's start by looking at some inspirational comments from people with an interest in sport, which consider the importance of sports and their positive effects on the mind and body. Which comments resonate with you the most? We'll start by going back around 3,000 years for a quotation that still has relevance today.

"Sport is a preserver of health."

Hippocrates, Ancient Greek physician and philosopher (c.460–370 BC)

"We can push ourselves further. We always have more to give."

Simone Biles, American gymnast, multiple Olympic champion (1997–)

"You have to fight to reach your dream. You have to sacrifice and work hard for it."

Lionel Messi, famous Argentinian football player (1987–)

"Someone said to me 'To you football is a matter of life or death!' and I said 'Listen, it's more important than that.'"

Bill Shankley, famous Scottish football manager (1913–1981)

"I think you can improve on everything; you're never perfect."

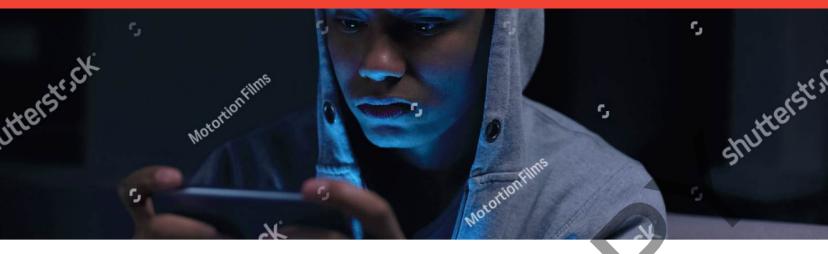Max Verstappen, Dutch Belgian multiple Formula 1 world champion (1997–)

"In life, there is no such thing as impossible; it's always possible."

Venus Williams, American champion tennis player (1980–)

"Your dreams are what define your individuality. They have the power to give you wings and make you fly high."

P. V. Sindhu, famous Indian badminton player (1995–)

2. Look at the unfinished statements below and think how you would complete them. There are no correct or incorrect answers but keep your comments relevant to sports and health.

a. "Sports to me are … "

b. "If I was capable, I would choose to be a professional … because … "

c. "My favourite sport is … "

d. "In my opinion, watching sport but not playing any is … "

e. "To keep healthy, I would recommend anyone to try playing … because … "

Remember

A news report is intended to be a factual piece that informs its audience about its chosen subject matter. It is contemporary to the specific place and time referenced in the report. It should not contain bias and should be written from a neutral perspective.

Unit 5.1

Exploring esports

Until quite recently, referring to "sports" meant talking about activities requiring physical effort or endurance. Whether the sports were undertaken indoors or outdoors, most people would have agreed that the definition of "sports" would definitely not extend to the playing of video games. Today, however, the definition absolutely does extend to this. The rise of esports has been a literal game changer – to such an extent that a version of esports is even being considered for inclusion in the 2028 Olympic Games.

Read this online news report on the rise of esports in Africa.

Esports in Africa

On a recent Sunday afternoon in an upmarket neighbourhood of Nairobi, Daniel Badu was rapidly pressing the screen of his mobile phone, headphones wrapped around his head, his elbows resting on a pillow.

Badu and his four teammates in the Aura 233 team, all decked in black-and-yellow kits and representing Ghana, were taking on Kenya's Delta eSports in the finals of the inaugural Carry1st Africa Cup, a continental tournament for the first-person shooter video game Call of Duty: Mobile.

Esport events are on the rise in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa, driven in part by increased access to the internet and devices such as smartphones, PCs and consoles. Popular titles include EA Sports FC, Call of Duty and Tekken.

Professional teams, university leagues, national federations and competitions such as the Carry1st Africa Cup have been set up to cater to burgeoning interest.

The trend is part of a growing interest in video games in general in Africa, the continent with the youngest population. A 2021 report said the number of video game consumers on the continent rose from 77 million to 186 million from 2015–21.

Some of those have now transitioned to professional gaming. Badu started playing Call of Duty: Mobile in 2019 after playing console games for years.

"I've been playing video games for as long as I can remember," said the 19-year-old. Badu began his journey to becoming a professional by joining various low-tier teams to gain experience, showcase his skill and get his name out. Last year, he was scouted by Ace Gamers Esports, a professional esports

organisation based in Accra, which signed him after a trial.

Ace Gamers also recruits, trains and manages players of EA Sports FC, Apex Legends, Mortal Kombat and other games. Badu said being signed has given him a chance to improve his game by playing with people with the same mindset, as well as get access to tournaments. "I've been playing the game, grinding the game, and we've got it to this point. So, I'm able to compete among the best in Africa," he said.

At the event in Nairobi, a production crew sat behind large monitors, selecting shots for a livestream. One floor below, spectators cheered and shouted while watching the action unfold on TV screens.

Six teams made it to the two-day Carry1st Africa Cup finals, which followed seven months of qualifying

events in Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and South Africa involving more than 100 teams, and was eventually won by South Africa's Noxious Gaming (NxG).

"Esports events at a high scale are a great way to synergise the attention of all gamers and also grow the interest of new gamers," said Dominion Eromosele, senior community manager and events lead at Carry1st, an Africa-wide game publisher headquartered in Cape Town.

The organisation has hosted more than 400 tournaments – mostly through universities – since it was founded in 2018. Its online network, Tribe, has attracted hundreds of thousands of gamers from across the continent.

By Carlos Mureithi, *The Guardian* (20 December 2024)

Understanding implied meaning

When writers use **implied meaning**, it requires the reader to engage more deeply with the text. The reader may be told what is happening – the explicit meaning – but has to work out the deeper meaning from the clues given.

"Daniel Badu was **rapidly** pressing the screen of his mobile phone" explicitly tells the reader that Daniel was using his mobile phone but the use of the word "rapidly" suggests urgency and heightened tension. The reader is alerted to Daniel's emotional state through this implied meaning.

It is important for you to have a good understanding of both the explicit meaning and the implicit (implied) meaning when responding to a text.

Building your vocabulary

Using vocabulary in context is very important in building a convincing picture when writing about a particular subject. Words such as "mouse", "bit", "web" and "surfing" all have specific meanings when referencing computers that are very different to their original meanings. The world of computers has also generated its own additions to formal language – for example, "central processing unit", "hypertext", "microprocessor", "malware" and "motherboard" are all terms created to explain computer usage that are now part of the formal English lexicon. Writing a convincing piece about computers requires building your vocabulary to include a range of context appropriate words and terms.

Understanding

1. Look at the first two paragraphs of the text. Answer these questions to test your understanding of the explicit meaning:
   a. Where was Daniel using his phone on Sunday afternoon?
   b. On what was he resting his elbows?
   c. How many teammates does Daniel have?
   d. What colour shirts does Daniel's team wear?
   e. What video game is Daniel playing?

2. Answer these questions to test your understanding of implicit meaning in the text. This time you have to figure out what the writer is implying by his use of language.
   a. Look at the paragraph beginning: "Professional teams …". In your own words, explain the meaning of "burgeoning interest".

b. Look at the paragraph beginning: "The trend is …". What connection is implied between the continent with the youngest population and the growth of video games there?

c. Read the same paragraph again. How does the use of statistics re-enforce the writer's point?

3. Re-read the paragraph beginning: "I've been playing video games …". Give two reasons why Daniel chose to join "various low-tier teams".

4. This text is an extract from a report written for an online newspaper. It is written in short paragraphs and contains some informal language that makes little sense when read literally but does make sense when the implied meaning is understood. Suggest implied meanings for:

a. "get his name out"

b. "grinding the game".

5. Look at the paragraphs beginning: "At the event in Nairobi …" and "Six teams made it …".

a. Why might a production crew covering the contest indicate its popularity?

b. Explain why the six teams in the finals must be very skilful.

6. Read again the paragraph beginning: "Esports event at a …". Why do you think the writer chooses to use the word "synergise" instead of alternatives such as "gain" or "gather"?

7. Now read again the last paragraph beginning: "The organisation has hosted …".

a. Carry1st usually organises events through universities. Why do you think this is?

b. Why would an online network be a particularly appropriate vehicle for gamers to exchange experiences and ideas?

Study Tip

There is always an amount of time for reading texts built into the overall time allowed to answer a question. Read through a whole text carefully before looking at the questions. Each question has a reference to a specific part of the text. Before you attempt to answer each question, always read the relevant section of the text again. Sometimes, it is very useful to also read around the stated section to understand its context.

Language awareness

Like many other sports, gaming has its own lexicon, often borrowing words from everyday usage to mean something different. Daniel uses the term "grinding" to explain the hours he has spent practising and learning the game. Even though a non-gamer may not know the term, it is still possible to work out the meaning form the rest of the sentence.

Wider discussion

Esports have become more popular with a younger audience than many traditional sports. Is this trend likely to lead to health problems for this younger generation as they grow older? Arguably, as a society, are we becoming too preoccupied with electronic equipment to the extent we are no longer as active as we were – or is this purely a misconception?

Discussing the influence of less physically demanding activities on today's society and the potential problems this could cause in the future could form the basis of an interesting and lively debate.

Skills application

Think about your own attitude to computer games. Do you see them as a form of relaxing entertainment or a distraction to studying that needs to be managed very carefully? Write a paragraph consisting of five sentences that each contain only explicit meaning. Then add one or two words to each sentence to create an additional implied meaning. Highlight the added words.

Unit 5.2

Writing a summary

The rise in popularity of esports is a global phenomenon fuelled by the technological advances in computer hardware and software.

Figure 5.1 An esports event

The Esports Phenomenon

By their very nature, esports are **synonymous** with computers, be it a desktop, a laptop, a tablet or a mobile phone. Without the technology developed to make computers faster, more adaptive and more intuitive, many of the best-selling computer-based games of today would not exist. It follows that to trace the origin of esports, one first has to trace the origin of computers.

It may be startling to know but the true origin of computers can be traced as far back as the early 19th century to the groundbreaking work of an inventor and mathematician called Charles Babbage. He first explored the possibility of using a mechanical device to do mathematical **computations**. His inventions were steam driven and even had basic memory storage built in. Fast forward to the mid-20th century and it is widely acknowledged that the invention of code cracking machines helped to significantly shorten the Second World War. The rest, as they say, is history.

In 1962, the first computer game was created at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) in the United States. Unsurprisingly, it took its inspiration from science-fiction stories and was somewhat dramatically named "SpaceWar!" – complete with its own exclamation mark. Although crude by today's standards, this game allowed two teams to compete against each other in a science-fiction-based universe.

Through the 1970s and into the next decade, more games became available such as "Pong", based on table tennis and "Space Invaders". Created by leading games system manufacturer, Atari, these arcade games were universally popular. Indeed, in 1980 the Space Invaders Championship was held in Los Angeles in the United States. Sponsored by Atari and using Atari consoles, over 10,000 players took part in a massive event showcasing the popularity of the game.

Until this point in time, if gamers wanted to play they had to visit arcades but, in 1985, there was ▶

◀

a seismic advance with the release of 8-bit home gaming consoles created by rival corporations, Nintendo and Sega. The world of home gaming erupted into existence and has never looked back.

If 1985 was earth shattering, the 1990s produced the single biggest tectonic shift with the creation of the World Wide Web, or internet as it is now commonly known. Suddenly, the potential for online gaming became huge. By the late 1980s, gamers were able to enjoy games boasting multiplayer functionality, thus allowing enhanced teamwork – and another step towards the evolution of esports was taken.

Fast forward to the 21st century and online gaming has become international. The number of individuals and teams competing either professionally or as devoted amateurs has grown **exponentially** to the extent that millions now participate. Quite simply, gaming has become big business, with major players in the

gaming market making huge profits from their products. As computing has evolved, so has the complexity of game design to the point where a player can be completely **immersed** in the world the game has created.

However, there is one more essential component to be considered. All sports require engagement on a personal level but the most successful, and therefore the most profitable, rely heavily on audience participation. Football is played by millions but watched by many millions more. Esports has successfully tapped into this rich vein and the viewing figures are extraordinary. In 2023, well over half a billion **devotees** watched esports worldwide. Whether trying to learn new techniques from the best players on the planet or just enjoying the action unfolding, esports fans have helped to create a worldwide phenomenon that lays claim to rivalling any of the major traditional sports.

From its humble origins in the 19th century to the contemporary multi-billion-dollar industry, esports has become a worldwide success. Where will it travel in the future? Will those who live one hundred years from now look back on early 21st-century gaming in the same way we view the work of Charles Babbage? Only time will tell.

Word box

computations calculations

devotees those who are deeply committed to something

exponentially increasing more and more quickly

immersed deeply involved in

phenomenon wonder/sensation

synonymous seen as closely connected

Study Tip

Break down the exam paper into parts so it is easier to manage. If there are multiple texts to read but each one has its own set of questions, tackle the first text and answer those questions before dealing with the next text. The rubric will always guide you to the set of questions that relate to each text.

Understanding summarising

A summary is a shorter version of a text. Your aim with a summary is to reproduce the main points of the text using fewer words that are mostly your own. A key skill, therefore, in summarising is having the confidence to exclude certain parts of the text.

Writing a summary, particularly in a stated number of words, can often seem a very daunting task. On first reading, being restricted to a smaller number of words when writing a summary may appear to be difficult but, in reality, it should make it easier.

Consider the nature of a summary:

- It Is a shortened version.
- It concentrates on the main points only.
- It ignores irrelevant detail.

One way to tackle writing a summary is to look at each paragraph in turn and create mini summaries made up of one sentence to explain the content of each paragraph.

The table shows how this process could be applied to the text on the development of esports.

Table 5.1 Summarising paragraph by paragraph

Paragraph from text	Own mini summary sentence
Paragraph 1: "By their very nature, esports …"	The origin of esports is closely linked to the history of computers.
Paragraph 2: "It may startle one to know …"	In the 1800s, Charles Babbage invented the first computer.
Paragraph 3: "Unsurprisingly …"	The first computer game – called 'SpaceWar!' – was created in 1962.
Paragraph 4: "Through the 1970s into …"	More games became available in the 1970s.
Paragraph 5: "Until this point in time …"	In 1985, home gaming was made possible with the release of gaming consoles.
Paragraph 6: "If 1985 was earth shattering …"	The invention of the internet changed gaming forever.
Paragraph 7: "Fast forward to the twenty-first century …"	Huge numbers now participate in esports and it has become a lucrative business.
Paragraph 8: "However, there is one more essential component …"	Esports now attracs a massive audience of followers from all over the world.
Paragraph 9: From its humble origins …'	What will happen to esports in the next century?

1. It may be that you can find more than nine main points because some paragraphs are longer than others or contain more relevant information.
    a. Look at paragraph 4 again. Find another relevant point to add to your collection.
    b. Look at paragraph 8 again. Find one more relevant point from this part of the text.
2. Your task may not be to simply write a summary of the text. Often the summary will be directed by the wording of the task. This could be: Summarise the main stages of the growth of esports as explained by the article.
    a. Look again at Table 5.1. Are all of the paragraphs and summary points still relevant to the specific task? Are any no longer relevant?
    b. Are there any additional points that would be better and more relevant to cover in your summary?

In responding to questions 1 and 2 you have been refining your summary by editing some points and adding others that are more suitable.

You are now ready to turn your points into a summary but there are two important ideas to remember when doing so:

- For it to be your summary, it should be written mostly in your own words.
- You should only use words from the original text if you cannot use different ones.
- You will need to write in sentences and paragraphs that link together so the use of discourse markers and conjunctions will help it flow more smoothly.