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## Let's Play a Ballgame!

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Once upon a time, there was a very popular sport in Central America. Nobody knows who came up with this sport more than 3,000 years ago. But everybody agrees that it was the Olmecs who made it popular. Even after the Olmecs were gone, the sport survived. The Mayas continued to play it. And so did the Aztecs.



Even now, we do not know the exact rules of the game. We do, however, know that people played the game differently in different places at different times. If we want to bring back the sport, we need to have two teams of players standing on each end of an I-shaped court. When the game begins, the two teams need to pass a ball from one side of the court to the other. The players cannot touch the ball with their hands and feet. They can, however, use their hips, elbows, or knees to hit it. If a player does not pick up the ball in time and lets it fall to the ground, that team loses a point. Or if a player manages to direct the ball through a hoop, that team scores a point. The team with the most points wins the game.

Does this sport sound familiar to you?

If you think this reminds you of both volleyball and basketball, you are certainly on the right track. You can say that the ballgame people in Central America played was a cross between these two modern sports.

Like any sport, the players of this ballgame were very serious when they were on a court. And they had two very good reasons for it.

One, the ball they used for the sport was made out of rubber. It was very bouncy. And it was quite heavy. (It weighed at least 6 pounds.) If a player missed a shot and was hit by the ball, he could get hurt or even killed! To protect themselves, the players put on helmets and wore padding on their arms, legs, and hips. But even if they managed to stay safe throughout a game, they might still lose their lives. That led to the second reason why the players never took the sport lightly.

Back in those days, people in Central America looked at their ballgame as a form of struggle between darkness and light, or between good and evil. After it was over, they would perform a religious ritual by killing the players of the losing team and offering them to the gods. They might even put one of the skulls at the core of a new ball they were making!

As violent as the sport was, people in Central America really enjoyed it! On a game day, they crowded over the court to watch it. While the game was in progress, they ate and drank just as we do today. One of their favorite snacks was a chocolate drink made from cacao beans. Once the game ended, some went home happy. Some became quite upset. Most likely, they were distressed because they had bet on the wrong team. If the stakes were

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too high, they might end up losing everything they owned, including their freedom!

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## Questions

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- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Who made the ballgame popular in Central America?
- A. the Aztecs
  - B. the Incas
  - C. the Olmecs
  - D. the Mayas
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Which of the following about the ballgame in Central America is true?
- A. The sport required four teams of players.
  - B. People in Central America considered the ballgame a struggle between good and evil.
  - C. People played the sport in a round court.
  - D. Players of this game did not wear any protective gear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Which of the following can a player NOT do when playing the ballgame?
- A. kick the ball with his feet
  - B. pass the ball through a hoop
  - C. hit the ball with his hip
  - D. hit the ball with his elbow
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What does the ball court look like?
- A. It looks like letter Z.
  - B. It looks like letter I.
  - C. It looks like letter L.
  - D. It looks like letter O.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What material did people in Central America use to make the balls for their ballgame?
- A. leather
  - B. polyester
  - C. straw
  - D. rubber
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. What would happen to a player if his team lost a ballgame?
- A. He would be thrown into jail.
  - B. He would be killed and offered to the gods.
  - C. He would have to buy the winning team a round of chocolate drinks.
  - D. He would become a temporary slave for about a week.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What did people in Central America eat or drink when they watched a ballgame?
- A. French fries
  - B. popcorn
  - C. chocolate drink
  - D. fried chicken



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8. Which two modern sports are similar to the ballgame people in Central America played?

- A. basketball and volleyball
- B. cricket and basketball
- C. bowling and basketball
- D. baseball and volleyball

$15 - 9 = \underline{\quad}$

$15 + -9 = \underline{\quad}$

Rewrite  $10 - 8$

Using numbers:  $-8$  and  $10$

$\underline{\quad} + \underline{\quad} = \underline{\quad}$

$-9 + 19 = \underline{\quad}$

$12 \times 4 =$

$40 \div \underline{\quad} = 8$

What number is halfway between 48 and 52?

120, 132, 144, 156,

\_\_\_\_\_, 180

How many total legs are on 12 owls?

You need to add what to 79 to get 87?

Jason earns \$20 an hour. He worked 4 hours. How much did he make?

$\underline{\quad} \div 10 = 2$

Pam has 22 nickels. How much money is that?

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$54 \div 6 =$	$\begin{array}{r} 34 \\ - 14 \\ \hline \end{array}$	<p>Mary wants to call Maria. Maria is on vacation in Asia. It is a time difference of fourteen hours. Maria's time is always later than Mary's time. If it is 9:55 A.M. where Mary lives, then what time is it where Maria is?</p> <p>_____</p>	$66 \div 11 =$
$\begin{array}{r} 29 \\ + 36 \\ \hline \end{array}$			

<p>The principal of your school wants to buy fifty-four books. Each book costs \$8.30. She wants to estimate how much it will cost. Show her how you would estimate the cost:</p>	$24 \text{ cm} = \text{_____ mm}$
	$1 \text{ lb} = 16 \text{ oz}$ $7 \text{ lb} = \text{_____ oz}$

<p>Can 749 be evenly divided by 8? Circle:  749 is NOT evenly divisible by 8  749 is evenly divisible by 8</p>	<p>How far do you think it is from the ground to your chin?  Write an estimate of the distance you think it could be.</p>
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$\begin{array}{r} 450 \\ - 168 \\ \hline \end{array}$	$5 \times 9 =$	$24 \div 8 =$	$\begin{array}{r} 215 \\ + 467 \\ \hline \end{array}$
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Write words below. Be sure to use these words:

COAT • ACCESS • BLOCK • BUSY

Write words. Lines connect squares with the same letter - cross off letter only ONCE for connected letters.

C		U		
C		A		

A O ~~U~~ C D L T

	E			
	L	O		

A ~~E~~ O B C G K ~~L~~ N

Write words. Lines connect squares with the same letter - cross off letter only ONCE for connected letters.

	R			
	U	S	Y	
		S		

A O ~~U~~ B M P ~~R~~ ~~S~~ T  
~~X~~

F						
M						
	A					

~~A~~ A E I C D ~~L~~ M N S Y