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Opening extract from

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FIRST FACTS



The word **'sport'** comes from an old French word – 'desport' – meaning 'leisure'.

Paintings of wrestlers have been discovered on the walls of an **Egyptian tomb** from around 1850 BC – which means wrestling was probably one of the **earliest sports** ever played.



There are now about **8,000** known sports and sporting games around the world.

Today, the top five **most popular sports** watched worldwide are football, cricket, field hockey, tennis and volleyball.

But more people take part in **fishing** worldwide than in any other sport.



Popular American sports like baseball, basketball and American football don't make it into the top five – they are big in the USA, but less popular in other parts of the world.



The Summer Olympics is the **most famous sporting competition** in the world – it happens once every four years.

4.7 billion TV viewers watched the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. That's nearly three out of every four people in the entire world!

Taking part in sport makes people healthier and happier.

ACTION-PACKED PAST



Football was invented in China around 476 BC.



The 'ancient' Olympic Games were first held in 776 BC, as a religious festival to honour Zeus, king of the Greek gods.

For many years, there was **just one race** at the Olympics – a running race of 192 metres. It was from one end of the stadium to the other, about the same length as today's **200 metre** sprint race.

