FENCING

Get ready for the Summer Olympic Games with our new series and learn about different Olympic and Paralympic sports.

It's one of the oldest Olympic sports but how much do you know about fencing?

Questions and answers

Fencing an Olympic sport? But isn't that what I have in my garden to keep out the dogs?

Ha! The sport of fencing involves fighting with different types of swords. But, actually, the two meanings have the same origin – from the old French defens, meaning 'defence'.

Oh, yes, of course. People have been fighting with swords for a long time, haven't they?

Yes, indeed. They discovered some carvings in Egypt showing sword fighting that date from about 1190 BC.

Really? And when did it become a sport?

In the 14th or 15th century. Both the Italians and the Germans say they invented fencing.

Lesson No. 14

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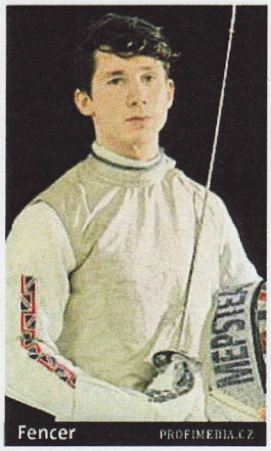
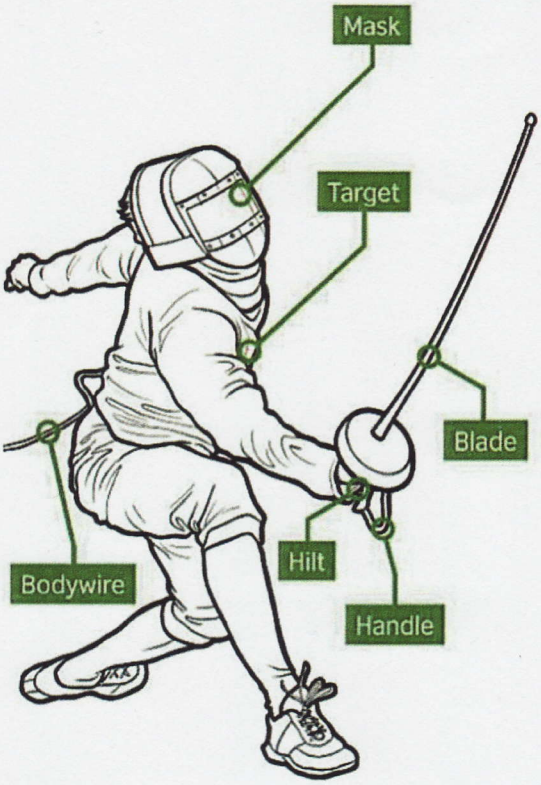


Fencer PROFIMEDIA.CZ



Activity

Decide if the following statements about the text are true, false or don't know.

- 1. The word 'fencing' has two different meanings.
- 2. Some old paintings of sword fighting were discovered in Egypt.
- 3. The Italians invented the sport of fencing.
- 4. Henri de Saint-Didier spoke French.
- 5. People don't talk about fencing in English.
- 6. Duels were dangerous.
- 7. The Italians are the best at fencing.
- 8. At the end of the conversation one of the speakers makes a good point.

For some reason I thought it was the French.

That's not surprising because French has been the language of fencing since 1573. A man called Henri de Saint-Didier wrote a document that included most of the terms still used today.

Such as?

Well, touché, for example. It's French for 'touched', and it's what a fencer says when he's been hit by his opponent's sword.

I've heard people say that in English, but they weren't talking about fencing.

Yes, you can say it if someone makes a good point against you in an argument or discussion.

Speaking of arguments, didn't people used to decide arguments by having sword fights?

Yes, and they were called duels. They were quite common. People sometimes even got killed.

Oh! Maybe better to just do it as a sport, then.

I agree. Fencing is one of the few sports to feature at every modern Olympic Games.

And who's won the most medals?

In the history of the Games, the Italians and the French have won almost the same number of medals. So there's no way of really knowing who's the best.

Yes there is. They could have a duel!

Touché!

Rules for Fencing

- There are ten events on the fencing programme: six for individuals and four for teams.
- Three types of sword are used: foil, epée and sabre.
- The foil is a light sword. You score a hit when the tip of your sword touches your opponent between the waist and the shoulders.
- The epée is a heavier sword. You score a hit when the tip of your sword touches your opponent anywhere on the body.
- The sabre is a light sword. You score a hit when the tip or edge of your sword touches your opponent anywhere above the waist except their hands or the back of their head.
- In epée, both fencers can score at the same time. In foil and sabre, only one fencer can score a hit at a time.
- Each bout lasts for three rounds of three minutes each, or until one fencer scores 15 hits.
- An electric scoring system and a set of rules called 'priority' are used to decide if a hit is valid.

Wordsearch

B	B	H	W	R	L	H	Y	O	M
Y	O	T	A	R	H	I	M	W	S
Y	D	A	J	N	O	L	Z	F	A
E	Y	R	Q	E	D	T	K	O	B
B	W	G	M	S	C	L	R	I	R
M	I	E	O	T	L	P	E	L	E
E	R	T	C	U	M	G	S	A	H
P	E	P	U	B	L	A	D	E	C
E	C	E	H	N	J	C	R	T	Y
E	M	D	G	S	V	E	E	K	T

Find these words in the grid: handle, hilt, blade, target, mark, bodywire, foil, epée, sabre

Answers

1. True; 2. False; 3. Don't know; 4. True; 5. False; 6. True; 7. Don't know; 8. True

INZERCE

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