

The History of Hockey

Pre-reading

Questions:

- What do you know about hockey?
- Where do you think the game began?

Definitions:

- Enthusiasm – a strong feeling of excitement and interest
- Opponent – a person or team on the opposite side in a game or contest
- Covet – to desire or want something very much



Photo courtesy of Rick Dikeman, 2004

Reading

19 It's the third period with only twenty seconds left on the clock. The center for the Wild passes the
40 puck to the right wing. The wing moves the puck down the ice. He hits the puck towards the net. Three,
61 two, one, buzz! He scores right at the buzzer! The goal is good, and the Wild win the game. Sticks are
79 waving in the air, players are hugging each other, and fans are pounding the glass. What a game!

97 Hockey is an exciting sport. It is a fast paced game of strategy, speed, and strength. Hockey is
115 believed to have **evolved** from the Irish field game called Hurley. Hurley is played year round in Ireland
127 with a stick (known as a "hurley") and a small leather ball.

145 Hurley was also played in the open fields of Nova Scotia back in the 1800's. Winters were difficult
167 for Hurley enthusiasts. It proved to be a difficult game to play in the snow, so it was moved onto the ice.
185 This game of "Hurley on Ice" began sometime before 1850 at King's College in Windsor, Nova Scotia, just
outside of Halifax.

188 At some point in the 1800's, the game became known as Hockey. Some attribute the name change
205 to a Royal Canadian Rifles officer stationed in Nova Scotia named "Hockey" who had his men play the
223 game for years. Others believe hockey came from the French word "hoquet" which means shepherd's stick.

239 James Creighton, an engineer who learned how to play the game of hockey while living in Nova
256 Scotia, is credited for bringing the game to a new level. He taught his friends at McGill University in
275 Montreal how to play the game. In the mid 1870's he organized the first hockey game that was played
294 inside a rink. He established a set of rules for the game known as the "Halifax Rules." One of the new rules
316 was nine players per team.

321 Hockey spread throughout Canada and gained popularity in the U.S. as well. In the late 1880's the
338 first organized hockey league started in Kingston, Ontario with four teams. In 1892 Lord Stanley, Earl of
355 Preston and Governor General of Canada, decided to donate a trophy cup that could be won by amateur
373 hockey teams in Canada. In 1926 the National Hockey League (NHL), which is today comprised of thirty
390 teams from the United States and Canada, gained control of the cup. From that time on, only NHL teams
409 could win the Stanley Cup. It has become the most coveted prize in the NHL.

424 Hockey has grown and changed in the last one hundred years. The first goals were two stones, each
442 frozen into one end of the ice. The equipment has evolved from a ball and straight stick to a puck and a
464 long handled curved stick. Hockey helmets were not worn much until the 1970's. They were **mandated** by
481 the NHL for the 1979-80 season and beyond. There were up to thirty players on the ice for the first hockey
502 games. That number has since decreased to nine and then to the current day six. Even though various
520 aspects of the game and its elements have changed over the years, the enthusiasm for the sport and the
539 passion for those who play it remain strong.

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Level 6.0

Understanding

1. Who invented the first rules of hockey? _____

2. What were those rules called? Why was that name given to the rules? _____

3. What does the word **mandate** mean? _____

4. How has the game of hockey changed since the mid 1800's? (List at least three ways.) _____

5. What does the word **evolve** mean? _____

6. Where does the word hockey come from? _____

7. How many players are on a present day hockey team? _____

8. What award is the most highly sought in the NHL? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: Write about your favorite NHL team or your favorite hockey player.

Option C: Write about a winter sport that you enjoy. How is it similar to or different than hockey?
