

The Story of Basketball (Level 3)

The purpose of LessonPlansCanada is to provide well-structured and interesting reading texts and other classroom activities. These lesson plans are aimed at both ELL students of all age groups as well as at grades 5-8 non-ELL students. Each basic lesson plan consists of a reading text, a worksheet, and one or two supplemental activities, depending on the package purchased. Answer sheets and teacher guides are also included.

The Story of Basketball (Level 3) is aimed at ELL students who are enrolled in strong middle level or upper level classes in most high school and adult ELL sites. The vocabulary used is more sophisticated and the use of idiomatic English is more prevalent than in the lesson plans for Levels 1 and 2.

Prior knowledge of soccer is not necessary to benefit from the reading. A simple explanation of the game and its worldwide popularity would be helpful.

The following resources were used in writing the texts:

- Wyckoff, Edwin Brit. *The Man Who Invented Basketball*. Berkeley Heights, NJ: Enslow Publishers, Inc. 2008.
- “The Biography of James Naismith”. Accessed March 2010. The Dr. James Naismith Basketball Foundation. <http://www.naismithmuseum.com>.
- “Everybody plays, everybody wins - Sports at YMCAs”. 2009. Accessed March 2010. <http://www.ymca.net>.
- Hareas, John. *Basketball*. New York: DK Publishing, Inc. 2005.
- Kelly, Malcolm G. *The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Canadian Sports History and Trivia*. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice-Hall Canada Ltd. 1999.



The Story of Basketball

Basketball is the most popular modern sport that was entirely invented by one person. In 1891, a Canadian named James (Jim) Naismith, who had relocated to Springfield, Massachusetts in the United States after finishing university, came up with the concept of basketball. Jim was working at the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) in Springfield. He helped with their sports programs. As winter approached in 1891, the YMCA director asked Jim to come up with a game that the men could play inside. Naismith had to design a game that was fun and challenging, but not too rough for inside play. A game that he had played as a child, called “Duck on a Rock” gave Jim the inspiration for basketball.

The first games were played with real baskets - old ones that had been used to store peaches. The baskets were nailed to the wall, one at each end of the gym. Naismith drew up a list of simple rules and the game of basketball was born on December 21, 1891. The baskets proved to be a challenge. Every time a basket was scored, someone had to climb up and remove the ball. Over the years the design of the basket changed. One early basket had a “trap-door” which could be opened by pulling on a piece of cord, allowing the ball to pop out. Eventually, baskets evolved to have backboards and nylon mesh baskets with holes in the bottom.

Early players had to be tough, as the courts were surrounded with steel mesh to keep the players away from the courtside spectator seats. The steel mesh led to the nickname of “cagers” for basketball players. Players were often cut by the mesh as they played. The replacement of steel mesh with less dangerous rope mesh must have been welcomed by the players!

Basketball popularity’s grew quickly. It did not require expensive equipment and specialized clothing. While professional players today wear high-tech clothing and shoes, people who play the game for fun can wear regular gym clothing and gym shoes. Many young people and adults play recreation basketball, and most North Americans have played the game, if only in school gym class.

The National Basketball Association (NBA) was formed in 1948 with the amalgamation of two other leagues. It is based in the USA and is one of the most successful professional sports leagues in the world, consisting of thirty teams - 29 in the U.S. and one in Canada.

What started as a game especially designed for a small group of men in Springfield has grown into one of the most popular sports in the world.

Vocabulary

Entirely (adverb)

Relocated (verb)

Concept (noun)

Director (noun)

Come up with (phrasal verb)

Inspiration (noun)

Was born on (used idiomatically)

Eventually (adverb)

Evolved (verb)

Nylon (adjective)

Courtside (adjective)

Recreation (noun)

Amalgamation (noun)

Especially (adverb)

Fast Facts



- An early Canadian women’s team was formed at a business college in Edmonton, Alberta (the “Edmonton Grads”). Between 1914 and 1939 they lost only twenty games, took the world championship twenty times, and represented Canada at the Olympics four times. They won every game they played at the Olympics.
- The smallest male player inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame was Barney Sedran who stood only 164.5 cm (5’4”) tall. He was nicknamed “Mighty Mite”. He was one of the highest paid players of his day.
- The WNBA (Women’s National Basketball Association) was formed in 1996 and has twelve teams based in the United States. The women play by slightly different rules and the ball they use is smaller than the regulation ball used in the NBA.

Worksheet: Correct the Statements

The following statements are false, according to the text “The Story of Basketball”. Rewrite the sentences after reading through the text to find the correct information.

1. Basketball is the only major sport that was invented by a committee.

2. James Naismith was an American living and working in Springfield, Manitoba.

3. A book James Naismith read as a child inspired his invention of basketball.

4. A problem for early basketball players was the lack of referees.

5. Backboards were an early part of the basket’s basic equipment.

6. The NBA began in 1960 as a brand new league.

Answers for numbers 7-8 are from the section above - “Fast Facts”.

7. The Edmonton Grads won 75% of the games they played at the Olympics.

8. Barney Sedran is famous for drawing up the rules for basketball.

Worksheet: Complete the Sentences

Using the vocabulary words on page 1, complete the sentences below to agree with the information found in the text.

1. Basketball is one of the most popular sports in the world today. The sport has _____ from a game designed _____ by one man, James Naismith, to a world-wide _____ sport enjoyed by millions. The NBA, a very popular professional league, was created in 1948 when two leagues _____ to form one.

2. James Naismith was born in Ontario and _____ to the USA after he finished university. He worked for the YMCA in Springfield, Massachusetts. One day the _____ asked him to _____ a game that could be played indoors. Naismith's _____ for basketball was really very simple - attach baskets to the wall and throw balls into them for points. The _____ for the sport came from a game he played when he was young.

3. The game of basketball _____ on December 21, 1891. The sport began by using peach baskets but these _____ became the familiar metal-rimmed hoops we know today with _____ "baskets" for the ball to pass through.

4. Basketball players are sometimes known as "cagers", which refers to the original steel mesh areas they used to play in. Spectators sitting _____ had to be protected from the players but the players were often injured by the _____ sharp steel mesh.

The Story of Basketball Answer Sheet

Answer Sheet: Correct the Statements

The following statements are false, according to the text “The Story of Basketball”. Rewrite the sentences after reading through the text to find the correct information.

Q1. Basketball is the only major sport that was invented by a committee.

A1. BASKETBALL IS THE ONLY MAJOR SPORT THAT WAS INVENTED BY ONE MAN.

Q2. James Naismith was an American living and working in Springfield, Manitoba.

A2. JAMES NAISMITH WAS A CANADIAN LIVING AND WORKING IN SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS.

Q3. A book James Naismith read as a child inspired his invention of basketball.

A3. A GAME JAMES NAISMITH HAD PLAYED AS A CHILD INSPIRED HIS INVENTION OF BASKETBALL.

Q4. A problem for early basketball players was the lack of referees.

A4. A PROBLEM FOR EARLY BASKETBALL PLAYERS WAS THE BASKET WITH A BOTTOM or THE STEEL MESH “CAGES”.

Q5. Backboards were an early part of the basket’s basic equipment.

A5. EARLY BASKETS DID NOT HAVE A BACKBOARD.

Q6. The NBA began in 1960 as a brand new league.

A6. TWO LEAGUES AMALGAMATED IN 1948 TO FORM THE NBA.

Q7. The Edmonton Grads won 75% of the games they played at the Olympics.

A7. THE EDMONTON GRADS WON 100% (OR ALL) OF THE GAMES THEY PLAYED AT THE OLYMPICS.

Q8. Barney Sedran is famous for drawing up the rules for basketball.

A8. BARNEY SEDRAN IS FAMOUS FOR BEING A VERY SHORT HALL OF FAME BASKETBALL PLAYER.

Answer Sheet: Complete the Sentences

1. Basketball is one of the most popular sports in the world today. The sport has EVOLVED from a game designed ENTIRELY by one man, James Naismith, to a world-wide RECREATION sport enjoyed by millions. The NBA, a very popular professional league, was created in 1948 when two leagues AMALGAMATED to form one.

2. James Naismith was born in Ontario and RELOCATED to the USA after he finished university. He worked for the YMCA in Springfield, Massachusetts. One day the DIRECTOR asked him to COME UP WITH a game that could be played indoors. Naismith’s CONCEPT for basketball was really very simple - attach baskets to the wall and throw balls into them for points. The INSPIRATION for the sport

came from a game he played when he was young.

3. The game of basketball WAS BORN ON December 21, 1891. The sport began by using peach baskets but these EVENTUALLY became the familiar metal-rimmed hoops we know today with NYLON “baskets” for the ball to pass through.

4. Basketball players are sometimes known as “cagers”, which refers to the original steel mesh areas they used to play in. Spectators sitting COURTSIDE had to be protected from the players but the players were often injured by the ESPECIALLY sharp steel mesh.

James Naismith, Inventor of Basketball

Teacher's Guide to Listening Exercise Group Activity

This listening exercise is to give students a chance to listen carefully to and understand what they are hearing. The following text is to be read to the students, slowly and with precise enunciation. The teacher might want to read it more than once, depending on the level of his/her class. The students will not have a copy of the text when it is read to them. The class will be divided into small groups and they or the teacher will choose writers/recorders. After listening to the text, and by using the "Sentence Mix-Up" sheet, they will rearrange the sentences so that the text is in the original correct order. The "Sentence Mix-Up" sheet could also be cut into individual strips beforehand - this is

often an effective way for the students to rearrange the sentences.

An additional second blank sheet is provided where the students may write out the text with the sentences in the correct order.

The text is on the following two pages. Text (A) does not have the sentences numbered (for easy reading aloud). The second text, (B), exactly the same as (A), has each sentence numbered for easy identification when going over the students' final charts.

James Naismith, Inventor of Basketball

Listening Exercise Text (A)

James Naismith was born near Almonte*, Ontario on November 6, 1861. Almonte is about 45 km (28 miles) from Canada's capital city of Ottawa. James, also known as Jim, was the son of Scottish immigrants. When he was nine years old, both of his parents died. Jim was raised by relatives in a small community of Bennie's Corners near Almonte.

Jim attended high school in Almonte for two years. He left to work for a lumberjack but returned to high school four years later. He had decided that he wanted to go to university. After high school, Jim studied at McGill University in Montreal. He studied to become a physical education teacher. In 1890 he qualified to become a Presbyterian minister. Later in life he became a medical doctor as well.

Jim got a job as a professor in the American city of Springfield after finishing university. The head of the physical education department asked him to create a new game to be played indoors at the YMCA. Jim came up with rules for a ball game that used two peach baskets that were attached to the gym walls.

James Naismith's invented game quickly went on to become very popular around the world. The inventor lived to see his game played at the 1936 Olympic Games before he died in 1939.

*Almonte is pronounced Al-mont by the local residents, without the final "e" being sounded.

James Naismith, Inventor of Basketball Listening Exercise Text (B)

(1) James Naismith was born near Almonte, Ontario on November 6, 1861. (2) Almonte is about 45 km (28 miles) from Canada's capital city of Ottawa. (3) James, also known as Jim, was the son of Scottish immigrants. (4) When he was nine years old, both of his parents died. (5) Jim was raised by relatives in the small community of Bennie's Corners near Almonte.

(6) Jim attended high school in Almonte for two years. (7) He left to work for a lumberjack but returned to high school four years later. (8) He had decided that he wanted to go to university. (9) After high school Jim studied at McGill University in Montreal. (10) He studied to become a physical education teacher. (11) In 1890 he qualified to become a Presbyterian minister. (12) Later in life he became a medical doctor as well.

(13) Jim got a job as a professor in the American city of Springfield after finishing university. (14) The head of the physical education department asked him to create a new game to be played indoors at the YMCA. (15) Jim came up with rules for a ball game that used two peach baskets that were attached to the gym walls.

(16) James Naismith's invented game quickly went on to become very popular around the world. (17) The inventor lived to see his game played at the 1936 Olympic Games before he died in 1939.

*Almonte is pronounced Al-mont by the local residents, without the final "e" being sounded.

Listening Activity - James Naismith, Inventor of Basketball

1. Listen carefully to the text “James Naismith, Inventor of Basketball” as it is read to you.
2. Choose one person in your group to be the writer/recorder.
3. With your group members, read over the “Listening Activity - Answer Chart”. The sentences are from the text that was read to you, but are in the wrong order.
4. Ask your teacher or use a dictionary to explain words you don’t know.
5. Working with the group, put the story back in the correct order.
6. Trade your final answer chart with another group.
7. As the story is read again, make corrections to the sheet you have.

Listening Activity - Answer Chart

	Jim attended high school in Almonte for two years.
	James, also known as Jim, was the son of Scottish immigrants.
	Jim got a job as a professor in the American city of Springfield after finishing university.
	He left to work for a lumberjack but returned to high school four years later.
	James Naismith was born near Almonte, Ontario on November 6, 1861.
	James Naismith’s invented game quickly went on to become very popular around the world.
	After high school Jim studied at McGill University in Montreal.
	In 1890 he qualified to become a Presbyterian minister.
	Almonte is about 45 km (28 miles) from Canada’s capital city of Ottawa.
	The head of the physical education department asked him to create a new game to be played indoors at the YMCA.
	He studied to become a physical education teacher.
	When he was nine years old, both of his parents died.
	The inventor lived to see his game played at the 1936 Olympic Games before he died in 1939.
	Later in life he became a medical doctor as well.
	Jim was raised by relatives in the small community of Bennie’s Corners near Almonte.
	He had decided that he wanted to go to university.
	Jim came up with rules for a ball game that used two peach baskets that were attached to the gym walls.

Listening Activity - Answer Sheet

6	Jim attended high school in Almonte for two years.
3	James, also known as Jim, was the son of Scottish immigrants.
13	Jim got a job as a professor in the American city of Springfield after finishing university.
7	He left to work for a lumberjack but returned to high school four years later.
1	James Naismith was born near Almonte, Ontario on November 6, 1861.
16	James Naismith's invented game quickly went on to become very popular around the world.
9	After high school Jim studied at McGill University in Montreal.
11	In 1890 he qualified to become a Presbyterian minister.
2	Almonte is about 45 km (28 miles) from Canada's capital city of Ottawa.
14	The head of the physical education department asked him to create a new game to be played indoors at the YMCA.
10	He studied to become a physical education teacher.
4	When he was nine years old, both of his parents died.
17	The inventor lived to see his game played at the 1936 Olympic Games before he died in 1939.
12	Later in life he became a medical doctor as well.
5	Jim was raised by relatives in the small community of Bennie's Corners near Almonte.
8	He had decided that he wanted to go to university.
15	Jim came up with rules for a ball game that used two peach baskets that were attached to the gym walls.

Listening Activity - Answer Chart

Group Members: _____

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Multiple Choice Questions

Underline the answer below that best answers the question about “James Naismith, Inventor of Basketball”.

- 1. James Naismith was born near which Canadian city?**
 - a. Springfield.
 - b. Ottawa.
 - c. Toronto.
 - d. Montreal.

- 2. Which of the following is a false statement about James Naismith?**
 - a. He was also known as Jim.
 - b. His parents died when he was nine years old.
 - c. He moved to the USA after he graduated from McGill University.
 - d. He became a doctor when he was only twenty-one years old.

- 3. What did James Naismith do after he left high school for the first time?**
 - a. He worked for a lumberjack.
 - b. He went to university.
 - c. He worked for his uncle.
 - d. He travelled around the world.

- 4. During his lifetime, what three professions did James Naismith train for?**
 - a. A doctor, teacher, and musician.
 - b. A teacher, minister, and doctor.
 - c. A minister, accountant, and doctor.
 - d. A writer, teacher, and minister.

- 5. Where did James Naismith invent the game of basketball?**
 - a. At the YMCA in Springfield.
 - b. At the YMCA in Montreal.
 - c. At McGill University.
 - d. At the Boys and Girls Club in Springfield.

- 6. What happened in 1936?**
 - a. The rules of basketball were changed.
 - b. The Basketball Hall of Fame was opened.
 - c. The NBA was formed.
 - d. Basketball was played at the Olympics.

Multiple Choice Questions - Answer Sheet

Underline the answer below that best answers the question about “James Naismith, Inventor of Basketball”.

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