

Dr. Naismith Reading Comprehension

Name _____

James Naismith found himself in a tough position. He was working with an unruly class of fourteen-year-old boys at the YMCA in Springfield, Massachusetts, during a particularly harsh New England winter in 1891. The YMCA director of physical education, Dr. Luther Gulick, gave Naismith an ultimatum: invent an indoor game that could keep the rowdy group of boys occupied for the winter. Gulick gave Naismith fourteen days to implement the game.

Naismith's original idea was to make a game in which the only way to advance the ball was to pass it. Furthermore, to score, players would have to lob the ball into a basket that was placed well above the players' heads. Naismith reasoned that these rules would reduce the violence and body contact endemic to games at the time such as soccer, lacrosse, rugby, hockey and football. In the first ever basketball game at the YMCA, the players used a soccer ball. Each team also had nine players on the court at a time. Peach baskets were used as "hoops." Before the game, Naismith etched his immortal "13 rules" on the blackboard. In the original rules, each half was fifteen minutes long and there was a five-minute break between the halves. The rules described the roles of the umpires and referees, fouls, and a description of what constituted "traveling," among others. According to Naismith, the rules governing fouls and traveling were most important as they prevented the boys from tackling, kicking, mobbing, and punching each other. In the first basketball game, the concept of dribbling had not been established.

Naismith's game quickly became popular. The YMCA decided to spread the word about basketball beyond its walls. In 1893, Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee, is thought to have fielded the first college basketball team. Two years later, the first intercollegiate game was played in Minnesota. In the meantime, Naismith earned a medical degree and joined the faculty at the University of Kansas, where he became the Kansas Jayhawks' first basketball coach. Naismith's record as a coach was a subpar 55 wins to 60 losses, making him, ironically, the only coach with a losing record in the history of Kansas basketball.

Despite his status as the undisputed inventor of one of the world's most popular sports, Naismith was uninterested in the fame or glory that typically accompany such an invention. In fact, he was more interested in pursuing the science of physical education. By the time he died in 1939, basketball was played throughout the world and was an Olympic event. Naismith was the first inductee into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall-of-Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1959. In 2010, Naismith's document describing the original rules of basketball were auctioned for a record \$4,338,000 dollars. It was the highest amount paid for an item of sports memorabilia in history. The rules were donated to the University of Kansas.

Today, over 300 million people are thought to participate in basketball, making it one of the world's most popular team sports.

1. Which of the following describes a problem-solution text structure as discussed in this passage?
- A. **Problem:** Naismith died in 1939. **Solution:** Basketball became an Olympic sport
 - B. **Problem:** Naismith was the undisputed inventor of basketball. **Solution:** Naismith was uninterested in fame or glory
 - C. **Problem:** The Boys of the Springfield YMCA were trapped inside during the winter. **Solution:** Naismith was forced to invent a new sport
 - D. **Problem:** The University of Kansas needed a basketball coach. **Solution:** Naismith led the team to a record of 55 wins and 60 losses

2. Why did Naismith decide that baskets would be placed well above the players' heads?

- A. He thought it would reduce violence and body contact
- B. He thought it would increase player skill
- C. He thought it would enable players to score a lot of points
- D. He thought it would be a great use of peach baskets

3. Why does the author use the word "immortal" in the following sentence?

Before the game, Naismith etched his **immortal** "13 rules" on the blackboard.

- A. To emphasize how important the sport of basketball is
- B. To emphasize how important the 13 rules were in the development of basketball
- C. To emphasize that the rules would be changed later on in history
- D. To emphasize that the sport of basketball would become among the most popular sports in the world

4. Which of the following is implied in the passage?

- A. Basketball was really invented in Tennessee
- B. The boys who played in the first basketball game should have received as much credit as James Naismith in the development of basketball.
- C. If rules governing fouls and traveling were left out, it would be much less popular
- D. If rules governing fouls and traveling were left out, it would be much more violent

5. What question is answered in the third paragraph?

- A. Who was the most successful basketball coach in the University of Kansas history?
- B. Who was the only basketball coach with a losing record in the history of University of Kansas?
- C. Which team won the first college basketball game ever played?
- D. Who was the first coach at Vanderbilt University?

6. Which is NOT true about James Naismith?

- A. The original rules for basketball he wrote were donated to the University of Kansas
- B. He was not interested in becoming famous
- C. He was more interested in physical education than basketball
- D. He gave a speech when he was elected to the Hall-of-Fame

7. Which of the following is the best description of this passage?

- A. A biography about James Naismith
- B. A description about the popularity of basketball
- C. A description of the role the YMCA played in the invention of basketball
- D. A description of Naismith's role in the development of basketball

