
4: Think about Sport (pages 131–72)

Reading 1: Sport: Play or Work?

Critical Focus: Constructing and Testing Definitions (page 133)

The third reading begins with an exercise in constructing and testing definitions. Review the strategy explanation. The scissors example is usually effective for illustrating how a definition that is too vague will allow inclusion of items that have some but not all of the features of the category one is trying to define. It is also a good one for illustrating the need for precision when trying to formulate a definition.

Pre-Reading (page 134)

The pre-reading requires students to apply the strategy of constructing and testing definitions to the concept of sport. Ask students to begin working individually and then combine their efforts with a partner until they come up with a tentative definition that they can share with the whole class. Or, put students in pairs from the outset.

The activity works well if pairs put their definitions on the board or project them via overhead projector and invite members of the class to critique the definitions. Use this question as a prompt: Can you think of any activity that, according to this definition, we should consider a sport—but which is clearly not a sport?

Allow students additional time to revise their definitions based on the critiques or set the definitions aside to begin the reading. The pre-reading can easily take up to an hour or more; we usually assign the reading as homework.

Reading (pages 135–45)

This challenging academic treatment of sport requires a number of close readings. We usually assign the entire reading as homework. Ask students to have a look at the first task in **Getting at the Matter**. As they read the selection, students should fill in at least the left-hand column, which lists scholars that the writer cites and four related topics dealt with in the reading. The students should check off the topics that each scholar discusses. The column reserved for **strengths and weaknesses** can be done at a later time. If students do this assignment conscientiously, they should be prepared for the follow-up reading.

As a follow up, ask students to reread the selection as a jigsaw reading task. Divide the reading into three to four sections (omitting for the moment the last section, An Attempt at Synthesis) and assign each section to a group of about three students. Each group should read and discuss the section with the expectation that each member of the group will become an expert on that section of the reading. In other words, each group member must be able to explain the section to someone who has not studied it.

After each group has thoroughly discussed its assigned section, reconfigure the groups so that each new group consists of an “expert” on one of the sections of the reading. Then each “expert” will explain his or her section to the others.

Finally, each group will complete the section of the table (from **Getting at the Matter**, Question 1) on the strengths and weaknesses of each sport theorist’s definition of sport. If time does not permit, this last step can be assigned as homework.

By the end of the jigsaw reading, students should have completed two intensive readings of the selection. As a homework assignment, they should now read the entire selection a third time, paying special attention this time to the last section of the reading. Students should now be in a position to complete the table from **Getting at the Matter**.

Students can then discuss the final section in small groups during the next class session and try answering Question 2 of **Getting at the Matter**.

Getting at the Matter (page 146)

Suggested answers.

<p>Huizinga</p> <p>Game</p> <p>x Play</p> <p>Sport</p> <p>Work</p>	<p>Strengths: Identifies important features of play (free, voluntary activity, can be suspended at any time, not involved with concerns of “making a living,” never imposed, satisfying in itself and doesn’t serve some other end, not pursued for material interest or profit).</p> <p>Illustrates how play does and does not intersect with sport.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Some features that Huizinga identifies are not helpful in distinguishing play from other forms of social behavior (that it proceeds within boundaries of time and space is true of all social behavior, that it has fixed rules that are freely accepted is not true for all forms of play; some play has no normative regulation).</p>
<p>Caillois</p> <p>x Game</p> <p>x Play</p> <p>Sport</p> <p>Work</p>	<p>Strengths: Expands on Huizinga’s definition of play. Classifies play according to various motives of participants (separates play motivated by competition from play motivated by chance, or pretence, or vertigo). Recognizes that play can be highly structured or non-structured.</p> <p>Weaknesses: Does not effectively distinguish between the terms play and game. Presents his contribution as a classification of games when it should be a classification of play.</p>
<p>Loy</p> <p>x Game</p> <p>x Play</p> <p>Sport</p> <p>Work</p>	<p>Strengths: Makes more clear the distinction between games and play (for an activity to be a game, it must involve competition. Some forms of play are games, some forms of play are not games (e.g., flying kites, riding teeter-totters, dressing in costumes).</p> <p>Weaknesses: Makes games a subcategory of play; therefore does not deal adequately with professional games. Sack argues that professional games should be considered work—not play.</p>

(Continued)

Edwards	Strengths: Removes professional sport from the realm of play because professional sport imposes severe limitations on individual freedom and is pursued for profit; therefore professional sport is work—not play.
Game	
Play	
x Sport	Weaknesses: Makes sport, in general, synonymous with professional sport; therefore makes playful sport logically impossible.
x Work	

2. Responses will vary.

Academic Vocabulary Focus (pages 147–48)

1. contemporary/*current*
2. refines/*improves upon*
3. reveals/*shows*
4. formulates/*creates/constructs*
5. explicit/*precisely stated*
6. suspended/*stopped/terminated*
7. imposes/*places/requires*
8. submit/*agree*
9. violates/*goes against*
10. oriented/*directed towards*
11. promote/*encourage*
12. regulates/*governs/controls*
13. proceeded/*continued*
14. occurred/*happened*
15. derives/*receives*

Although the italicized vocabulary items represent synonyms for the academic vocabulary that appear in bold, it is important to let students know that it is not always possible to substitute the synonym. Some substitutions result in awkward expressions. In fact, in nearly every case, the original collocation seems more natural and therefore preferable.

For Discussion (page 148)

Responses will vary.

Reading 2: The Meaning of Sport—A Cultural Approach

Pre-Reading (page 149)

The pre-reading questions are designed to try to move students from naming activities commonly regarded as sports to searching for more unusual or obscure examples that may or may not be obvious examples of sports. After students discuss the questions in small groups, they usually find it interesting to hear about any unusual activities that students in other groups have been able to come up with.

Reading (pages 150–56)

We recommend dividing the reading into three parts. The first paragraph of the reading is a perfect extension of the **Pre-Reading** activity. Keeping the small groups from the pre-reading, have the groups read and discuss the six numbered activities and situations described in the first paragraph. Ask them to put the activities into two categories—sports and not-sports—and to explain why they assigned each activity to the category that they did. If possible, each group should try to arrive at a consensus. Then ask one member of each group to report on how the group divided the activities and explain the reasons the group gave for dividing them as they did.

Next, ask students to read Paragraphs 2–6 quickly for the gist. Then ask groups to discuss this section. Their task should be simply to explain in a couple of sentences what happens in a song duel. Invite a spokesperson from one of the groups to report on the group’s discussion; allow other groups to add comments.

The song duel dialogue is most effective when it is read aloud with expression. The teacher can do this, or if there are good oral readers in the class, assign two of them the parts of Immok and Akausraurak and have them perform the dialogue. (If students understand the humor of the dialogue, they should be able to describe the relative statures of the two “combatants.” Ask them to give a general description of the men. Hint: What is implied in the last line of Akausraurak’s oration? A creek is usually fairly shallow tributary. Akausraurak suggests that Immok is so short that he cannot cross a creek without a boat.)

Before reading the rest of the selection, ask students whether they consider the song duel to be a sport. Ask them to read the remainder of the selection, either in class, if there is time or as homework.

Getting at the Matter (page 157)

These questions make a good follow-up assignment to complete as homework. The next time the class meets, students can share their responses in groups.

Suggested Answers:

1. Although we seem to recognize sport when we see it, sport is difficult to define, even in Western societies that share many cultural assumptions. Sport sociologists have tried with only partial success to clearly define sport. The problem of defining sport cross-culturally is much more difficult.
2. Describing the song duel in detail draws attention to various aspects of this activity that might resemble sport while also drawing attention to features that would lead a critical thinker to conclude that it possesses characteristics not normally associated with sport but more closely resembling other institutions, e.g., theater, court, etc. As to whether readers of this book would consider it a sport or not, opinions might vary.
3. It has an element of competition. The contestants exhibit physical prowess. It is done for the benefit of spectators who cheer on their favorite. On the other hand, most sports with which we are familiar do not include singing and debate as an integral feature of the contest. Modern sports are not staged for the purpose of determining issues that stand outside of the question of who is better or more skillful. The song duel seems to have as its primary objective the resolution of a civil dispute.
4. Some cultures simply do not have equivalents in their languages for the term *sport*, and often they do not distinguish between such concepts as work and play or sport and ritual.

Critical Focus Review (pages 157–58)

By repeatedly returning to activities that involve active engagement with citations and reference, we want to emphasize the importance of this feature of academic texts and help the student establish an expectation that the citation is an integral feature of academic texts and not merely an adornment.

Suggested answers:

1. Paragraphs 10 and 11 are most heavily loaded with citations.
2. The author cites “earlier” literature in Paragraph 10. In Paragraph 11, he cites more current views (relative to the publication date of his article). In general, he finds the earlier literature deficient because it does not reflect any awareness of the problem of defining sport, whereas he acknowledges that the sport sociologists cited in Paragraph 11 have made an effort to develop adequate definitions of sport even though some problems remain.
3. Answers will vary.

Academic Vocabulary Focus (page 159)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. e | 9. m |
| 2. h | 10. a |
| 3. l | 11. g |
| 4. n | 12. f |
| 5. o | 13. j |
| 6. c | 14. k |
| 7. d | 15. i |
| 8. b | |

For Discussion (page 160)

Answers will vary.

Reading 3: Why Competition Excites Us

Pre-Reading (page 161)

In Reading 3 the author explores the question of what causes human beings to engage in sports or to watch others participate. The pre-reading questions are designed simply to get students to reflect on the question. Give students 10–15 minutes to discuss the questions, and then ask them to read the article.

Reading (pages 162–68)

This is a good reading to have students annotate as they read. Remind them of the technique and benefits of annotation introduced in connection with Reading 2, Unit 3 (“The Human-Animal

Link”). Have them annotate the text; when they are finished, have them answer the **Getting at the Matter** questions. Students usually do not have much difficulty grasping the general idea of the reading.

Getting at the Matter (page 169)

Possible Answers

1. The author argues that contemporary society has become too predictable and too secure. Human beings evolved in a world that was more dangerous and more unpredictable. Humans carry, as a part of their genetic heritage, an instinct for confronting conflict and physical challenge through physical prowess. Sport allows human beings to satisfy that inborn need within a society where all risk has been minimized.
2. The general thrust of the second question is much the same as the first. Sport compensates for the loss of challenge and excitement as a result of a modern lifestyle that has become increasingly predictable and risk-free, but therefore also monotonous and routine. Sport reintroduces some element of excitement, risk, physical challenge, and unpredictability into life to compensate for the loss of these in everyday life.

Academic Vocabulary Focus (pages 170–71)

1. The first vocabulary task is intended to be a self-study activity, but learners benefit from discussion of new vocabulary. After students finish filling in the table, the teacher could extend the activity by selecting a number of vocabulary items and discussing their meaning. For instance, a number of the vocabulary items in this task are related to the discussion in the reading of the concept “bureaucracy.” The teacher can illustrate the meaning of these items by using them to discuss the students’ understanding of the workings of a bureaucracy.
2. The answer key to the second vocabulary activity is provided:
 1. challenges
 2. unpredictable
 3. achieve
 4. security
 5. precise
 6. procedures
 7. area
 8. predictable
 9. element
 10. restore
 11. outcome
 12. compensate
 13. retain
 14. ceases
 15. pursue

For Discussion (page 172)

Responses to the discussion questions will vary.

