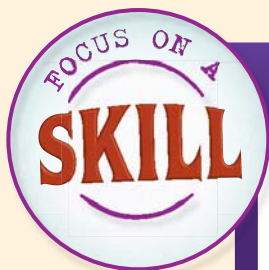


What do you think is the oldest sport in America? Baseball? Football? Soccer? Think again! Lacrosse is a sport that North American Indians played long before explorers came to America. The sport is a combination of basketball, soccer, and hockey. Lacrosse is now one of the fastest growing team sports in the United States.



Recognizing the Main Idea

The **main idea** is the big idea of the passage. It is what the author wants you to know. Are you having trouble finding the main idea? You can write down the important **details**. Then see what these details have in common.

Read this paragraph and see how the details support the main idea.

The National Lacrosse League (NLL) has grown quickly since it began. The league started in 1986 with only four teams. There are now 13 teams that play indoor lacrosse. There are three teams from Canada. The other ten are from the United States. The NLL season runs from December to April. Each team plays 16 regular games. Then they play for the NLL Champion's Cup. The newest teams began playing in the 2007 season. They are the New York Titans and the Chicago Shamrox.

The league started in 1986 with only four teams.

There are now 13 teams that play indoor lacrosse.

The newest teams began playing in the 2007 season.

The National Lacrosse League (NLL) has grown quickly since it began.



Read these sentences about lacrosse.

1. Some people still tell the legend of the very first game of lacrosse played between animals and birds.
2. The modern version of lacrosse is a lot different from the game played by the American Indians a long time ago.
3. Lacrosse is very popular in Canada, where it is played by thousands of people.
4. Players in any sport where contact is allowed should wear helmets to protect themselves.
5. Lacrosse may not be as familiar to most Americans as baseball.
6. The object of lacrosse is to get the ball in the goal.

Read each of the definitions below. Choose an underlined word from above to match each definition. Write it on the line.

- _____ *adj.* liked and enjoyed by many people
- _____ *n.* the area into which players drive a ball or puck to score
- _____ *n.* touching of persons or objects
- _____ *n.* a form or variation
- _____ *adj.* well known or easily recognized
- _____ *n.* a story handed down from earlier times

The Oldest Sport in America

The oldest sport in America is not as popular as baseball or football. It's not as familiar as basketball or soccer. In fact, the oldest sport is one that may be new to you. It's lacrosse [luh-KROSS].

Lacrosse is a game between two teams of players. There are 10 players on a men's lacrosse team. Women's teams have 12 players. Lacrosse is a game that requires a lot of skill and speed. Players must run up and down the field while trying to throw and catch a ball using a stick with a net on the end. It is usually played outdoors on a field. It can be played indoors, too.

According to Cherokee legend, the first game of lacrosse was a contest between animals and birds.

The Native American Game

North American Indians played lacrosse long before European explorers ever came to this continent. They played lacrosse instead of fighting with other tribes. They used lacrosse games to peacefully settle disputes. They also played the sport for fun. There were not many rules in the early Indian version of lacrosse. There was no limit to the number of people on a team. Hundreds of people could play in one game. A game could last for days.

Probably the first time the game was organized was by the Iroquois tribe in Canada. They called the game "baggataway" [buh-GAT-uh-vey]. Baggataway was played with a ball about the size of a tennis ball. It was made of



deer hide and stuffed with deer hair. Just as in today's lacrosse game, players would throw and catch the ball using a special stick. The stick was long and had a net or a little basket on the end. The object of the game was to get the ball in the goal.

Different things were used to mark the goal. Sometimes it was a post stuck in the ground. The ball had to hit the post. Sometimes two posts marked the goal. Then the ball had to pass between them. For some tribes, the medicine men served as goal posts. If they wandered around during the game, the game moved with them!



Born in Canada

French settlers in Canada learned baggataway from the North American Indians. They made the game their own and gave it a new name—lacrosse. In 1867, a Canadian player named George Beers set up rules and standards for the game. He decided on the size of the field, the number of players, and the equipment. The sport soon spread to the United States, where the first college lacrosse game was played in 1877.

Lacrosse Today

Players today use a solid rubber ball. Their sticks have nets on the end. Men playing lacrosse wear helmets with masks and padded gloves. That is because players are allowed to have contact, or bump each other. Women's lacrosse does not allow contact. So women do not need helmets. The only player whose hands can touch the ball is the goalkeeper. All the other players must use their sticks.

Lacrosse is played mostly in schools and colleges. And there are professional lacrosse **leagues** in the United States and Canada. Lacrosse is played in other countries, too.

Do you want to learn more about the rules of lacrosse? Visit www.laxrules.com.

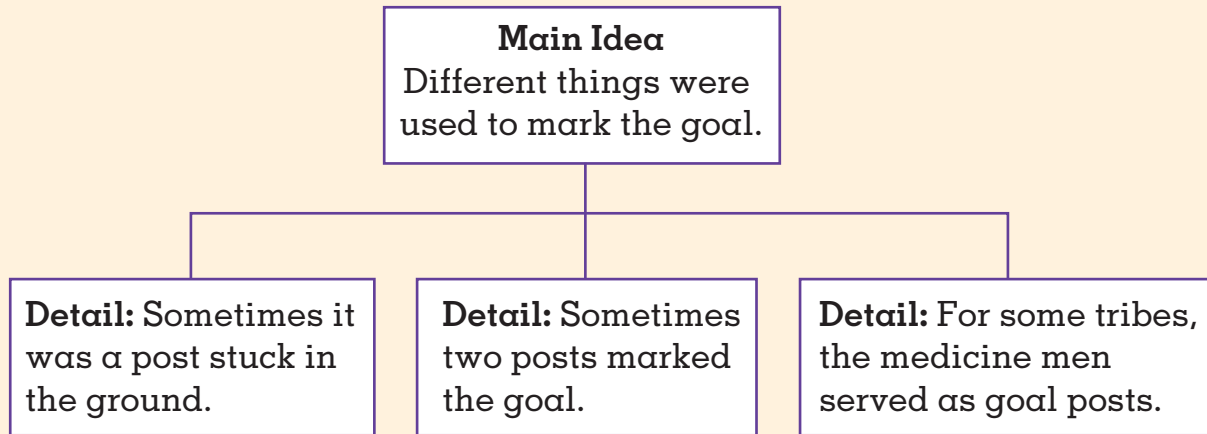
leagues

n. groups of sports teams that compete against each other

STRATEGY: Main Idea Chart

The **main idea chart** will show you how the **main idea** is the most important thing the author has to say. It also will show how **details** in the passage support the main idea.

This chart shows how details in paragraph 5 support the main idea that different things were used to mark the lacrosse goal.



Think about all the details in the article. Then decide what main idea all those details support. Write one detail and the main idea of the article in the chart below.

Main Idea		
<hr/> <hr/>		
Detail: North American Indians played lacrosse long before European explorers ever came here.	Detail: French settlers in Canada learned baggataway from the Native North Americans. They made the game their own and gave it a new name, lacrosse.	Detail: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Think about what you learned from the article about lacrosse. Then circle the letter of the correct answer.

Recalling
Details

1. Lacrosse was begun by the _____.
- A French
 - B Canadians
 - C Europeans
 - D North American Indians

Using
Context Clues

2. Which word in the article means “arguments or debates”?
- A helmets
 - B disputes
 - C tribes
 - D rules

Determining
the Sequence
of Events

3. Which event happened first?
- A George Beers set up rules and standards for lacrosse.
 - B The Iroquois played a game called baggataway.
 - C French settlers made up the name lacrosse.
 - D Americans began playing baseball.

Identifying
Cause-and-Effect
Relationships

4. Women lacrosse players don't need helmets because _____.
- A women's lacrosse is played with a different kind of ball
 - B women's lacrosse is played with the ball on the ground
 - C women's lacrosse does not allow contact
 - D women are not allowed to play lacrosse

Making Inferences
and Drawing
Conclusions

5. You can decide from the article that _____.
- A lacrosse has changed over time
 - B no one plays lacrosse anymore
 - C all schools have lacrosse teams
 - D lacrosse is still played using North American Indian rules

Writing a
Response



6. Compare and contrast the game the North American Indians played with the game people call lacrosse today. Use details from the article to support your answer.

WORD STUDY: Suffix -er

A **suffix** is a word part placed at the end of a word. Some suffixes change a verb into a noun that refers to a person. For example, if the suffix **-er** is added to the verb *play*, the new word is *player*. *Player* is a noun that means "one who plays."

Joseph and his team *play* lacrosse every Thursday.

Joseph is a good lacrosse *player*.

Write the verb to which -er was added to form these words.

1. teacher _____
2. catcher _____
3. fighter _____
4. runner _____
5. explorer _____
6. settler _____

Sometimes the spelling of the word has to change when you add a suffix. Here are some rules to follow.

When you add -er to a root word that ends in e, first drop the e.
score + -er = scorer

When you add -er to a short-vowel word, first double the final consonant.
win + -er = winner

Add -er to each of these words. Remember to follow the rules above.

1. hit _____
2. write _____
3. kick _____
4. skate _____