



THE GREAT OUTDOORS! ➡

Snow Sports

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CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Into the Great Outdoors!	6
Chapter 2: Getting It Done Right	16
Chapter 3: Get Great Gear	28
Chapter 4: Further Adventures	38
Find Out More.	46
Series Glossary of Key Terms	47
Index/Author	48

KEY ICONS TO LOOK FOR



Words to Understand: These words with their easy-to-understand definitions will increase the reader's understanding of the text, while building vocabulary skills.



Sidebars: This boxed material within the main text allows readers to build knowledge, gain insights, explore possibilities, and broaden their perspectives by weaving together additional information to provide realistic and holistic perspectives.



Research Projects: Readers are pointed toward areas of further inquiry connected to each chapter. Suggestions are provided for projects that encourage deeper research and analysis.



Text-Dependent Questions: These questions send the reader back to the text for more careful attention to the evidence presented here.



Series Glossary of Key Terms: This back-of-the-book glossary contains terminology used throughout this series. Words found here increase the reader's ability to read and comprehend higher-level books and articles in this field.



Educational Videos: Readers can view videos by scanning our QR codes, providing them with additional educational content to supplement the text. Examples include news coverage, moments in history, speeches, iconic sports moments and much more!



WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

black diamond a sign in this shape shows the most difficult and dangerous type of ski run

carve a fast, precise turn that uses the edges of skis or snowboards

complement to naturally go with something else

Zamboni a motorized vehicle that smooths ice in rinks by melting it and letting it refreeze

Into the Great Outdoors!



hen the weather forecast calls for a snowstorm, a lot of people want to huddle up by the fire with a cup of hot chocolate.

Sure, it can be fun to get snowed in. But it's even more fun to get snowed out! It's easy enough to build a snowman in the yard, or you could get a snowball fight going. But maybe you run out of carrots for noses. Or maybe you get sore arms from throwing (or being hit). Then it's time to venture into new territory.

If you are not used to winter sports, you may find they take a little more effort to do. But the payoff is worth it. It's exhilarating to shred a mountainside of fresh powder on skis or a snowboard, master a figure eight on ice skates, or trek through a fresh snowfall in the woods. One of the

best parts of conquering the snow and ice is that it takes a whole different set of skills than other sports. So get ready for a challenge!

Whether you like skiing, snowboarding, ice skating or snowshoeing, there are plenty of choices. You don't have to stay inside and let the weather win. And there's always hot chocolate waiting at the end.

History of Snow Sports



When mother nature dumps three feet of snow on the ground, life may slow down for a little while. But it can't stop forever! Skiing, ice skating, and other winter sports started as important ways to travel through the snow and ice when regular shoes were not enough.



Northern people have been using skis for centuries, in peace and war.



WINTER WARFARE

In wartime, soldiers cannot wait until the weather clears up. Historically, wars that happened in the winter meant soldiers had to find a way to fight even in snow and ice. Records show many battles that were fought on skis, perhaps as early as the 12th century. Army forces from Russia, Finland, Italy, Norway, and the United States have all been trained in ski combat. Troops in the Netherlands carried ice skates along with their rifles. They were able to move on the frozen water much more quickly than their enemies, giving them the advantage of speed.



Winter Warfare

Skiing is probably the oldest of the winter sports. Archaeologists have found wooden skis from more than 5,000 years ago. Places like Russia, Finland, and Norway got a lot of snow—and it stuck around for months. Skis were a necessary form of transportation. These ancient peoples were cross-country skiing. They used the skis to slide easily on the surface of the snow. Downhill skiing began around the mid-1800s. It is also called Alpine skiing because it became popular in the Alps, a mountain range in Europe. By this time, skiing was not just a way to get around. People did it just for fun—and nothing was more fun than racing down a mountainside at top speed.

Snowshoes are another ancient form of transportation. People attached wide, flat platforms onto their feet. There was more surface area touching the ground, so it spread out the weight of their bodies. This kept them from sinking down in the snow. Ice skating also dates back several thousand years. At first, people tied animal bones to their feet and simply slid across the ice. Later they used a metal blade that cut into the ice. A lot of sports and activities have come from ice skating. Some people like to do fancy moves in figure skating, while others go as fast as they can on speed skates. Hockey is another popular sport played on skates.



Snowboarding has become very popular with younger snow lovers.

By the middle of the 20th century, there was a newcomer to snow sports. Snowboarding put the thrills of downhill skiing onto a single board. It is similar to a surfboard or skateboard. Young people especially took to snowboarding. At first, many skiers did not like snowboarding. Some of them thought that the “one-plankers” did not respect the traditions of skiing. Snowboards carved the snow differently, and made it more difficult for skiers who followed them on the slopes. Snowboarding was not just a short-lived fad, though. By the 1990s it was getting so popular that ski resorts started allowing snowboarders in. Although some rivalry still exists between the two sports, it’s more friendly now. Lots of skiers decided to give snowboarding a try and found they liked it.

Snow Sports Heat Up



Not surprisingly, snow sports are more popular in areas that have long winters and get lots of snow. You will find more skiers in Colorado and Canada than in Florida! However, with new technology, it does not have to be winter to enjoy winter sports. Pump in some electricity, and indoor ice rinks can be kept frozen all year long. When the ice gets messy, **Zambonis** roll over to create a new, fresh sheet of ice.



Figure skating combines athleticism, grace, and balletic movement.

A huge boost to winter sports was the invention of artificial snow. (It's still real snow, but the process of making it is artificial.) In 1950, three men in Connecticut experimented with making artificial snow by spraying water through a garden hose into the cold air. It froze into snow. It took a couple of decades for artificial snow to catch on, but now many ski resorts make snow when the weather does not cooperate.

What's the most popular winter sport? Alpine skiing is the most popular in the United States, with almost 9.4 million people taking part. Next up comes snowboarding, with about 7.7 million people hitting the slopes. Snowshoeing is also quickly growing in popularity. Of course, lots of people do more than one sport—and sometimes they do not even wait for the cold months!



TAKE A LESSON

It's true: learning isn't as much fun as doing. The idea of taking lessons can seem like a waste of time. In the long run, though, learning from someone who knows what they are doing can *save* you a lot of time—and probably a few falls. Lessons are especially important in skiing and snowboarding.



It's easy to get hurt when you're hurtling down a mountain. Some skills may feel strange at first. Your body might not want to naturally do what it should. Instead, you'll need to learn and then practice these skills until they become second nature. Most ski resorts have professionals on hand who can show you a few basics before you hit the slopes.



Cross-country skiing is one of the best overall workouts you can get.

Choosing Your Sport



he type of winter sport that you choose will probably depend on where you live. Unless you live in the mountains, you will have to travel to a resort to get in some downhill time on skis or a snowboard. Other activities, such as cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, can be done in a lot of places, as long as there's snow! If skating is your thing, many places have ice skating rinks. If not, you can try a frozen pond or lake. (Be sure the ice is frozen thick!)



Like most outdoor activities, skiing is best enjoyed with others.

You may choose a sport that **complements** activities you do in warmer weather. Runners might like the idea of long-distance cross-country treks through the snow, for example. That will help them keep in shape during the off-season. If you have experience with surfing, water skiing, or skateboarding, then skiing and snowboarding are natural crossovers.

Winter sports are great for getting a good aerobic workout. In addition, they work your leg muscles and core strength. Even if you play other sports during the year, you may find that your winter workout is even more strenuous!

Some winter sports, such as hockey, are played in teams. However, most of them are geared to individual participation. You can learn at your own pace, and it's up to you to decide when to try a new ice skating jump, a gnarly **carve** on a snowboard, or a run down a treacherous **black diamond** slope. Even if you aren't on a team, outdoor winter sports should never be done alone. There are risks in being out in the cold and off the beaten path. Don't tackle the slopes or the countryside without a buddy, in case you get in trouble.



TEXT-DEPENDENT QUESTIONS

1. What material was used in the first ice skates?
2. How do snowshoes work?
3. What is the most popular winter sport in the United States?



RESEARCH PROJECT

Skiing has a history that goes back thousands of years. Look up some of the major milestones about how the sport and its equipment have developed over the years.



Snow Sports History



WORDS TO UNDERSTAND

crampon a spike that attaches to shoes to improve traction

friction the resistance that happens when two surfaces rub together

mogul a bump on a ski slope that is formed after many skiers have pushed the snow together

parallel two objects that are side-by-side and have an equal amount of distance between them

piste a marked, prepared trail for skiing

traction the grip or contact that an object has with another surface