

Unusual sports

1 Talk about the infographic with your partner. Answer the questions.

**TOP TEN MOST POPULAR SPORTS WORLDWIDE** (based on number of fans)

- |                     |                  |                           |                            |                      |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1</b> FOOTBALL   | <b>3</b> TENNIS  | <b>5</b> BASEBALL         | <b>7</b> AMERICAN FOOTBALL | <b>9</b> GOLF        |
| <b>2</b> BASKETBALL | <b>4</b> CRICKET | <b>6</b> FORMULA 1 RACING | <b>8</b> ATHLETICS         | <b>10</b> ICE HOCKEY |

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Do any of the sports on the list surprise you? Are there any sports that you are surprised are missing from the top ten? | 2 Which sports on the list are popular in your country?                  |
|  | 3 Are there any popular sports in your country that are not on the list? |

2a Read the web page. Which sports are competitive?

**THE WEIRD WORLD OF SPORT**

SEARCH



From getting dirty for fun to dogs competing in sporting events, the world is full of interesting and unusual sports! Let's find out more ...

- ▶ Home ▶ What's new ▶ **Weird sports**

**Zorbing, New Zealand**

Culturally, New Zealand is well-known for its extreme sports and one of the latest trends is zorbing. Invented in the country in 1994, it involves rolling down a hill inside a large inflatable ball that's made of transparent plastic. New Zealand has a lot of hills and people usually do this sport for fun rather than for competition. It can also be done on water or in the snow. A passenger is safely strapped to one of the walls inside the giant ball with a harness, and then rolls off!

Zorbing is now popular in many countries around the world and there are even world records in the sport, both achieved by New Zealanders. Steve Camp travelled 570m in a zorb to achieve the longest ride, and Keith Kolver achieved the fastest ride with a speed of 52km an hour.



**Mud Olympics, Germany**

Every summer, hundreds of competitors take part in a bizarre sport near Hamburg in Germany. They play volleyball, football and other sports, but with a difference – they play them in the thick mud on the banks of the River Elbe. The competition started in 1978 and people participate both for fun and to raise money for charity. The Mud Olympics are now a tradition in the country, and it's very entertaining watching so many competitors trying to do sports when they're covered in mud!

**Dog surfing, the USA**

California has a long tradition of surfing thanks to its location on the Pacific coast of the USA, and over the last decade a new type of surfing is becoming more and more fashionable. Dogs of all shapes and sizes are now taking part in an annual surf competition at Huntington Beach. A total of 65 dogs participated in last year's event, either riding solo on their board or in tandem with their owner. The dogs must wear life jackets to be sure they take part safely, and they're judged on skills such as how long they can ride a wave and how confident they are on their board.



**2b Read the web page again and write zorbing, Mud Olympics or dog surfing.**

- 1 Humans don't have to participate in this sport.  
.....
- 2 It's a sport that is now popular around the world.  
.....
- 3 It's hard to keep clean in this competition!  
.....
- 4 Participants don't need special safety equipment to do this.  
.....
- 5 This sport doesn't take place on land.  
.....
- 6 This is the newest activity in a country already popular for exciting sports.  
.....

**2c Choose the best alternative to answer the questions.**

- 1 Why is New Zealand a popular country for extreme sports?
  - a New Zealanders are more competitive than other nationalities.
  - b It has a geography that makes exciting sports fun to do.
- 2 What gives Germany a good reason to host the Mud Olympics?
  - a One of its rivers has the perfect muddy conditions.
  - b German people prefer doing sport in the mud.
- 3 Why did dog surfing develop in California?
  - a Surfing is already part of the culture in this part of the USA.
  - b There are more dogs per household than in other parts of the USA.

**Gateway to culture**

**3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.**

- 1 What are the traditional or national sports of your country? Are there any unusual sports that people enjoy doing or that were invented in your country?
- 2 Why do you think people enjoy taking part in sports that are different?
- 3 Find out about another unusual sport, either in your country or from a different part of the world. Discuss the sport with another pair.

**PROJECT**

**3b You are going to work on a presentation about the unusual sport that you discussed in 3a. Read the points and prepare your project research.**

- 1 Work in pairs. Do some research on the Internet to find out the following information about your chosen unusual sport:
  - what kind of sport it is: competitive or non-competitive, team or individual
  - what equipment you need
  - why it is played or why it developed in your country or its country of origin
  - what the sport involves
  - any other information that you think is valuable
- 2 Decide who will talk about each of the points above, and add in any additional information to make your presentation more interesting.

**3c In your pairs, use your notes to give a presentation to the rest of the class on your unusual sport. Your presentation should be around three minutes long.**