



SNOWBOARDING

Wild Rides
by Phyllis McIntosh



PRE-READING: INTRODUCING THE ARTICLE

Read the introduction to the article. Then answer the question.
What is the author's purpose in the introduction?

- a** To give historical background about the sport of snowboarding.
- b** To explain why snowboarding is popular among rowdy teenagers.
- c** To promote having snowboarding included in all Winter Olympics.

Cave drawings suggest that people in what is now Scandinavia were gliding over the snow on skis more than 5,000 years ago. And it's believed that Polynesians had been using boards to skim over ocean waves at least 1,000 years before explorer James Cook described surfing in the Hawaiian Islands in the late 1700s. So it was perhaps **inevitable** that one day somebody would combine skiing and surfing to create a fun new sport. What is surprising is that it took so long.

The sport that came to be known as snowboarding is only about 40 years old, but its popularity has grown at a **phenomenal** pace. Dismissed at first as a **diversion** for rowdy teenagers, it now ranks

second only to skiing among winter sports in the United States. Snowboarding officially came of age in 1998, when two snowboarding events were included in the Winter Olympics at Nagano, Japan. At the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, competitors in the six snowboarding events include professional athletes with international reputations and multimillion-dollar **endorsement** deals and their own lines of designer clothing and snowboarding equipment.

What is the meaning of the words in bold?

BOARDING BASICS

At its most basic, snowboarding is akin to skiing; participants in both sports rely on gravity to descend a snowy slope. But in terms of technique, snowboarding more closely resembles surfing and skateboarding. While skiers exercise control by shifting their weight from one side to the other, snowboarders shift weight from heel to toe. When their weight is forward, their boards speed up; as they shift back, their boards slow down. When snowboarders press their heels down on the edge of their boards, they stop. In a straight race between a skier and snowboarder of equal skill, the skier probably would reach the bottom of the slope first, because skis allow the rider to attain greater velocity.

A snowboard is constructed of a wood core surrounded by fiberglass to make it stiff and light. Steel along the edges helps

the rider turn and control speed. Like skiers, snowboarders who race wear hard-shell boots for greater support, but most snowboarders prefer soft boots that provide the flexibility needed to perform the tricks and maneuvers for which the sport is famous.

Bindings that hold the rider’s boots onto the board are fastened to stainless steel inserts on top of the board. The most popular type, strap bindings, secure the boot with an ankle strap and a toe strap. Step-in bindings are used mainly for hard boots. A new design, called flow-in bindings, combines the control of strap-in systems with the ease of step-ins.

According to the author, snowboarding is similar to skiing, surfing, and skateboarding.

Sort the characteristic to show how snowboarding is similar to these other sports.

Characteristic	Similar to Skiing	Similar to Surfing	Similar to Skateboarding
Rely on Gravity			
Technique			
Shift weight from side to side			
Allow rider to attain grater velocity			

What is the the main idea of the section of the article called, “Boarding Basics?”

In your opinions which of the following sports is most challenging: snowboarding, skiing, or surfing? Explain your answer.

There are three main styles of snowboarding, each of which demands its own type of board:

- **Free-riding.** The snowboarder rides down a slope taking advantage of bumps and curves in the natural terrain to “catch air” (leave the ground) and perform tricks. The free-ride snowboard, or all-mountain snowboard, is the most popular, accounting for half of all snowboards sold. It moves well on a powder surface and is maneuverable enough for beginners but stiff enough for sharp turns.
- **Freestyle.** Inspired by skateboarding, freestyle snowboarding emphasizes tricks such as flips, spins, and grabbing the board in midair. These tricks are usually performed on manmade features in snowboard terrain parks. The freestyle board is short, wide, flexible, and responsive to the rider, which also makes it a good choice for a beginner. With less edge grip, freestyle boards are not built for fast cruising or sharp, carving turns. One of the most popular terrain features for freestyle riders is the halfpipe, a U-shaped trench patterned after the wooden halfpipe

ramps popular in skateboarding, inline skating, and BMX bike racing. The snowboarding halfpipe was born in 1978, so the story goes, when a group of high school students in Tahoe City, California, began piling snow around a gully to make it deep enough to ride their snowboards and perform skateboard-inspired tricks. The idea caught on when snowboarding pioneer Tom Sims built a halfpipe for the World Snowboarding Championships he organized in California in 1983. Early snowboarding halfpipes were constructed by hand with shovels and rakes. The invention in 1990 of a cutting machine called a Pipe Dragon has made it possible for ski resorts to groom their halfpipes regularly and consistently.

- **Alpine.** Similar to skiing, this racing style of snowboarding emphasizes downhill speed and sharp turns rather than tricks. Best for advanced riders, alpine snowboards resemble large skis and are narrower and less stable than other types of boards.

Link the type of snowboarding to the correct description.

Free-riding	emphasizes tricks, flips, spins
Freestyle	racing style, for advanced riders
Alpine	also called, ‘all-mountain’ and is most popular type of snowboarding

Answer the question by marking True or False.

The most common injuries of snowboarders are knee injuries.

- ☐ **True** ☐ **False**



Like skiing, snowboarding poses a risk of injury, although the two sports strain different parts of the body. In skiing, the knees are most vulnerable. The snowplow maneuver (bringing the tips of the skis together into a V) that novices use to stop puts tremendous pressure on the inside of the knee. Among more advanced skiers, bad knee twists during falls cause most injuries. Snowboarders, on the other hand, are most prone to wrist injuries. With their feet firmly locked into non-release bindings on the board, they instinctively reach out a hand to break a fall.

Because falls and tumbles are common, especially among beginners, snowboarding has its own protective gear. Helmets and wrist guards are essential, and knee pads are also popular. Some beginners rely on hip pads that pull on like biker shorts under snow pants to help cushion the seat and tailbone during frequent

falls. Snowboarding pants themselves may have extra padding in the knees and seat and usually are looser fitting than ski pants to allow more freedom of movement during spins and jumps. All snowboarders, like skiers, should dress in layers for warmth and wear waterproof jackets and pants. Any style of snowboard requires a safety leash, a strap wrapped around the leg to prevent the board from getting away in case the bindings accidentally release.

Which of the following are descriptions of snowboarding protective gear?

- a** Helmets
- b** Wrist guards
- c** Knee pads
- d** Sunglasses
- e** Tight-fitting pants

Snowboarding Slang

Match the word to the correct definition.

carve	riding a snowboard backwards
fakie	a snowboarder
ollie	turn sharply on a snowboard's edge, leaving a thin track in the snow
rider	small jump in which the snowboarder uses his or her energy to spring into the air





COMPETITIONS

Part of the thrill of any sport is competition, so it's not surprising that snowboarders have been vying with one another almost since the first riders took to the slopes. The very first snowboarding contest, a small event called King of the Mountain, took place in Leadville, Colorado, in 1981. That was followed the next year by the first National Snowboarding Championship at Suicide Six Ski Area in Vermont, an event so low-tech that an upside-down kitchen table was used as a starting gate. By 1983, such contests were so popular that Jake Burton and Tom Sims organized competing championships, Burton's in Snow Valley, Vermont, and Sims's in the Lake Tahoe region of California. Meanwhile, the Europeans were catching on to the new sport, and in 1985 Austria hosted the first World Cup of Snowboarding.

In the mid-1990s, the sports television network ESPN launched the X Games to showcase "extreme" sports such as skateboard-

ing, BMX bicycle racing, and snowboarding. The Winter X Games publicized snowboarding to a worldwide audience, paved the way for its acceptance as a legitimate winter sport and its inclusion in the Winter Olympics.

Alpine racing. As in slalom skiing events, snowboarders race downhill making sharp turns around a series of flags, or "gates," and the competitor with the fastest time wins.

Slope style. Boarders descend a course while performing jumps and stunts on a series of obstacles, which include boxes, rails (see Snowboarding Slang), and almost anything the boards can slide on.

Halfpipe. Competitors speed from one side of the snowy trench to the other, performing tricks while in the air above the sides of the pipe. Judges rate the tricks on difficulty, the cleanliness of the performance and the landing, and the amount of "air," or how high the rider soared while doing the trick.

Boardercross (also known as Boarder X). Snowboarders race down a course patterned after a motorcycle motocross track, with jumps, berms, and other obstacles made of snow.

Sequence the following snowboarding events in the correct chronological order.

- ☐ King of the Mountain
- ☐ National Snowboarding Championship
- ☐ Burton's in Snow Valley and Sims in Lake Tahoe
- ☐ Winter X Games

What are the four types of snowboarding competitions?

The four categories of snowboarding competition are: _____, _____, _____, and _____.

WINTER SPORTS WORD SEARCH

Figure out the answer to each numbered clue below. Then search for and circle those answers in the grid. Words may be printed vertically, horizontally, diagonally, or even backwards. All answers are related to winter sports, and the number of letters in each answer is indicated.

- 1 This is the color of snow. _____
- 2 Many winter athletes wear these to keep their hands warm _____
- 3 one of the most popular winter sports is figure____ . _____
- 4 This country is the host of the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. _____
- 5 In this sport, athletes ride boards, like wide skis, on the snow. _____
- 6 Children love to sit on these and ride down snow-covered hills. _____

S	G	N	I	T	A	K	S	N	O	S	G
L	E	L	F	O	R	U	M	L	W	N	A
S	U	V	R	I	C	E	Y	S	I	O	N
M	T	T	O	W	V	W	A	D	N	W	A
O	F	E	Z	L	P	E	R	E	D	B	D
U	I	A	M	I	G	A	G	L	E	X	A
N	C	C	C	L	O	N	O	S	W	W	N
T	Y	S	I	B	E	G	I	I	H	O	A
A	F	T	W	C	L	H	N	I	O	A	C
I	A	O	M	E	L	T	T	D	K	Q	O
N	N	O	U	T	E	E	L	S	I	S	L
S	S	B	R	R	H	O	C	K	E	Y	D

