

Golf

A Reading A-Z Level R Leveled Book
Word Count: 1,064

Connections

Writing

Why should someone choose to play golf?
Write a letter to a friend persuading him or her to start playing golf. Include information from the book.

Math

Imagine there are four players on a par three golf hole. Player A scores an eagle, Player B scores a double bogey, Player C scores a birdie, and Player D scores a hole in one. What was each player's score? Rank them in winning order.

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LEVELED BOOK • R

Golf



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Focus Question

Why do people love to play golf?

Words to Know

clubs	par
cores	professional
equipment	simulators
focus	tournaments
hazards	

Front cover: Professional Jason Day tees off during the third round of a championship in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Title page: A golf tee holds a ball.

Page 3: A boy is about to put on a putting green.

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Correlation

LEVEL R

Fountas & Pinnell	N
Reading Recovery	30
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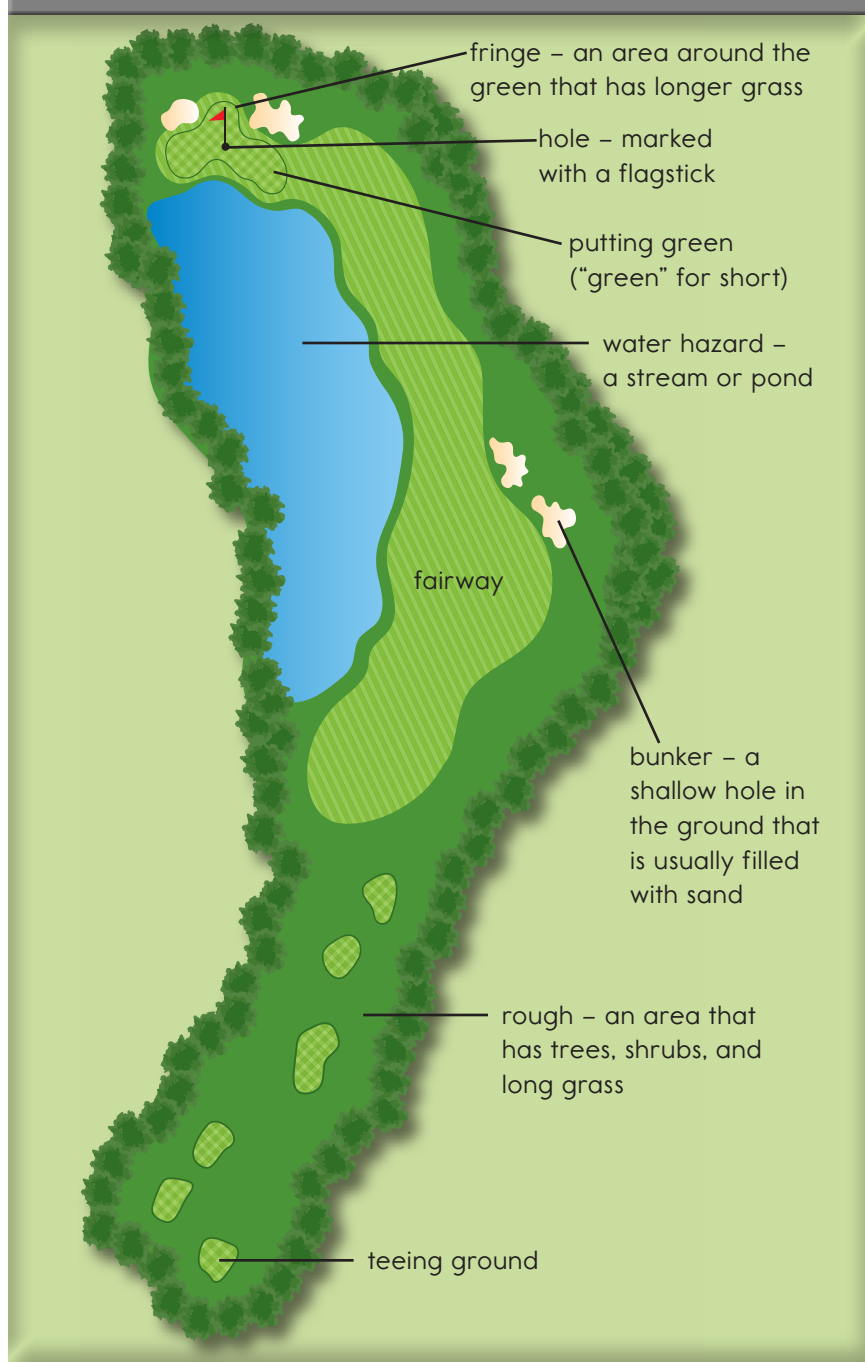
Golfers spend many hours trying to improve their golf swing.

Why Golf?

If you compare golf to other sports, you may think that hitting a ball into a hole in the ground sounds fairly simple. Nothing could be further from the truth. To play well, golfers need patience, balance, **focus**, and lots of practice.

Yet if golf is hard, why do millions of people love the sport? It's played in beautiful places with rolling green land. It gives people the chance to learn, practice, and improve. Most of all, golf offers hours of fun and relaxation.

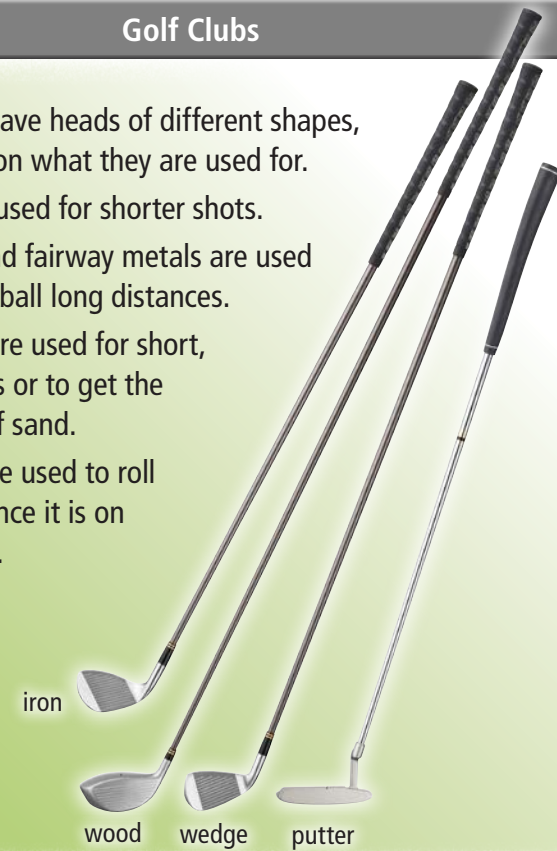
Golf Hole



Golf Clubs

Golf clubs have heads of different shapes, depending on what they are used for.

- Irons are used for shorter shots.
- Woods and fairway metals are used to hit the ball long distances.
- Wedges are used for short, high shots or to get the ball out of sand.
- Putters are used to roll the ball once it is on the green.



Playing Golf

Golfers use **clubs** to hit a small, hard ball into a hole using as few strokes, or swings, as possible. Sometimes the ball must travel a very long way to reach the hole. Sometimes it only needs to move a short distance. At other times, it must fly high in the air to get over long grass or other things. Golfers need to know how to make all these types of shots.

The sport is played on a golf course, which is a large area of land that is carefully mowed and trimmed to define the areas of the course. A golf course usually has nine or eighteen sections, or holes. Each section begins at the teeing ground, where golfers usually place their ball on a small peg called a *tee*. They hit the ball down the fairway—the area that leads to the small hole at the far end of the section. The area around the small hole is called the *putting green*, or simply the *green*. It almost always takes several strokes to get the ball there. However, lucky golfers sometimes get a hole in one.



In golf, the word *hole* has two different meanings. One is the small hole into which golfers hit the ball (left). The other is each of the nine or eighteen sections of a golf course (right).



This hole is almost surrounded by water and rough, with a large bunker as well. Other holes might have fewer hazards.

Golfers need to deal with **hazards**, which are parts of the course that they try to avoid. Getting a ball out of a hazard may take extra strokes, which is bad for a golfer's score. One type of hazard is a sand-filled area called a *bunker*. Streams and ponds are other types of hazards. The rough—the area around each section, which usually has trees, bushes, and longer grass—can also present problems.

A golf game usually involves playing eighteen different sections, called *holes*. If a golf course has only nine holes, golfers often play the course twice.

Each hole on a golf course has a number, called the **par**. If a hole has a par of four, golfers try to get the ball into the hole in four strokes or less. The number depends on the distance from the teeing ground to the hole. Most holes are three, four, or five par. Par for the course is the total of all the pars for the entire nine or eighteen holes. Golfers who play together in a small group compare their totals for the whole course. The player with the lowest score wins.

Scoring a Par Five Hole

A golfer's score is based on the number of strokes compared to par. The sport has special names for scores.

Name of Score	Number of Strokes	
Hole in one	One	
Eagle	Two strokes under par	$5 - 2 = 3$ shots
Birdie	One stroke under par	$5 - 1 = 4$ shots
Bogey	One stroke over par	$5 + 1 = 6$ shots
Double bogey	Two strokes over par	$5 + 2 = 7$ shots



Golfers respect how much concentration it takes to play the game well. They stand back and stay quiet when another person is taking a swing.

It can take between three and five hours to play a round of golf, or eighteen holes. People who golf just for fun often ride the course in golf carts. **Professional** golfers walk from one hole to the next. Helpers called *caddies* carry their clubs.

Golfers wear shoes with spikes on the bottom for gripping the grass. Their clothing allows them to move easily when they swing a club. Some golfers wear a glove on one hand to help them grip the clubs better and avoid getting blisters.

A Sport Is Born

Scotland is the birthplace of modern golf. The game may have begun as long ago as the 1400s. It probably spread to England in the early 1600s and to India, Australia, and other British colonies soon after. By the late 1800s, golf was played in many countries around the world.

Equipment has changed a lot over the years. The first golf balls and clubs were made of wood. In the early 1600s, people started using leather balls filled with feathers. In 1848, a new ball was invented. It was made of tree sap that was dried, heated, and shaped. Players began using metal golf clubs with the new balls. Modern golf balls with rubber **cores** first appeared in 1898.

Golf balls started to have dimples in the early 1900s. The dimples help the balls fly higher and farther.



old clubs



old ball



modern ball

A Global Game

Because golf began in Scotland, the sport is most popular in countries where English is spoken. People in more than 130 countries around the world play the game. The United States has many more golf courses than any other country. However, compared to how many people live in each country, Scotland has the most golf courses.

In addition to outdoor courses, many places have indoor digital **simulators** where people can improve their skills. Miniature golf is played both indoors and outdoors.



Who Plays Golf?

More than sixty million people around the world play golf. In the United States, over twenty million people play each year. Programs exist for young people to learn the game and compete.

Top men's golfers compete in the U.S.-based Professional Golfers' Association (PGA) Tour and the European Tour as well as several others. Top women's golfers from around the world compete in the U.S.-based Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour. In addition, men and women each have several top professional **tournaments**, called *majors*. Winning a major earns a golfer respect, fame, and money. Only a small number of golfers earn a living by competing in golf tournaments.

Golf competitions sometimes have wildlife hazards. The 2008 Women's World Cup in South Africa was interrupted by baboons.



Golf Greats

Jack Nicklaus is the top golfer in the history of the sport. He competed in important tournaments from 1961 to 2005 and won more than a hundred competitions. He won eighteen majors.

Patty Berg was the top woman to ever play golf. As a professional, she competed from 1940 to 1962 and won sixty tournaments and fifteen majors.

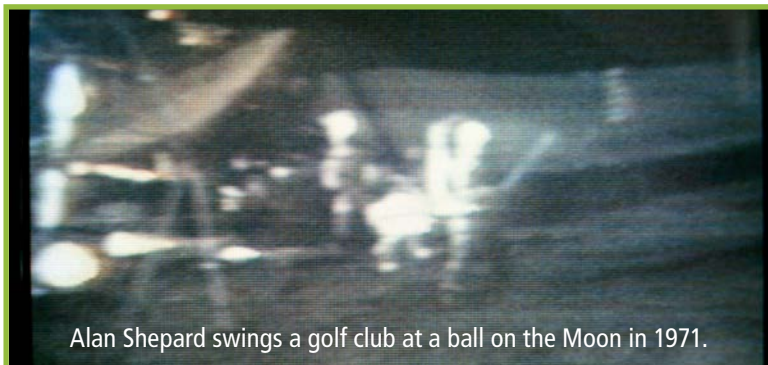
Tiger Woods may be the greatest golfer playing today. He has done better on the PGA Tour than any other golfer now playing.

Types of Golf Courses

Golf courses are located in many different places. Some are like large, grassy parks with tall trees. Some are narrow strips of land along coastlines. In desert areas, courses often have cactuses and palm trees.

The most unusual place golf has been played is . . . the Moon! Astronaut Alan Shepard went to the Moon in 1971 and hit a few golf balls while he was there.

Few players will ever experience golfing on the Moon, but anyone who is interested can find a way to play golf right here on Earth. All you need is a club and a golf ball. With lots of practice, young players will learn what millions of golfers already know: golf is out of this world!



Alan Shepard swings a golf club at a ball on the Moon in 1971.

Glossary

clubs (<i>n.</i>)	long sticks used to hit a small ball in the game of golf (p. 6)
cores (<i>n.</i>)	the central, innermost, or most important parts of things (p. 11)
equipment (<i>n.</i>)	tools used in work or play (p. 11)
focus (<i>n.</i>)	concentrated attention (p. 4)
hazards (<i>n.</i>)	obstacles on a golf course, usually involving water or sand (p. 8)
par (<i>n.</i>)	the number of golf strokes a player should use for a hole or course (p. 9)
professional (<i>adj.</i>)	earning money for taking part in an activity rather than doing it purely for pleasure (p. 10)
simulators (<i>n.</i>)	machines that model or imitate the appearance or condition of something, usually for training or practice (p. 12)
tournaments (<i>n.</i>)	series of games or competitions to determine final champions (p. 13)