



## What is Wimbledon?

The Championships, Wimbledon, which is usually referred to as simply 'Wimbledon', is the world's most prestigious tennis tournament. Along with the Australian Open, the French Open and the US Open, it forms one of the sport's Grand Slams and is the one everyone wants to win. Played over two weeks on grass courts, the competition includes men's and women's singles and doubles and mixed doubles as well as a tournament for junior players and wheelchair competitors. Last year, Scotland's Andy Murray triumphed in the men's competitions whilst USA's Serena Williams took a historic victory in the women's singles.

This year the competition takes place from Monday 3 July and will culminate with the women's singles final on Saturday 15 July and the men's singles final on Sunday 16 July.

## How can Wimbledon be used for literacy teaching?

We know that tapping into children's interests is a great way of engaging them in learning. Our research shows that children who enjoy writing very much are seven times more likely to write above the level expected for their age compared with children who don't enjoy writing at all<sup>1</sup>.

Our Craze of the Month taps into children and young people's personal interests in order to improve outcomes in literacy. The activities featured here relate to the English Programmes of Study from the National Curriculum in England<sup>2</sup>:

### Spoken language

Pupils should be taught to:

- articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others

### Writing – composition

Pupils should be taught to:

- develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:

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<sup>1</sup> Clark, C. (2017). [Writing for Enjoyment and its Links to Wider Writing](#). Findings from the National Literacy Trust's Annual Literacy Survey. London: National Literacy Trust

<sup>2</sup> Department for Education (2013). [The National Curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4](#)

- writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)
- writing about real events
- writing for different purposes

## Using Wimbledon in the classroom

Wimbledon offers some great opportunities for cross-curricular learning with particularly strong links to PE. Here we'll focus on how it could be used to promote literacy. The activities start with simpler ones, designed for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, and progress to activities more suitable for Key Stage 3 and 4 students.

### Warm up

Try our Wimbledon-themed [wordsearch and anagrams](#) to get pupils started. Pupils might need to do some research to crack the anagrams – they are the names of the [top five male](#) and [top five female](#) players according to the world rankings as of 26 June 2017.

### Tennis glossary

Many sports, tennis included, have their own specific language which can sometimes make its way into every day usage. Ask pupils to put together a tennis glossary that explains some of the terms that people outside the sport may not be familiar with. See the activity sheet on page 4 that can be given out to pupils and includes some examples to get them started.

### Wimbledon haiku

As an extension to the above activity ask pupils to create their own tennis-themed haiku using some of the words they've defined. Bonus points if they can make it rhyme!

### Fun facts

The Wimbledon tournament has a long history and many traditions associated with it. From strawberries and cream to ball boys and girls and 'Henman Hill', ask students to research some interesting facts connected to the tournament. The [official Wimbledon website](#) has some facts to get you started – for example, did you know that the Championship's caterers supply 28,000 kg (140,000 servings) of English strawberries for the tournament?! You could make a display of facts along with a wallchart for the tournament where students can record match results.

### The interviews

Players are interviewed immediately after each match, often on court. Get students to role play an interview in pairs with one taking the role of player and the other of the interviewer. How might the questions and answers vary according to whether the player won or lost? How do you think the player would feel at this point and what might they want to say to their team and supporters?

### Motivational notes

Players aren't allowed to talk to their coaching team during matches and many, including Andy Murray, write themselves tactical and motivational notes to read during their games. (The world number one and his team were angry after a [TV camera revealed one such note](#) during his match against Grigor Dimitrov at the China Open last year). Ask students to imagine they are playing in the Wimbledon final and get them to write notes to themselves. These could include playing tactics, "attack the second serve", as well as motivational messages, "stay calm, you can do this."

## Five set matches

Wimbledon has paid the same amount of prize money to men and women at all stages of the tournament since 2007. However, men currently play the best of five sets whilst women play the best of three. Some, such as [Andy Murray](#), have said they believe women should play five set matches whilst others, including former Wimbledon champion [Marion Bartoli](#), have said this is not possible. Organise students into two teams to debate this issue, either verbally or in writing.

For more tennis-related activities download the free [Tennis Activity Week Pack](#) for primary schools by the Tennis Foundation from TES. The British Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) also has a series of [lesson plans for secondary schools](#).

## Further reading

Fans of tennis might like to try some of these books, which can be used to promote reading for enjoyment

- *Alice the Tennis Fairy* (part of the *Rainbow Magic* series) by Daisy Meadows
- *A Magical Racquet Ride: Journey to the Four Grand Slam Tournaments of Tennis* by Marissa Irvin
- *Cam Jansen: the Tennis Trophy Mystery* by David A. Adler
- *Junior Tennis: A Complete Coaching Manual for the Young Tennis Player* by Mark Vale
- *Wimbledon: The Official History of the Championships* by John Barrett
- *Tennis's Strangest Matches: Extraordinary but True Stories from Over Five Centuries of Tennis* by Peter Seddon
- Older students might also like to read the autobiographies of current and past greats of the games including Serena Williams, Novak Djokovic, Andre Agassi and John McEnroe

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The [National Literacy Trust Network](#) supports schools to develop outstanding literacy provision by providing practitioners with tools, resources and inspiration. [Join now](#).



Got a class of sports fans? The National Literacy Trust runs several [sports and literacy programmes](#), including Premier League Reading Stars, now part of [Premier League Primary Stars](#). Secondary schools can purchase [Skills Academy](#), a KS3 intervention that gets students reading and learning freestyle football tricks. We also have a free toolkit, [Literacy with the Lionesses](#), to capitalise on the excitement around the Women's Euros in Holland, which begin on 16 July.

