Badminton History

Teacher's Key | Level C1 | EnglishBridges.com

Sections follow the student handout. Delete a section here when you delete it from the handout. The handout uses the short (quick) version of the reading.

Vocabulary: Fill in the Blank

1. spanned
2. leisurely
3. pastime
4. aloft
5. took shape
6. garrison
7. murky
8. prestigious
9. center of gravity / centre of gravity
10. relinquished
11. drag
12. paradox
13. fragile
14. synthetic

Word Partners

Part A. 1 b 2 g 3 d 4 a 5 c 6 h 7 e 8 f

Phrases: at a leisurely pace; span three decades; a garrison town; murky waters; a prestigious award; relinquish a claim; a fragile economy; embrace change.

Part B. 1 prestige 2 fragility 3 paradoxical 4 synthesize / synthesise 5 leisure 6 murkiness

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1. *What two kinds of badminton does the writer describe in the first paragraph?*
A relaxed, leisurely game played in a garden without keeping score, and a fast, fiercely competitive professional sport played in arenas.

2. *How were most early shuttlecock games different from modern badminton?*
Most of them were games of cooperation rather than competition: players tried to keep the shuttle aloft together instead of scoring points against each other.

3. *Why was the game once called "Poona"?*
It was named after the garrison town now known as Pune, in British India, where the competitive game took shape.

4. *What is known, and what is unclear, about how badminton got its English name?*
The name comes from Badminton House, an estate in England, and officers back from India are widely believed to have played there. But the details are murky, and nobody can say exactly how or when the name stuck.

5. *What evidence does the writer give that the sport's center of gravity moved east?*
Malaya won the first Thomas Cup in 1949; when badminton joined the Olympics in 1992, Indonesia won its first Olympic golds; and at Paris 2024 Asian players took four of the five titles.

6. *Why does the writer mention Viktor Axelsen?*
He is the exception: as a Danish champion, he shows that Europe has not relinquished its place at the top.

7. *Why can a defender return a smash that left the racket at very high speed?*
Because the feathers create so much drag that a smash loses about half its speed every three to four meters, so it is much slower by the time it reaches the defender.

8. *Why does the writer treat the claim about a goose's left wing with caution?*
Taking feathers from one wing makes sense, but the claim that it must be the left wing is open to

question, since at least one engineering text names the right wing.

9. *Do you think synthetic shuttles will replace feathered ones at the top level? Give reasons.*
   Open answer. Strong answers use the reading: feathers are fragile and expensive, and the governing body is testing synthetic shuttles, but it has no fixed timeline and many players like the feel of feathers.
10. *True, False, or Not Given: "The world record of 565 kilometers per hour was set in an Olympic final." Explain your answer using the reading.*
    False. The record came from a controlled test at a racket maker's factory in Japan, not from a match.
11. *Yes, No, or Not Given: "The writer thinks the story of how badminton got its name is fully understood." Explain your answer using the reading.*
    No. The writer says the details are murky and that nobody can say exactly how or when the name stuck.
12. *Author's purpose: Why does the writer open with a family playing in a garden and a player in an arena? Is it (a) to show how wide the range of the sport is, (b) to argue that garden badminton is better than professional badminton, or (c) to explain the official rules of the game?*
    (a) To show how wide the range of the sport is. The writer says few sports span such a range, from garden pastime to professional sport.

True or False

1. **T.** Hanetsuki is a New Year game played with decorated wooden paddles.
2. **F.** The goal was to keep a rally going for as long as possible, a game of cooperation.
3. **T.** The competitive version took shape when officers stretched a net and started counting points.
4. **F.** The details are murky, and nobody can say exactly how or when the name stuck.
5. **T.** Malaya won the first Thomas Cup in 1949, beating Denmark in the final.
6. **F.** It became a full medal sport in Barcelona in 1992.
7. **T.** Viktor Axelsen of Denmark won the men's singles.
8. **F.** It came from a controlled test at a racket maker's factory, not from a match.
9. **T.** One recent analysis found this rate of speed loss.
10. **F.** They were being tested at junior and lower-level events, with no fixed timeline for the top level.

Language Focus: Passive Reporting Structures

Model answers. Accept any answer that uses the form correctly and makes sense.

1. In my country, it is often said that the first snow of the year brings good luck.
2. It is widely believed that people who eat breakfast do better at work.
3. In my family, it is generally thought that my uncle is the best cook.
4. My hometown is known to have the best seafood in the region.
5. A popular food in my country is said to help people recover from colds.
6. Ginseng soup is said to be good for your energy in hot weather.
7. Football is thought to be the most popular sport in my country.
8. It is commonly believed that people who stay up late are more creative.
9. An old hotel near the coast is said to be haunted.
10. The southern region is known to have the best food in the country.

Accept either pattern where it fits, and any reporting verb (said, believed, thought, known, claimed, considered). Check the perfect infinitive for past events.

Notes on the Evidence

Origins and name: Wikipedia (Badminton) says the modern game developed in mid-19th-century British India from battledore and shuttlecock, was also called Poona, and that the first rules were drawn up there in 1873; it says why and

when the Badminton House name was adopted remains unclear (that claim is flagged as needing a citation). The Isaac Spratt booklet (1860) is from the same article; no copy is known to survive. Popular accounts (for example Live History India, which cites no sources) give the Duke of Beaufort a lawn party in 1873 and credit Henry St Clair Wilkins; the reading avoids these details and reports the Pune rules and the officers story with passive reporting structures. The popular story that early courts had an hourglass shape because of hall doors was left out as unverified. Jianzi: Wikipedia dates it to the Han dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD), so "around two thousand years" is approximate.

Organization and results: Badminton Association of England 1893, All England Championships 1899, IBF 1934 with nine founding members (England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Canada, New Zealand), from Wikipedia. Thomas Cup: first held 1948 to 1949, won by Malaya 8-1 over Denmark; Wikipedia gives Indonesia 14 titles and China 12 (checked October 2026, after China's 2026 win), so the reading says "more than twenty". Olympics: demonstration 1972, exhibition 1988, medal sport 1992, mixed doubles 1996 (BWF timeline). The 1992 golds of Susi Susanti and Alan Budikusuma were Indonesia's first Olympic golds (Wikipedia, Indonesia at the 1992 Summer Olympics). Paris 2024 golds: Axelsen (DEN), An Se-young (KOR), Lee Yang and Wang Chi-lin (TPE), Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan (CHN), Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong (CHN), per NBC Olympics; Axelsen also won in Tokyo 2020 (held 2021).

Speed: Guinness World Records lists Satwiksairaj Rankireddy at 565 km/h and Tan Pearly at 438 km/h, both on 14 April 2023 at the Yonex factory gymnasium in Soka, Saitama, Japan, measured by high-speed camera. In competition, Lee Chong Wei's 408 km/h (2015 Hong Kong Open) was cited as BWF-verified; Mads Pieler Kolding's 426 km/h (Premier Badminton League, January 2017) was not at a BWF-accredited event (Badminton Planet). Formula One comparison: race top speeds are below about 380 km/h, so smashes above 400 are faster. Speed loss: arXiv 2601.01412 (2026) gives a half-distance of about 3.35 m for smash speed; the reading rounds this to "three to four meters". Flip time (about 20 ms) and the steep final fall are from Cohen, Darbois Texier, Quéré, and Clénet, "Unique flight features of shuttlecock" (worldbadminton.com copy).

Shuttle and feathers: 16 feathers and 4.74 to 5.50 g are from the BWF Laws of Badminton (Law 2). An 80 gsm A4 sheet weighs about 5 g. The left-wing claim is widespread online, but Improbable Research (2013) notes that J. E. Morgan, The Engineering of Sport (1996), describes right-wing feathers, and that BWF rules do not specify spin direction. Synthetic shuttles: BWF approved trials at selected grade 3 and junior international events on 8 April 2026 (Reuters via Malay Mail); by August 2026, four events had used them (DT Next, PTI), and BWF said there was no fixed timeline. Recheck this status before publishing.