

Golf: The Four-letter Game *By John Parker*

Introduction

This text gives fascinating insights into the game of golf. It looks at how the game evolved, the gear it requires, and how it is played – and also offers strange-but-true golf stories.

Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students:

- to introduce the game of golf, possibly as part of a wider unit on sports
- to explore the structure of the text, especially the inclusion of interesting golf stories.

Setting the scene

Draw on your students' prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Brainstorm ideas about golf. "Does anyone here play golf? What equipment do you need to play? Where are some local golf courses? How much does it cost to play?" Alternatively, you could elicit prior knowledge through a postbox or "think, pair, share" activity. Write key vocabulary on the board.
- Print Template A, the KWLH chart, from the back of this document. Alternatively, create a KWLH chart on the board. Have the students fill in the first two columns with what they know and want to know about golf. After reading, they can fill in the final two columns (what they learned and how they learned it).
- Introduce any vocabulary that your students may need to access the text. Refer to Worksheet 2 for a list of potentially unfamiliar words. You could carry out this activity before or after reading. (See "Taking a closer look – Exploring language".)
- Have your students quickly skim the text, especially the contents page and headings, to get an idea of what information it covers.

Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images. The meanings of words in bold text are in the glossary at the back of the book.

- Cover page – "Why do you think the text has this subtitle – 'the four-letter game'?"
- End page 3 – "Were you right? Why is golf a difficult sport?"
- End page 5 – "What are three main points on these pages?" (For example: A game similar to golf was played in the 1200s. Golf has been played for a long time in Scotland. The materials for making golf balls have changed over time.)
- End page 7 – "Why do players need different golf clubs? Which clubs hit the ball the furthest? What does a high number indicate? Which club is used to hit the ball into the hole on the green?"
- End page 9 – "What do you score points for in golf? What does a par-4 hole mean? What is a bogey? Look at the illustration – why do you think the bunkers are placed where they are?"
- End page 11 – "Were you right about the bunkers? What do you think of the quicksand story?"

- End page 13 – “How far do you think you could hit a golf ball?” Make comparisons to the distances between things in your local environment to ensure that your students understand the distances mentioned in the text.
- End page 17 – “How hard do you think it is to get a hole in one? What makes you say that? What do you think of the two stories on the right of page 17?”
- End page 21 – “What do you think about these stories? Do they surprise you? Why or why not?”

Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

Exploring ideas and opinions

- Ask for your students’ opinions of the text and encourage them to justify those opinions. “If you don’t already play golf, do you think you’d like to give it a go, like the text suggests? Why or why not?”
- Have the students complete Worksheet 1 (the three-level thinking guide) and discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- Have the students complete the KWLH chart with things they’ve learned about golf.
- Discuss the things that the students find most interesting about golf. “Why do you find those things interesting?”

Exploring structure

- Explore how the text is structured and the types of information it contains. Notice the use of headings that identify the focus of each section. You could carry out a “treasure hunt” activity in which the students use features like the contents page and headings to scan for answers to questions you give them.
- Also explore the layout of the information, especially why there are lots of text boxes, photos, and diagrams. “Do these help you to understand and enjoy the text? Why or why not?” In particular, focus on the inclusion of funny or strange stories and the accompanying illustrations or photos. “Why do you think the author included these stories?” Draw out the idea that they help to bring the text alive.

Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 2 and muddle them up. Hand them out to individual students and have them find their correct “partner”.
- As an alternative to the above, divide the class into two groups and have them complete Worksheet 3a and Worksheet 3b respectively. This activity involves the students in creating the definitions, which they then use to test the other group.
- Your students could work in small groups to cluster vocabulary (from the worksheet, their earlier brainstorming, and/or the text) into sets of their choice, for example, golfing equipment, parts of the course, types of shot – or even nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs. They could also practise using the words in sentences.

Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

Writing

- Make up a crazy story about something that happened when someone was playing golf. Write it as if it were true, following the models in the story, for example, “In 2000, a golfer in New Zealand ...”
- Create a poster or pamphlet that encourages young people to take up golf.

Research

- Research more about golf. You could choose to focus on its history, tips for playing, or other strange-but-true golf stories.

WORKSHEET 1

Golf – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas by relating them to other knowledge)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

LEVEL 1	Agree/disagree
Golf is a four-letter game.	
Golf is an easy game to play.	
The player with the lowest score wins.	
Early golf balls were stuffed with feathers.	
Woods are designed to hit the ball short distances.	
Irons have smaller heads than woods and hit the ball further.	
A putter is used to hit the ball into the hole.	
All golf courses have 18 holes.	
A double-eagle is the same as an albatross.	
“Tee” is something you drink when playing golf.	
A bunker is where the spectators watch the game.	
A hole in one happens when a golfer hits a ball from the tee straight into the hole.	
One of the great dangers when playing golf is lightning.	
It is best to learn to play golf when you are older.	

Sheet 1 of 2

LEVEL 2	Agree/disagree
Golfers need 14 clubs to play golf.	
The word "golf" comes from the Dutch word "kolf".	
Woods are golf clubs that are always made of wood.	
Woods, irons, wedges, and putters all have numbers.	
Golf players must have good upper-body strength.	
You'd have to be a pretty bad golfer to score a triple-bogey.	
Golf is the favourite game of US presidents.	
LEVEL 3	Agree/disagree
Only intelligent people can play golf.	
The best golfers in the world come from New Zealand.	
Golf is a team sport.	
Men are better than women at playing golf.	

Sheet 2 of 2

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 2

Golf – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and definitions, muddle them up, and have your students match them.

Word	Definition
hole	1) the cup in the ground that a golfer hits the ball into 2) the distance from a tee to its corresponding hole on the green
club	the stick used to hit a golf ball
shaft	the part of a golf club between the hand grip and the head
woods	clubs with large heads that are used to hit the ball long distances
irons	clubs used to hit the ball high into the air
wedges	clubs used to hit the ball the highest into the air
putter	a flat-faced club used on the green to hit the ball into the hole
head	the end of the golf club that hits the ball
loft	the angle of the club's head, which makes the ball go high or long
green	the closely mowed area around the hole
courses	golf parks, made up of 9 or 18 holes
par	the number of hits that a very good golfer might take to get the ball into the hole

Word	Definition
birdie	when a golfer gets the ball into the hole one shot under par
eagle	when a golfer gets the ball into the hole two shots under par
albatross	when a golfer gets the ball into the hole three shots under par (sometimes called a double-eagle)
bogey	when a golfer gets the ball into the hole one shot over par
tee	1) the place a golfer hits from at the beginning of each hole 2) the peg the ball is placed on
bunker	a hollow filled with sand, usually beside the green
rough	the grass beside the fairway that is not mowed
fairway	the mowed grass stretching from the tee to the green
drive	to hit the ball off the tee for the first shot of each hole
hole in one	when the golfer hits the ball off the tee and it goes straight into the hole

Sheet 2 of 2

Note that some words above may have other meanings in other contexts.

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 3a – GROUP A

Golf – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 3a and half Worksheet 3b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
hole (p. 2)	(p. 2)	
shaft (p. 2)	(p. 2)	
irons (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
putter (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
loft (p. 7)	(p. 7)	
courses (p. 9)	(p. 9)	
birdie (p. 9)	(p. 9)	
albatross (p. 9)	(p. 9)	
tee (p. 10)	(p. 10)	
rough (p. 11)	(p. 11)	
drive (p. 12)	(p. 12)	

WORKSHEET 3b – GROUP B

Golf – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 3a and half Worksheet 3b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group B)
club (p. 2)	(p. 2)	
woods (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
wedges (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
head (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
green (p. 7)	(p. 7)	
par (p. 9)	(p. 9)	
eagle (p. 9)	(p. 9)	
bogey (p. 9)	(p. 9)	
bunker (p. 11)	(p. 11)	
fairway (p. 11)	(p. 11)	
hole in one (p. 14)	(p. 14)	