



Do You Know the Fastest Growing Sport in the World?

A) Warm up

1. Which sports do you particularly enjoy playing or watching?
2. To what extent do you believe that companies should take responsibility for employees' physical health, and should they provide sporty benefits for their employees, such as yoga classes or gym memberships?

B) Adapted Text - Do you know the Fastest Growing Sport in the World?

Do you Know the Fastest Growing Sport in the World?

Adapted from an article published in 2023 in rootnote.co

Could you name the fastest growing sport in the world with one guess? Imagine the biggest global sporting events - the World Cup, the Olympics, the Super Bowl. Think about **the hype**, the celebrities, the news coverage. Think about all of the effort and all the money that goes into making these events a global product.

Well, this sport has none of that.

And yet in 2021, just one of this mystery sport's main competitions **drew** nearly 74 million viewers, nearly as many as the 96 million people who watched the Super Bowl. And unless you already know what sport we're talking about, **the odds are that** you didn't even know this competition was happening!

It's not drone racing, bike racing or rugby. While those are all certainly among the fastest growing, they **pale in comparison** to the viewership, participation, and revenue from this sport — in no small part due to its global audience.

And The Fastest Growing Sport In The World Is ... Esports ... competitive video gaming!

Yes, you have read that correctly! Esports is estimated to be a \$3.5 billion industry that will likely **surpass** \$10 billion in the next few years. And we're not talking about people playing computer games - the \$10 billion figure refers only to the *competitive* gaming industry - purely people who get paid to play competitive gaming and the fans who pay to watch them.



If you're already at least somewhat familiar with esports, then none of this will surprise you. But if you're still **wrapping your head around** the idea of competitive gaming, it's really not that hard **to draw parallels with** a sport you may be more familiar with. Sold-out arenas with fans wearing jerseys of their favourite players, video screens, music, lights — the whole package. Just with, you know, video games.

To name just one example, the “League of Legends” World Championship Final **drew** an audience of 71 million people. It happened in Iceland and is just one example of how global accessibility leads to global growth.

Understanding The Growth Of Esports

We've already **touched on** perhaps esports' biggest advantage: it has a global audience. Most games easily translate across cultural barriers and **touch on** universal themes that are fairly simple to understand. The rules are accessible to everybody and there is no real advantage to a competitor's physical makeup.

Esports also have the availability and **prevalence** of mobile phones to thank for their booming popularity, **drawing** many people to the sport from various different backgrounds.

For those who are good enough to become professional, esports tournaments are loaded with cash prizes. In addition to plenty of opportunities for athletes to win prize money, the infrastructure around esports now means teams are able to sign, trade and develop players in the exact same way as more traditional sports.

In a nutshell, you have the same level of organization and infrastructure as a traditional sport, but with much fewer barriers to entry for athletes, much lower overheads for producing events, much less liability, and way more access for the audience. The fact that competitive gaming is the fastest growing sport is hardly surprising, in fact it feels **inevitable** at this point.

But surely we can't call professional gamers “athletes”, can we?

This is an argument that is often **put forward** when talking about esports, and certainly will come up more as people start to understand just how popular competitive gaming is getting. People who simply understand sports in the traditional sense of "physically put this item in the scoring area" look at esports and think: "That's not a sport, and those people aren't athletes."

This is a complex argument, but it really **boils down to the notion of** what is a sport and what is not a sport. Notwithstanding the dexterity, acuity, and mental and physical stamina that competitive gamers exhibit throughout the course of their careers, the only thing that really matters is that esports players have teams, contracts, fans, brand deals, practice, and matches just like any other sport.

Link to the original article:

<https://rootnote.co/do-you-know-the-fastest-growing-sport-in-the-world/>

C) Key Words from Context

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

to draw	the odds are that	to pale in comparison to
to surpass	to wrap your head around something	to draw parallels with
to touch on	prevalence	in a nutshell
hype	to put forward	to boil down to
		inevitable notion

1. To understand something, especially something which is strange, or something which you are not willing to accept: _____

*"I can't _____ why he made that strange decision."
"I have been trying to _____ the problem for 2 days."*

2. The fact that something is very common and can be seen everywhere: _____

"The government have failed to recognise the _____ of mental health problems in the area."

3. Very briefly, giving the main points (often used at the beginning of a sentence):

*"Revenue is down by about 10% and our client base has also fallen by around 5%.
_____, we are experiencing difficult times."*

4. To attract: _____

*"We need to _____ visitors to the sales page on our website."
"The city of New York _____ approximately 4 million tourists per year."*

5. To offer an opinion, idea, plan or proposal: _____

"I am really interested in the proposal that you have _____. Let's set up a call next week to discuss it further."

6. To seem very small, very insignificant when compared to something else:

"Our current problems _____ those we experienced during the pandemic."

7. Intensive publicity and promotion: _____

"There is a lot of _____ surrounding the event."

8. To show the ways in which two things are similar: _____

"With the current economic crisis, many experts are _____ the situation in 2008."

9. Certain to happen, unavoidable: _____

"In light of financial problems at the company, redundancies seem _____."

10. The likelihood / chances are that...: _____

"_____ we will secure this deal."

11. A general concept, idea, belief about something: _____

"We discussed the _____ of success in-depth, and what it takes to become successful."

12. To be the main reason for a situation: _____

"There are many factors which contribute to becoming a good sales person. However, in reality it all _____ to confidence."

13. To deal briefly with a subject in a written or spoken discussion: _____

"Earlier in the presentation, I _____ sustainability in the workplace. I would now like to explore that further in the next section."

14. To be better or more than something else: _____

*"This year's profits have _____ last year's profits quite significantly."
"The athlete has far _____ his father's achievements by winning his 5th world title."*

D) Comprehension

Can you answer the questions below about the text?

1. How does esports compare with the other fastest-growing sports on the planet?

2. Which 4 key factors make competitive esports so accessible to the masses?

3. Which factors make it easier to organise and run esports events over traditional sporting events?

4. What physical attributes does a competitive gamer need to demonstrate in order to be successful in the sport?

5. According to the author, what constitutes a real sport?

6. What is your opinion on the notion of paying to watch professionals play video games competitively?

7. What do you think the author's position is in the debate as to whether competitive gamers are real athletes, and to what extent do you agree?

E) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words from the box below? You may need to change the form of some of the verbs in order for them to fit into the sentence.

to draw	the odds are	notion
to surpass	to wrap your head around	to draw parallels
hype	inevitable	to boil down to

Underwater Rugby - Making Waves in the World of Sport

In the vast ocean of sports, there's a gem that manages to draw attention in the most unique and exhilarating way. That's right, we're diving deep into the world of underwater rugby. _____ that you have never heard of this sport before, but it is starting to _____ more and more attention around the world.



The _____ of Underwater Rugby - What is it about?

For a beginner, it can be quite difficult to _____ underwater rugby. Two teams attempt to score a goal by placing the ball in the opposing team's basket. The basket, however, is located underwater, which is precisely what sets it apart from conventional sports.

Parallels with Traditional Rugby

At a glance, one might be tempted to _____ with traditional rugby, but underwater rugby takes this concept to a whole new level. Players have to manoeuvre around the pool whilst consistently holding their breath, adding an entirely new dimension to the game.

A Sport Like No Other

The casual first-time viewer of the sport may mistakenly think that the sport basically _____ who can hold their breath for the longest, but there is much more to the game than that - it's also about strategy and teamwork. Players must communicate effectively, plan their movements, and execute plays in an environment where speaking is impossible.

Generating excitement around the sport

As you might imagine, _____ is starting to build for this unique sport across the globe. The more people learn about underwater rugby, the more they become intrigued by its complexity and beauty. Many claim it is _____ that this underwater phenomenon will an even wider audience within the next few years. Its popularity may even _____ that of sports such as water polo within the next 10 years.