

EXTRA EXAM PRACTICE

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

The Power of Chess

I Belize is the only country in Central America where English is the official language. Today, its economy is based mainly on agriculture, with tourism fast becoming another important factor. But one day, Belize may become famous for producing a chess grandmaster.

II It all started in the 1990s, when Ian Anderson moved from Canada to Belize, where he eventually met his Russian-born wife, Ella. As part of their effort to help local children, Ella developed the "Bad Cats" programme in order to teach chess. From this beginning, the two went on to establish the Belize National Youth Chess Foundation (BNYCF) in 2007 as a non-profit organisation. After training 79 tutors, the organisation began teaching approximately 500 underprivileged students aged 9 to 12. The number of members has now reached 1,400, including many older players.

III In addition to getting young people off the street and into an educational institution, the programme also helps them by using the game as a motivating force for learning ordinary subjects like mathematics and geography. Furthermore, chess teaches many scholastic and life skills: the ability to think logically, keep an open mind, plan ahead, establish goals and learn from previous mistakes. It also develops players' discipline, concentration and team spirit. And finally, of course, it is an interesting game.

IV The BNYCF receives support and encouragement from international grandmasters, including Jennifer Shahade, twice the US women's chess champion, Maurice Ashley, another US champion who was born in Jamaica, and Sonia Zepeda, an international master from El Salvador. It also regularly holds free chess competitions and celebrations designed to entertain the whole family. The first tournament, held in 2008 in the capital Belmopan, included costumes, decorations and activities celebrating the game's long history. In 2011, a nationally-televised, eight-hour-long chess "Olympiad" included games for which players had to have qualified by previously winning matches in local areas.

V With all this interest, it is not surprising that chess is the fastest growing sport in Belize. It is not yet as popular as football, basketball or cycling, but it looks as if it may soon catch up.

1 Choose the correct answer.

- In 2007, the BNYCF ...
 - established the Bad Cats programme
 - trained 9 to 12 people as chess tutors
 - taught about 500 youngsters how to play chess
- The 2011 "Olympiad" ...
 - was televised to eight countries
 - required players to have won local matches
 - took place over several days
- What does the writer say in the last line of the text?
 - Chess won't remain popular in Belize.
 - Football, basketball and cycling are not as popular as they used to be in Belize.
 - Chess might soon be as popular as football in Belize.

2 Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F). Find evidence in the text to support your answers.

- There aren't many tourists in Belize.
.....
- Playing chess requires good maths skills.
.....
- The BNYCF receives financial help from local chess champions.
.....

3 Answer the questions.

- According to the writer, what are the benefits of chess?
.....
.....
- Why does the writer think that Belize may produce a chess champion?
.....
.....

4 Complete the sentences.

- The "Bad Cats" programme enabled
- Sonia Zepeda

5 Find words or expressions in the text that mean the same as:

- poor (paragraph II)
- regular (paragraph III)
- at no cost (paragraph IV)

6 Write a composition of about 100-150 words. Choose ONE option.

- Which sport do you most enjoy watching or playing? Explain your reasons.
- It is argued that football is the most popular sport in the world. In your opinion, what makes football so popular?