

A Short History of Poker (B1)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Which card games are popular in your country?
2. Do you ever play cards?
3. If so, what games? When? Who with?
4. Are you good at playing cards?
5. Have you ever played poker?

B – Listen and answer

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and complete them.

1. A game called *pochspiel* was played in Strasbourg in the _____ century.
2. In a similar game, mentioned in 1526, each player had _____ cards.
3. In the early 19th century, _____ settlers in America were playing a game called *poque*.
4. During the _____ _____ _____, poker was played by soldiers on both sides.
5. In 1872, US diplomat, Colonel Jacob Schenck, wrote a set of rules for _____ _____.
6. Now poker players are using _____ _____ to improve their game.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What negative associations does the game of poker have, according to the article?
2. What was a 'flux' in the 16th century game?
3. What does it correspond to in the modern game?
4. Where did the name *poque* probably come from?
5. How did the name *poker* develop?
6. What changes took place in the game in the 19th century?
7. When did poker become a game for all kinds of people?
8. What has recently contributed greatly to the popularity of poker?

D – Learn it! Use it!

Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. Someone has just _____ on the door. Can you go and open it, please?
2. In the Middle Ages, _____ _____ had the important job of making the royals laugh.
3. A _____ is usually divided into three parts. Finding one with four parts is considered lucky.
4. The Channel Islands _____ off the coast of Normandy, France.
5. The Smiths are very proud of their swimming pool. They're always _____ about it.
6. Last year, Granddad _____ on a horse in the Grand National and won over £500.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 5)

Choose the correct word in brackets for each space.

In the American West, during the 19th century, gambling was the main form of entertainment.

¹ _____ (*Quite/Hardly/Closely/Nearly*) all the inhabitants of the frontier towns gambled: businessmen, lawmen, cowboys, miners, men and women.

Gambling was also considered to be a respectable profession. ² _____ (*As/For/By/With*) a result, the gambling hall was usually the largest and most richly decorated ³ _____ (*palace/building/post/flat*) in the town and its activities gave a great contribution to the local economy. As ⁴ _____ (*well/good/like/soon*) as gaming tables, the gambling hall contained a bar, hotel rooms and often a stage for shows.

Gamblers generally preferred fast games, like faro and roulette, because these ⁵ _____ (*allowed/let/did/showed*) them to make a quick profit. At first poker was played ⁶ _____ (*lesser/more/much/less*) because it was a slower game. However, over time it became more and more popular.

F – Write about it

Write about a card game that's very popular in your country. Mention:

- how many players are needed to play it;
- what kind of cards are used;
- how it's played;
- what you have to do to win.

Answers

B – Listen and answer

1. 15th 2. three 3. French 4. American Civil War 5. Queen Victoria 6. artificial intelligence

C – Read and answer

1. It is associated with savage capitalism and the dream of easy money. 2. It was a hand that contained cards all of the same suit. 3. It corresponds to a five-card flush. 4. It probably came from the German word *pochen* meaning ‘to brag’ or literally ‘to poke’. 5. The word *poque* was anglicised to *poker* by English-speaking settlers. 6. It began to be played with the modern fifty-two card deck and the betting aspect became stronger with the introduction of some variants.

7. In the 1920s. 8. The broadcasting of poker tournaments and the accessibility of online poker.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. knocked 2. court jesters 3. cloverleaf 4. lie 5. bragging 6. bet

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?

1. Nearly 2. As 3. building 4. well 5. allowed 6. less