

# Fun for Hundreds of Years

by *Mary Altman*



1 Drifts of snow sparkled in the sunlight. The lake was frozen hard. Out on the ice, men shouted and laughed. They had long blond hair. They had bushy beards. They wore animal skins tied with leather strings. They slid about on the ice. And when one fell down, the rest laughed.

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- 2 These men were Vikings. They lived more than 1200 years ago. They lived in the northern lands of Europe. And they liked to ice-skate.
- 3 The Vikings used skates made of bone. They took the ribs of cows, horses, or reindeer. They rubbed and polished them. They made them flat and smooth. They tied them to their feet with leather strings. Bone skates like these were used for hundreds of years. They were used in many countries.
- 4 The first metal skates were made about 400 years ago. They were made in Holland. They were almost as wide as shoes. The metal part was fastened to a wooden part. The wooden part tied to the shoe with straps.
- 5 A hundred years passed. Then someone thought of skating on the thin edge of the metal. This made skating more fun. Since then, skates haven't changed much. The biggest change has been in the way they fasten to the shoes. Screws hold them on now.
- 6 Do you like to ice-skate? Is it fun? Next time you skate in fitted skating boots, think of the Vikings on their skates of bone. Ice skating is an old, old sport. It's been fun for hundreds of years!

## How Well Did You Understand?

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a* or *b*.
- This story shows
    - how ice skating began and changed over the years
    - how the Vikings lived hundreds of years ago
  - The Vikings slid on the ice
    - to have fun
    - to get warm
  - When you rub and polish bones for skating, you make them
    - slide better
    - the right size
  - Bone skates and metal skates from long ago were both
    - fastened to wooden blocks
    - tied to a skater's feet
  - If you go ice-skating now, you would most likely wear
    - skating boots with a thin metal edge
    - metal skates as wide as shoes

## Learn about Words

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

*Directions:* Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- gleamed; glittered (1)
  - light-colored; yellowish (1)
  - frozen water; water made hard by coldness (1)
  - narrow strips of leather (4)
  - went by (5)
- C** Look at the words you wrote. Which one best fits in each sentence? Write the word.
- The Viking boy had \_\_\_\_ hair.
  - His eyes \_\_\_\_ when he saw the new skates.
  - The \_\_\_\_ was thick enough to skate on.
  - Vikings had to use \_\_\_\_ to tie bones to their feet.
  - Years \_\_\_\_ before skates had metal blades.

## Think about It

**D** Her **fingers** were as **cold** as **ice**. This sentence helps you understand how cold her fingers were. The phrase “as cold as ice” is a **figure of speech**. It is a different way of saying that her fingers were very cold.

*Directions:* Choose the word from the first two sentences that best fits in the blank. Write the word.

- 1 Diamonds are bright. Coal is dark. The snow was as bright as \_\_\_\_.
- 2 Cloth is soft. Rocks are hard. His hands were as hard as \_\_\_\_.
- 3 Tar is sticky. Oil is slick. The streets were as slick as \_\_\_\_.
- 4 A rose is red. A lake is blue. The Viking’s eyes were as blue as a \_\_\_\_.
- 5 Lead is gray. Snow is white. The sky was as gray as \_\_\_\_.

**E** Most verbs add *ed* to show that something happened in the past.

Yesterday she *skated* on the pond.

Today she *skates* indoors.

*Directions:* Read each sentence. If it could be happening now, write *now*. If it happened in the past, write *past*.

- 6 Tom polished his skates.
- 7 Mia skates every day.
- 8 José ties the laces together.
- 9 Kim changed her mind about going.
- 10 Dan raced with his friends.

## Find Out about It

Today there are many different ways to ice-skate. Figure skating is like dancing on ice. Speed skating is like racing on ice. Ice hockey is a game played with ice skates. Choose one kind of skating and find out all about it. Find out who the most famous skaters are, what things you need to do it, and where it is done. Tell your class what you found out.