

Week 22: Characteristics of society and sport in pre-industrial Britain

Learning outcomes

By the end of this week, you will be able to describe:

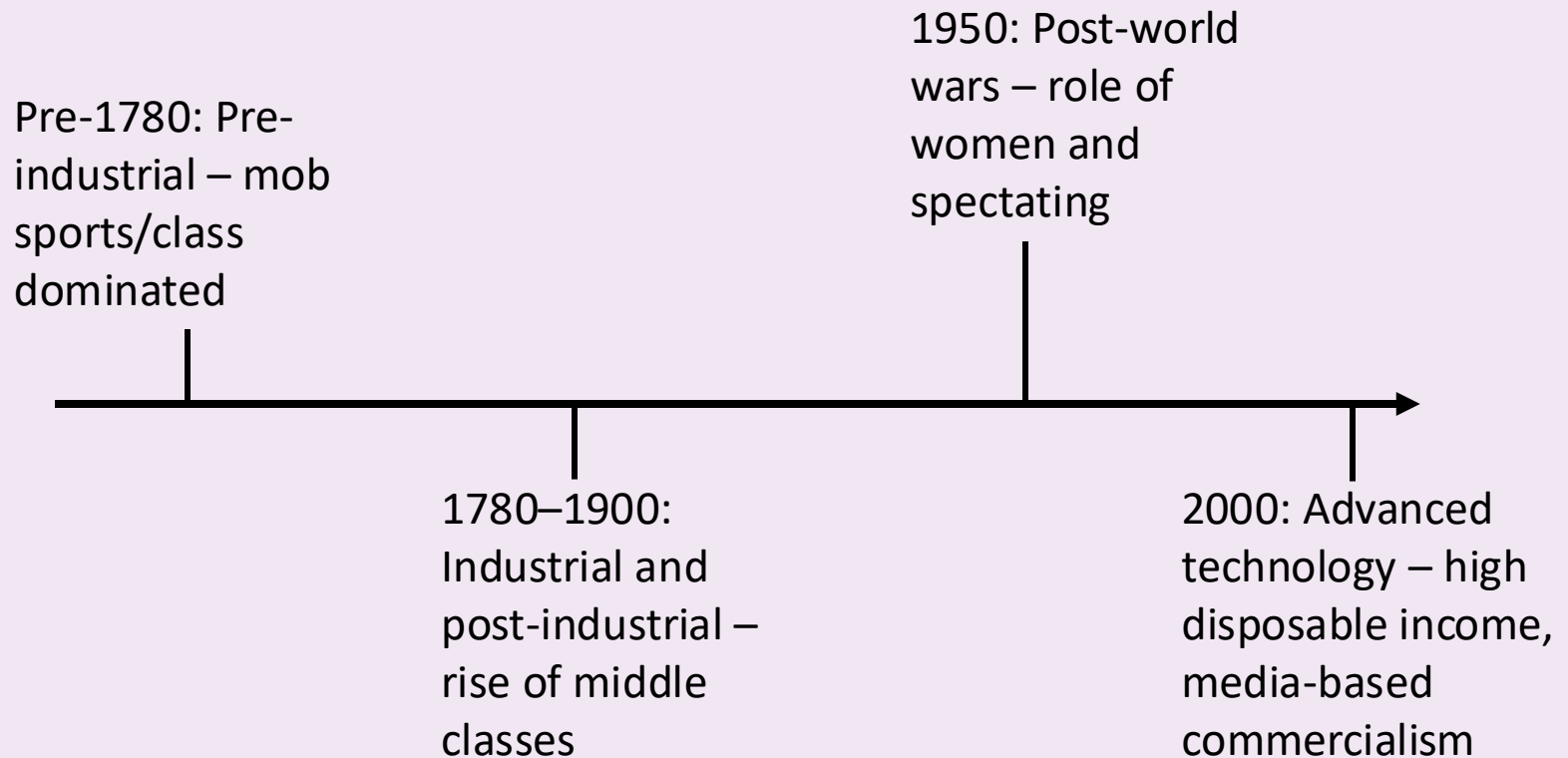
- the characteristics of pre-industrial (pre-1780) British society
- sporting recreation in pre-industrial Britain (relating to mob football and real tennis).

Now complete the starter activity.

Sport reflects society

- Society in pre-industrial Britain was cruel by today's standards, and so were the sports, such as cock-fighting, bull baiting or dog-fighting.
- When society was completely dominated by men, so were the sports.
- As women's position in society became more equal, their position in sport improved. This did not happen until relatively recently.

Simplified timeline



Pre-industrial society

- Rich landowners had almost all the power.
- Poor farmers worked the land.
- The different groups enjoyed different pastimes.
- There was a lack of time and money for sport, which mostly took place only on festivals, fetes and holidays.
- There was widespread illiteracy.
- There was little communication or means of transport.

Example of popular recreation – mob football

- Unruly form of football played by the lower class
- Simple equipment and facilities, e.g. an inflated pig's bladder for a ball
- Participation rather than spectating
- Played over large areas, sometimes involving large numbers
- Few (and unwritten) rules
- Very violent: based on physical force rather than skill
- Local and traditional; occasional and spontaneous

Example of popular recreation – Real tennis

- Played by upper class: exclusive and royal in nature
- High moral code
- Played with respect and rules
- Purpose-built facilities
- Specialist equipment
- High level of skill and technical demands

Summary

- Pre-industrial society had clear divisions within society that were reflected in people's pastimes.
- The 'popular recreation' of the masses was:
 - local
 - occasional
 - violent
 - had few rules.

Now complete Worksheets 1, 2 and 3.

AO3 skills- evaluation

Evaluate whether the conditions in pre-industrial Britain dictated what popular recreations were available for the lower class. [8]

- AO1 Describes the conditions.
- AO2 Explains the recreational activities.
- AO3 Evaluative comments, drawing reasoned conclusions.