Four classic toys enter Hall of Fame

LEVEL A2/B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What toy or game do you still love to play?
2. Do you prefer board games, cards, or outdoor play? Why?
3. Which toy from your childhood would you keep forever?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

- **display** to show something in a place where people can see it
- **nominate** to suggest someone or something for a prize or list
- **curator** a person who looks after and organises items in a museum
- **popular** liked by many people
- **collect** to get and keep a series of similar things
- **playground** an outdoor area where children play
- **skill** an ability to do something well
- **finalist** a person or thing in the last stage of a contest

III. READING

Four classics have joined the National Toy Hall of Fame in the US: bingo, Care Bears, the Pokémon Trading Card Game, and the slide. The contest is run by The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York, where copies of the toys are now on display. The Hall of Fame was set up in 1998.

People nominate toys each year, and a panel of historians, educators, and other experts chooses the winners. This year there were 12 finalists. Curators at the museum explained why each toy matters. Each winner has a long history.

In bingo, players match called numbers on a card and shout "Bingo" when they complete a line. Care Bears, first sold in the early 1980s, have grown into more than 100 bears and stayed popular in storybooks, TV shows, movies, games, toys, and decorations.

The Pokémon Trading Card Game began in 1996, and billions of cards have been produced for fans around the world, who also collect the cards. Slides have been in playgrounds since the early 1900s and help children develop motor skills, encourage exploration, and promote risky play.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News:** *"Which toys would you pick for your favourite of...". Original article linked at* theenglishwire.c...

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which four winners entered the National Toy Hall of Fame?
2. Where is the museum that runs the Hall of Fame?
3. When was the Hall of Fame set up?
4. How are toys chosen for the Hall of Fame?
5. How do slides help children?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Which of the four winners is your favourite, and why?
2. What toy would you nominate for the Hall of Fame next year? Why?
3. Do you like collecting cards or figures? What do you collect?
4. Which matters more in a toy: fun, learning, or memories?



VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Past continuous

Use was/were + verb-ing for an action in progress at a past time. Use when + past simple for a shorter interrupting event. Use while + past continuous to show two actions in progress.

*"We **were sliding** when the whistle blew."*

*"At 7 pm, my friends **were choosing** their favourite toys."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with the past continuous form of the verb.

1. Students (trade) ___ Pokémon cards when the bell rang.
2. We (play) ___ bingo when the power went out.
3. My friends (chat) ___ about Care Bears while we waited.
4. A worker (paint) ___ the slide when it started to rain.
5. My brother (look) ___ at the toys when the museum closed.

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.



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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 7–8 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 10 minutes reading, 10 minutes comprehension, 8–10 minutes discussion. If needed, fold grammar into reading time.
- Pre-teach: display, nominate, curator, finalist. In pairs, predict which toys might win before reading.
- Run the reading as a jigsaw: half the class underline how the Hall works; the other half underline facts about each winner, then share in pairs. For teens, keep pace brisk and swap partners once.
- Add a quick class vote: students propose one extra toy, give a 10-second reason, and the class chooses a winner; optional homework is to ask family which toy they would nominate.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick show of hands, then ask two students with different choices to swap reasons.
2. Project or read the shortlist items in the text and model one short pitch before they choose.
3. If answers stall, prompt with cards, stickers, figures, or digital items students know.
4. Have students rank the three, then pair up with someone who chose a different top value and compare.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Survey: In groups, survey classmates about their top three toys and graph the results in 10 minutes.

Writing: In pairs, write a 70-word Hall of Fame label for one winner to display next to it.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: Past continuous

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which four winners entered the National Toy Hall of Fame?
   Bingo, Care Bears, the Pokémon Trading Card Game, and the slide.
2. Where is the museum that runs the Hall of Fame?
   The Strong National Museum of Play is in Rochester, New York, in the US.
3. When was the Hall of Fame set up?
   In 1998.
4. How are toys chosen for the Hall of Fame?
   People nominate toys and experts choose the winners.
5. How do slides help children?
   They help children develop motor skills, and they encourage exploration and risky play.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with the past continuous form of the verb.

1. Students ___ Pokémon cards when the bell rang. **were trading**
2. We ___ bingo when the power went out. **were playing**
3. My friends ___ about Care Bears while we waited. **were chatting**
4. A worker ___ the slide when it started to rain. **was painting**
5. My brother ___ at the toys when the museum closed. **was looking**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use was/were + verb-ing for an action in progress at a past time. Use when + past simple for a shorter interrupting event. Use while + past continuous to show two actions in progress. (Examples constructed.)

*"We **were sliding** when the whistle blew."*

*"At 7 pm, my friends **were choosing** their favourite toys."*