

Hogwarts: A History

# Skiing: A History

By Charlie Huang

# What is Skiing?

Skiing is a sport where a person slides over snow on two long pieces of hard but flexible material. There are many forms of skiing, but today the most popular types are **downhill skiing** (Charlie's favorite, where people ski down a slope for the purposes of exhilarating leisure) and **cross-country skiing** (where people 'walk' using skis to move across snow-covered land for the purposes of leisure or transportation).

Downhill skiing, the most popular form, involves people typically taking a lift up a slope and skiing back down, gathering speed and turning to make the cutting-through-snow feeling that makes the sport fun. Corduroy (lines in the snow made nightly by a snow-groomer at a ski resort) give off a satisfyingly smooth feeling, moguls (bumps in the snow) physically challenge the user and push one's skill, and the most prestigious, powder (a thick layer of fresh, untouched snow from a recent snowfall) gives a soft, smooth, highly satisfying feeling that overwhelms skiing addicts with pure exhilaration.

Note: "Indiana" and "powder" seldom go in the same sentence .-

[Click here](#) to check out a documentary about Charlie's skiing adventures.

Powder skiing:



Mogul (not Mongol) skiing:



Corduroy skiing:



Ouch:



# Unit 1: Origination [Pre-1100] (The Global Tapestry)

But people didn't just randomly decide one day that sliding down a mountain on two sticks is fun. People didn't randomly decide to blast some snow on a hill in Southeastern Indiana and start selling tickets to go up and down it under a company name called Perfect North Slopes.

Skiing originated thousands of years ago, though when is disputed. Early cave drawings suggest the use of skis by the Cro-Magnon peoples, early European humans who lived during the Upper Paleolithic Era between 40,000 and 10,000 years ago. However, the earliest physical artifacts of objects that look like skis date back to the Mesolithic Era around 6000 BCE in northern Russia. Skis were used as methods of transportation that allowed men to cross snow-covered wetlands and marshes in the winter as they hunted. For thousands of years they remained an important tool for winter transportation in northern climates. Ski artifacts thousands of years old were discovered in northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland, indicating that Scandanavian peoples used them.



# Unit 3: Military Use & Diffusion [1100-1880] (Land-Based Empires)

Skis began to be used for military purposes, dating back as early as the Battle of Oslo in 12th century Norway, where ski troops were sent out to observe the enemy. Ski troops continued to be used from the 15th to 17th centuries in Sweden, Norway, Finland, Russia, and Poland, and they were even used in both World Wars of the 20th century.

Starting in 1767, the Norwegian military ran ski competitions, where troops were to ski around obstacles while practicing their target shooting. This provided both military training and recreational purposes, and led to the recreational sport of Biathlons.

As the popularity of skiing grew, increasing numbers of civilians in Europe and other parts of the world began trying out the sport and civilian competitions were even held, such as the 1843 cross-country skiing race held in Tromsø, Norway and downhill ski races in California in the 1860s.

Until the mid-1800s, boots were only attached to the ski at the toe, which made gnarly maneuvering on steep slopes impossible. This was changed, however, when a norwegian named Sondre Norheim in the 1860s found a way to anchor his boots' heels into his skis, providing much more control and shaping the way bindings work in modern alpine skiing.



# Unit 5: The Beginnings of the Sport [1880-1960] (Revolutions)

In the 1880s, the popularity of skiing as a recreational sport shifted from cross-country (Nordic) skiing to downhill (alpine) skiing. This was due to the fact that the adrenaline one gets from skiing down a mountain was more appealing than simply moving across flat terrain (Charlie agrees). More modern kinds of skis were invented. The new popularity in alpine skiing made the European Alps, particularly the legendary Chamonix resort area of France, the 'skiing capital of the world'.

In 1924, the first Winter Olympics was hosted and included Nordic skiing, and in 1936 it expanded to include Alpine skiing as well.

1936 saw a major breakthrough in the world of skiing. Rather than have to hike back up the mountain after every run, which proved exhausting, the invention of the chairlift in the US greatly increased the number of runs a skier could make in a day, further pushed the popularity of the sport, and created a large skiing industry in not only Europe and North America but Australia, South America, and Japan as well.

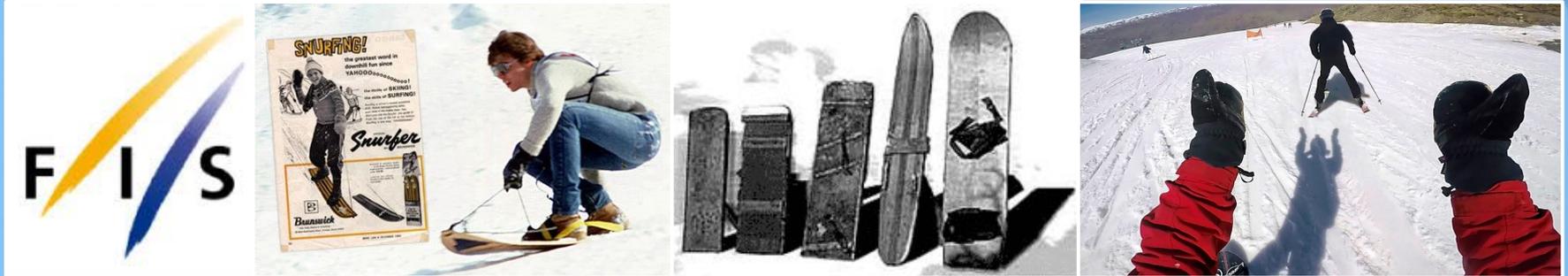
The late 1950s saw the invention and introduction of another major technology in the skiing industry - snowmaking. It involved blasting compressed air and water into the air, which would then freeze if the atmosphere was cold enough and fall to the ground as snow. This artificial snow guaranteed skiers adequate snow coverage, even if the weather wasn't too favorable.



# Unit 7: Resistance & Tensions [1900-Present] (Global Conflict)

In the early 20th century, as skiing grew in popularity, Norway, Sweden, and Finland outrightly resisted Alpine skiing influence and saw their native Nordic skiing as the only legitimate form of skiing. However, they finally withdrew from their resistance in 1930, allowing the International Ski Federation (founded 1924) to establish influence in the sport in the countries.

In 1965, a Michigan engineer named Sherman Poppen bolted two skis together for her daughters to use to 'surf' across snow as a toy. This accidental invention became the precursor of the modern snowboard, another winter sport that would rise to challenge the skiing sport. As the new sport grew, not every US ski resort allowed it. In the 1984-1985 ski season, only about 40 US ski resorts permitted snowboarding, as a result of skiers' disdain towards the new sport. Though almost every resort would eventually lift their ban, skiers and snowboarders continued to have a disapproval of one another. This tension remains to this day, and Charlie has once been a victim of snowboarders' disapproval while riding a chairlift with some of them.



# Unit 9: Skiing's Green Revolution [1950-Present] (Globalization)

As the popularity of skiing became widespread, changes have occurred. Multinational corporations such as Vail Resorts and Alterra Mountain Co have acquired ski resorts in foreign nations all around the world to build a ski resort 'empire', and these two corporations are the main competitors in the US.

Technologies of ski resort operations have dramatically improved. Snow groomers, invented in the 1950s in Colorado, flatten out the snow and lay out corduroy on select runs each night to dramatically improve the skiing satisfaction. The later invention of winch cats (snow groomers with a winch) allowed grooming to happen on very steep terrain. Chair lift technologies got faster, larger, and more technologically advanced, such as the invention of high-speed detachable chairlifts, some even with heated seats. Snowmaking guns evolved into snowmaking fans, which have been becoming more powerful, increasingly efficient, and which Charlie is addicted to watching as they magically create snow from nowhere. Resorts in Eastern North America rely heavily on snowmaking as natural snowfall isn't enough to sustain their ski resort (especially at [Perfect North Slopes](#) in Indiana).

Despite the invention of chair lifts in the US, most chairlift manufacturing has shifted over to Europe with companies like Poma and Doppelmayr due to the higher market in that continent (the Alps).

Thanks to the increasing convenience of global transportation, skiers on one side of the world can travel thousands of miles away to distant resorts on skiing adventures.



# The Magic of Skiing

Today, there are over 100 million skiers worldwide, and the industry in the US alone is worth 3.75 billion dollars in 2019, according to [statista.com](https://www.statista.com). Chamonix of France unofficially remains the most prestigious ski resort in the world, though many other legendary resorts have emerged, including Les 3 Vallées in France (the biggest in the world), Park City in the US (biggest in north America), Whistler Blackcomb in Canada, and Zermatt Matterhorn in Switzerland.

Those not familiar with skiing may find it confusing why people get up way before dawn and drive several hours just to slide on some snow. But skiing addicts all around the world (though you won't find many in Indiana) find the prospects of their favorite winter sport irresistible, and they love doing one thing - chasing adventure.

In summary, skiing is truly a remarkable sport with thousands of years of history!



“Other than my own brain and wit” (Mrs. Cole), and my addiction for skiing, the following contributed to the making of this presentation:

- Allen, E. John B.. "Skiing". Encyclopedia Britannica, 29 Nov. 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/sports/skiing>. Accessed 25 May 2021.
- Bright, Torah. "Snowboarding". Encyclopedia Britannica, 13 Mar. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/sports/snowboarding>. Accessed 25 May 2021.
- Lange, David. "Ski and Snowboard Resorts Market Value US 2021." Statista, 26 Jan. 2021, [www.statista.com/statistics/1175393/ski-snowboard-resorts-market-size/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/1175393/ski-snowboard-resorts-market-size/). Accessed 25 May 2021.
- Lund, Morten, and Seth Masia. "A Short History of Skis." A Short History of Skis | International Skiing History Association, International Skiing History Association, 2019, [www.skiinghistory.org/history/short-history-skis-0](http://www.skiinghistory.org/history/short-history-skis-0). Accessed 25 May 2021.
- Sood, Suemedha. "Travel - Where Did Skiing Come from?" BBC, BBC, 22 Dec. 2010, [www.bbc.com/travel/story/20101221-travelwise-where-did-skiing-come-from](http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20101221-travelwise-where-did-skiing-come-from). Accessed 25 May 2021.

# The End

Although some may argue that my presentation isn't long enough because of the pictures on each slide and how it is only 7 slides of information, it is indeed long enough because of the small font on each slide, the wide variety of information covering multiple units, and the fact that upon putting the informational paragraphs into an MLA document it turns out to be more than 3 pages. [Insert DBQ Here]