

# The art of fighting

1. A martial art is a special form of fighting and self-defence. Most of the martial arts train people to fight and defend themselves using different parts of their body.
2. Martial arts have been practised by humans for thousands of years. The word 'martial' comes from the name of the Roman god of war, Mars. Martial arts were started, long ago, to train people to fight and survive in real wars and battles. No-one is really sure exactly where they started, but most Asian countries have their own special forms of martial arts. Many martial arts have come from China, India and Japan, and have been developed over thousands of years.
3. There are many different types of martial arts. Jujitsu is one that teaches people how to overcome a bigger, stronger person using wrist, elbow and shoulder twists and throws. Kendo is the Japanese martial art of sword-fighting. Taekwondo is a Korean martial art that uses strong kicks. Karate is a martial art from Japan that uses punching, kicking, knee and elbow strikes and open-handed hits. Other kinds you might have heard of include kung-fu, judo and sumo wrestling.
4. Not all kinds of martial arts are about fighting. Some are about training the body and mind, and learning to control anger to avoid fighting. Tai Chi, for example, uses slow movements and is sometimes practised by people wanting to improve their health. Other forms of martial arts are linked to dance, religion or spirituality.
5. Today, many people around the world practise martial arts for sport, exercise, self-defence or to increase their self-confidence.

