



Let's Study About...

The OLYMPIC GAMES



Introduction



The Olympic Games are an international sporting event that is held every four years. It brings together 10,000 athletes from 200 countries for 2 weeks of drama, excitement and sports. The Olympics were established to promote world peace and international friendship by replacing military competition with athletic competition.

There are four main types of Olympic event: the *Summer Olympics*, the *Winter Olympics*, the *Paralympics* (for athletes with physical disabilities) and the *Special Olympics* (for athletes with intellectual disabilities).

The 2016 Summer Olympics were held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The 2020 Olympics are being held in summer 2021 in Tokyo hosted by Japan.

QUESTIONS

1. What are the Olympic Games?
2. How often are they held?
3. How many athletes participate?
4. Why were the Olympics established?
5. What are the four main Olympic events?
6. Where were the 2012 Olympics held?
7. Which nation will host the 2020 Olympics?

Olympic Traditions

Olympic Symbol The Olympic symbol is five interlinked rings. These represent the 5 continents (Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Oceania).

Olympic Motto The official motto of the Olympic Games is *Citius, Altius, Fortius*. This means *swifter, higher, stronger* in Latin.

Olympic Creed "The most important thing is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle."

Olympic Torch The Olympic torch is lit in Olympia and is carried by a relay of runners from Greece to the host city. It is used to light the Olympic Flame at the opening ceremony, then is put out at the end of the closing ceremony.

QUESTIONS

1. What's the symbol of the Olympics?
2. What do the five rings represent?
3. Explain the Olympic motto.
4. What's the Olympic creed?
5. Who does the torch get to the host city?
6. What happens at the opening ceremony?
7. What happens at the closing ceremony?

The Ancient Greek Olympics



The Olympic Games began 3,500 years ago in ancient Greece. They were held as a religious event to honor the Greek god Zeus. The first recorded Olympics took place in the city of Olympia in the year 776 BC. These consisted of running races, but other events were added later. All participants competed naked, with no clothes. The ancient Olympics were stopped by a Roman Emperor in the year 393 AD.

QUESTIONS

1. When did the Olympic Games begin?
2. Where did they begin?
3. Why were they held?
4. Where did the first recorded event take place?
5. When did it take place?
6. What happened in the year 393 AD?

The Modern Olympics



After 393 AD, no games were held for over 1,500 years. The modern Olympics were revived in the 19th century by an idealistic Frenchman named Pierre de Coubertin. He had read about the ancient Greek Olympics and wanted to restart the games. He believed that the Olympics could contribute to world peace and international friendship. Thanks to him, the first modern Olympics were held in Athens, Greece in 1896.

QUESTIONS

1. What happened after 393 AD?
2. When were the Olympic Games revived?
3. Who restarted the Olympics?
4. What did he believe?
5. When were the first modern Olympics held?
6. Where were they held?

The Summer Olympic Games – Complete List (1896 – 2028)

	Year	Host City	Host Country	Nations	Athletes
1	1896	Athens	Greece	14	241
2	1900	Paris	France	24	997
3	1904	Saint Louis	USA	12	651
4	1908	London	UK	22	2,008
5	1912	Stockholm	Sweden	28	2,407
6	1916	Berlin	Germany	-	-
7	1920	Antwerp	Belgium	29	2,626
8	1924	Paris	France	44	3,089
9	1928	Amsterdam	Netherlands	46	2,883
10	1932	Los Angeles	USA	37	1,332
11	1936	Berlin	Germany	49	3,963
12	1940	Tokyo	Japan	-	-
13	1944	London	UK	-	-
14	1948	London	UK	59	4,104
15	1952	Helsinki	Finland	69	4,955
16	1956	Melbourne	Australia	72	3,314
17	1960	Rome	Italy	83	5,338
18	1964	Tokyo	Japan	93	5,151
19	1968	Mexico City	Mexico	112	5,516
20	1972	Munich	Germany	121	7,134
21	1976	Montreal	Canada	92	6,084
22	1980	Moscow	USSR	80	5,179
23	1984	Los Angeles	USA	140	6,829
24	1988	Seoul	South Korea	159	8,391
25	1992	Barcelona	Spain	169	9,356
26	1996	Atlanta	USA	197	10,318
27	2000	Sydney	Australia	199	10,651
28	2004	Athens	Greece	201	10,625
29	2008	Beijing	China	204	10,942
30	2012	London	UK	204	10,768
31	2016	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	207	11,238
32	2020	Tokyo	Japan	205	11,091
33	2024	Paris	France		
34	2028	Los Angeles	USA		

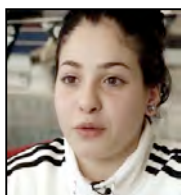
Inspiring Olympic Athletes - Some Examples

#1 Wilma Rudolph (USA)



Wilma Rudolph was an Olympic runner. As a child, she contracted polio and had to wear a leg brace until age 12. Thanks to her family, she overcame her illness, became a talented athlete and went on to win 3 gold medals at the 1960 Olympics. When asked about her illness, she said, *“My doctor told me I would never walk again. My mother told me that I would. I believed my mother.”*

#5 Yusra Mardini (Syria)



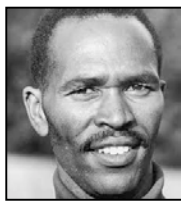
Yusra Mardini was a promising young swimmer living in Damascus. When the Syrian Civil War broke out, her house was destroyed. She and her sister fled the fighting and finally managed to reach Germany. In 2016, she was chosen as a member of the Olympic Refugee Team and took part in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. In 2017, she was appointed a UNHCR Ambassador.

#2 Abebe Bikila (Ethiopia)



Abebe Bikila was an unknown runner from Ethiopia when he shocked the world's sports experts by winning the marathon at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. It was Bikila's first competition outside his hometown of Addis Ababa. What was surprising was that he ran the entire marathon barefoot – without shoes – yet set a new Olympic record for the event!

#6 Kip Keino (Kenya)



Kip Keino grew up in a farming village in Kenya and became a policeman. Due to his talent as a runner, he was sent to the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. On the way to the 1,500 meter track, his taxi got stuck in a traffic jam. To avoid being late, he got out of the taxi and jogged the last mile to the stadium. Despite this, he went on to beat the world's best runners and win the gold medal.

#3 Jesse Owens (USA)



Jesse Owens, a Black American, was the grandson of slaves. His talent for sports earned him a place on the US Olympic team and he was sent to Berlin for the 1936 Games in Nazi Germany. Hitler had hoped that these Olympics would prove the superiority of the white Aryan race. He was shocked when Owens publicly disproved his racist theories by winning 4 gold medals.

#7 Sohn Kee-Chung (S. Korea)



Sohn Kee-Chung was a talented runner during the occupation period when Korea was a colony of Japan. Due to his speed, he was sent to the 1936 Olympics on the Japan team and was forced to use a Japanese name. When he won the marathon, his victory was celebrated with the flag and anthem of Japan. Finally, at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, he was honored – as a Korean – for his achievement.

#4 Lawrence Lemieux (Canada)



Lawrence Lemieux of Canada was in second place in the sailing competition at the 1988 Olympics when he noticed that Joseph Chan of Singapore had fallen in the water behind him and was drowning. He quickly turned around and saved Chan's life. When asked why he didn't ignore Chan and keep racing, he replied *“I'm not *that* intense!”* He was later given a special award.

#8 Gertrude Ederle (USA)



Gertrude Ederle competed in the 1924 Olympics on the US women's team. At that time, many people were against women taking part in sports since they were *“too weak.”* To prove them wrong, Ederle set out to swim across the English Channel from France to England in 1926. To everyone's surprise, she set a world record of 14 hours 34 minutes – 2 hours faster than the fastest man's time!



Let's Study About...

Olympic Issues



War



- The ancient Greeks imposed an “Olympic Truce” which banned all fighting, conflict and war during the Olympic Games.
- The Olympics were cancelled three times in the 20th Century (in 1916, 1940 and 1944) because of World War I and World War II.

Politics



- Fifty Western nations boycotted the Moscow Olympics in 1980 to protest the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.
- In return, the USSR boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984.
- Taiwan competes as “Chinese Taipei” due to pressure by China

Terrorism



- At the 1972 Olympics in Munich, Arab terrorists invaded the Olympic village and killed 11 members of the Israeli team.
- At the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, USA, a bomb went off in the Olympic Park killing 2 people and injuring 111 others.

Sexism



- Only men could take part in the Olympic Games in ancient Greece.
- No women participated in the first modern games in 1896.
- Women weren't allowed to run in the marathon until 1984.
- The Saudi Arabia Olympic team first included women in 2012.

Racism



- Adolf Hitler hosted the 1936 Berlin Olympics in Nazi Germany and believed it would prove that the white race was superior.
- South Africa was banned from the Olympics from 1964 until 1988 because its racist apartheid system discriminated against Blacks.
- Black athletes protested against racism at the 1968 Olympics.

Money



- Hosting the games is expensive and a major burden on host nations.
- The Olympics value the ideals of amateurism. Yet medal winners earn big money and nations spend large amounts on their teams.
- The Games have become very commercialized over the years.
- Bribery and corruption is a problem when selecting host cities.

Drugs



- Athletes come under intense pressure to use illegal drugs in order to win medals for their countries or to become rich and famous.
- East German athletes of the 1980s damaged their health by doping.
- Athletes from nations such as Russia have been banned for drugs.

Fairness



- Rich nations spend lots of money to buy the best coaches, equipment and training for their athletes, so of course they win medals.
- Poor nations can't afford to do this, so their athletes don't have the same chances that athletes from rich nations have. That's not fair.

Which Country Won the Most Medals? Three Ways of Counting

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) does not record – or promote – the counting of which countries won how many medals. That’s something the media, national governments and the public in each country do. Given the big gap between rich nations and poor nations, a simple medal count doesn’t seem fair. After the 2004 Olympics in Athens, one NGO calculated national medal counts according to 3 criteria: the number of medals won, medals per capita and medals adjusted for GDP (Gross Domestic Product). The top 10 winners are listed below. Why not discuss this topic with your class or have your students do these calculations for Tokyo 2020?



The 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens, Greece (The Top 10 Medal Winners)



WINNERS MEASURED BY NUMBER OF MEDALS



Gold + Silver + Bronze = Total

WINNERS MEASURED BY POPULATION PER MEDAL



Population - Medals per million

WINNERS MEASURED BY GDP PER CAPITA




Medals adjusted for national GDP


1 USA	103	6 Japan	37
2 Russia	92	7 France	33
3 China	63	8 Italy	32
4 Australia	49	9 S. Korea	30
5 Germany	48	10 UK	30


1 Bahamas	10	6 Jamaica	1.9
2 Australia	2.5	7 Latvia	1.7
3 Cuba	2.4	8 Hungary	1.7
4 Estonia	2.3	9 Bulgaria	1.6
5 Slovenia	2	10 Greece	1.5

1 Cuba	1.1	6 Belarus	4.1
2 Jamaica	2	7 N. Korea	4.5
3 Bahamas	2.6	8 Kenya	4.7
4 Georgia	3	9 Bulgaria	4.8
5 Eritrea	3.3	10 Mongolia	4.8



OLYMPIC WORKSHEET





Your name: _____ Your class: _____

I Olympic Athletes from Around the World

Choose an interesting athlete from each region, research them and explain why you chose them.

Region	Person	Country	Sport	Reason
1. Asia				
2. Africa				
3. Middle East				
4. Latin America				
5. Europe				

II Good Sportsmanship

During the Olympics, find two examples of good sportsmanship.

Name	Country	Example of good sportsmanship
1.		
2.		

III Scandals and Controversies

During the Olympics, find two examples of a scandal or a controversy.

Name	Country	Scandal or controversy
1.		
2.		

IV Trans-National Athletes and Coaches

Some countries hire, steal, import or borrow athletes from other countries to help them win Olympic medals. Find two examples of athletes in one country’s team who are actually from another country.

Name	Sport	Olympic Country	Original country
1.			
2.			

V Olympic Flags

During the Olympic Games, you can see the national flag of many different nations. Choose 2 interesting flags, draw them in the boxes below and research what their patterns stand for.

Country	Flag	Meaning
1.		
2.		

VI Olympic Data Box

Research the following data about the Olympic Games and write the answers in the blanks.

Number of countries taking part	
Number of sports	
Number of athletes	
Number of security forces	
Number of Olympic torch carriers	
Number of TV viewers worldwide	

VII Matching: Sports and Countries

Match the countries on the left with the sports on the right that they’re good at.

▪ India	▪ weightlifting
▪ China	▪ running
▪ Turkey	▪ grass hockey
▪ Cuba	▪ judo
▪ Kenya	▪ table tennis
▪ Korea	▪ baseball
▪ Japan	▪ archery

VIII Interview

Interview 4 classmates, family members, neighbors or people on the street about the following:

What’s your favorite Olympic sport? Why?
1.
2.
3.
4.

Which foreign athlete do you like? Why?
1.
2.
3.
4.

IX Rate the Media in Your Country

In some countries, the media (TV, radio, newspapers) only cover athletes from “our” nation. In other countries, the media makes efforts to profile athletes from around the world and promote international understanding. Use the chart below to rate the media in your country.

Your Country:	Yes					No
1. Does the media only focus on “our” athletes?	1	2	3	4	5	
2. Does the media ignore sports that “our” athletes aren’t in?	1	2	3	4	5	
3. Does the media take an “us vs. them” approach to each event?	1	2	3	4	5	
4. Does the media try to profile athletes from other nations?	1	2	3	4	5	
5. Does the media try to inform viewers about foreign countries?	1	2	3	4	5	
6. Does the media try to promote international understanding?	1	2	3	4	5	

Your comments: _____

X Who Should I Cheer For?

During the Olympics, many people only cheer for their own country. For a change, try out one or more of the following cheering styles. Then, comment on what you did and how you felt.

1 Good plays	Cheer only for good plays or performances, regardless of the country.
2 Sister country	Cheer for the country of your sister school, sister city or sister state.
3 Neighbor country	Cheer for neighbor countries – the nations located next to your country.
4 Small countries	Cheer for small or poor countries – they’re the ones that need extra help.
5 Underdog	Cheer for the underdog – the country that’s behind and needs most support.
6 Day by day	Cheer for a different country each day of the Olympics.

Your comments: _____

Quotes about the Olympics

- 1 *The Olympics are a wonderful metaphor for world cooperation, the kind of international competition that's wholesome, healthy and represents the best in all of us.* – John Williams
- 2 *It has been said that the Opening Ceremony of the Olympics is something an athlete will remember for the rest of their life. It's true. That moment when you walk into the Olympic Stadium is a moment that I will never forget.* – Jeff Fenech (Australian Boxer)
- 3 *The purpose of the Olympics is to do your best. The only victory that counts is the one over yourself.* – Jesse Owens (US sprinter, 1936 gold medalist)
- 4 *One shouldn't be afraid to lose; this is sport. One day you win; another day you lose. This is what sport is about. This is why I love it.* – Oksana Baiul (Russian skater, 1994 medalist)
- 5 *The first thing is to love your sport. Never do it to please someone else. It has to be yours.* – Peggy Fleming (US skater)
- 6 *The Olympics is a lifetime of training for just 10 seconds.* – Jesse Owens (US sprinter, 1936 gold medalist)
- 7 *All I've done is run fast. I don't see why people should make much fuss about that.* – Fanny Blankers (Dutch sprinter)
- 8 *My doctor told me I would never walk again. My mother told me that I would. I believed my mother.* – Wilma Rudolph (American sprinter, childhood polio victim and 1960 Olympic gold medalist)
- 9 *For nations to want a lot of gold medals, as proof of national superiority, degrades the whole idea of competitive sports.* – Dick McTaggart (British boxer)
- 10 *I am always amazed when I hear people say that sport creates goodwill between nations. Sport is like warfare. The spectators and the nations behind them work themselves into furies over these contests and seriously believe – at any rate for short periods – that running, jumping and kicking a ball are tests of national virtue.* – George Orwell (British author)



Redesign the Olympics!

The United Nations has asked you to re-design the Olympics to reduce nationalism and more faithfully reflect the Olympic ideals of peace, friendship and international understanding. Look at the options below, then choose the best 3 ideas, writing the numbers 1 to 3 in the spaces. Then, explain your choices and the reasons why you like them.

Continent Against Continent

Make all team competitions 'continent-against-continent' instead of "country vs country" to de-emphasize national rivalry. That way, Koreans, Japanese and Chinese, for example, would all belong to one 'Asia team' and would have to live, train and cooperate together in order to win.

Multi-National Dream Teams

Make all team sports more international by having players from different countries on the same team. Require each team to have members from every continent with no more than 1 member from any one country. Allow these "dream teams" to get together and practice for 6 months, then hold the Olympic events to see which team is best.

Eliminate Nationalism

Eliminate national anthems and national flags during the award ceremonies. Focus on the winning athletes as representatives of humanity, rather than of particular nations.

Replace Violent Sports with Peace Sports

Eliminate all violent Olympic events such as boxing, wrestling, judo, fencing and shooting. Replace these with peaceful sports and games which emphasize friendship, teamwork, trust and cooperation.

Global Education for Olympic Athletes

Introduce a global education curriculum for all athletes who wish to take part in the Olympic Games. This should include courses on Olympic ideals, global issues and on the countries and cultures of their fellow competitors. Give a test which all athletes have to pass in order to take part in the games.

Invent New Global Issue Sports

Add new events to the Olympics to raise awareness about some of the world problems that face our planet. Examples could include events such as Olympic land mine clearing, team litter pick-ups, competitive rescue operations, group tree-planting races, oil spill clean-up races...

Hold Events in Multiple Countries

Use multiple sites in different countries to make each Olympics a "shared" event like the Japan-Korea World Cup. Include poorer nations that normally can't afford to host the Olympics. This would enable spectators to see a wider range of cultures and countries. For example, you could hold track and field events in Kenya, volleyball in Venezuela, swimming in Finland and cycling in India.

Demonstrate Sports from Local Cultures

Add demonstration sports from local, indigenous and traditional cultures so people can learn about the variety of sports in the world. Introduce Australian aborigine sports such as the boomerang, for example, or have athletes try a sumo event in Japan.

New Opening Ceremony

Change the Opening Ceremony so that athletes enter the stadium with others in the same event, not with people from the same country. That way, all the swimmers would enter together, all the gymnasts together and all the soccer players together.

Socially Responsible Athletes

Select Olympic athletes not just for athletic skill, but also for their actions as global citizens. Make the Olympics like modern universities which emphasize not only grades but also community service and volunteer spirit. Have TV stations focus on socially responsible athletes (a swimmer who works for human rights, the soccer team which raised \$1 million to protect the rainforests) instead of the usual stories of who defeated who or which nation got the most medals.

Your Own Idea