The Olympic Games are an international sports competition which are held every four years in a different city. Thousands of athletes from all over the world compete against each other in individual and team sports. Over 1 billion people watch the games on TV.

The first Olympic Games were held in Greece in 776 B.C. They were called the ancient games and lasted until the 4th century A.D. The modern games began in 1896, when the Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin revived the games to bring peace and friendship to the young people all over the world.

Today, there are summer and winter games. Up to 1994 both games were held in the same year, but now they are staged two years apart from each other.

**CEREMONIES AND SYMBOLS**

The Olympic Games begin with the opening ceremony. Athletes from all the participating nations march into the stadium. Greece comes in first, because it was the first nation to hold the Olympics and the host nation comes in last.

The Olympic flag is raised and a chosen athlete lights the Olympic flame. It is a symbol of spirit, knowledge and life. The fire comes from Olympia, a small town in Greece and many runners transport the flame in a torch relay to the site of the games. It burns from the opening ceremony until the end of the games.

The Olympic rings were created in 1913 and represent the five continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia and the Americas).

All athletes must take the Olympic oath. One of them has to promise that all athletes will give their best and compete in a fair way.

After each event, medals are given to the first three athletes. They receive gold, silver and bronze medals. Their flags are raised and the national anthem of the winner’s country is played.
The Olympic Games

**THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE**

The IOC is the organisation that governs the games. It decides which sports and events are held at the games. The IOC also selects the host city for the summer and winter games, at least seven years before they take place. Cities that want the games must show that:

- they have enough stadiums for all events
- they have enough room for all the athletes
- they can provide safety for the athletes
- they can transport athletes and spectators from one event to another

Host cities must build an Olympic village where all athletes live during the games.

**HOW CAN ATHLETES TAKE PART?**

Normally, each country decides for itself which sportsmen and women are allowed to take part. Athletes must qualify for the games by winning or doing well in competitions before the Olympic Games start.

Athletes, who are sent to the games by their country must be a citizen of that country. For years, only amateurs were able to participate in the games, but today, most athletes are professionals, who earn their money through sport. Most governments give their team money so that it can take part in the games.

**THE ANCIENT GAMES**

The ancient Olympic Games were celebrated at Olympia, Greece every four years. They were held in honour of the god Zeus. In the early games, only Greek men were allowed to participate. The games consisted of sports like footraces, wrestling, boxing, the pentathlon and horse racing. The last event of the games was usually a chariot race.

When the Romans conquered Greece in 140 B.C. the games started to lose their religious meaning and in 393 the Roman emperor banned the event.

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**Words:**
- amateur: someone who does something as a hobby. He does not get money for it.
- ancient: old
- ban: to forbid
- celebrate: to do something in a special way
- chariot: a wagon pulled by two horses. It was used by the old Greeks and Romans
- citizen: someone who legally belongs to a country
- competition: an event in which teams play against each other
- conquer: to get control of a country by fighting
- consist of: to be made up of
- decides for itself: to choose itself
- footrace: athletes who run against each other
- govern: to set the rules and make decisions
- government: the people who run a country
- in honour of: to show how much you like or respect someone or something
- host city: the city that organises the games
- meaning: sense, importance
- participate: to take part
- pentathlon: an event that has five different sports
- provide: give
- safety: not to be in danger
- select: choose
- spectator: someone who watches an event or game
- wrestling: two people fight by holding each other and trying to make each other fall to the ground
The Olympic Games

**THE SUMMER GAMES**

The Summer Games are held during the summer season of the host country. They last for 16 days. Today, there are more than 270 events during the games. Over 15,000 athletes from 190 nations take part. The next Summer Games will be held in Athens (2004) and Beijing (2008).

**THE WINTER GAMES**

The first separate Winter Games were held in Chamonix, France in 1924. They usually take place in February. Today, the Winter Olympics include over 60 events. Athletes from more than 60 countries participate.

**POLITICS AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

In the past, the Olympic Games have been disturbed by political issues. In 1936 the IOC chose Berlin as the site for the 1936 Summer Games. A few years later, Adolf Hitler’s Nazi Party rose to power and Hitler used the games to show Germany’s power.

In 1968 two Black American runners protested against their government and raised their fists when the American national anthem was played. In 1980 the USA—and many other countries—didn’t send athletes to the games in Moscow because the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan a year before. In return, the Russians and other Communist countries refused to take part in the 1984 games in Los Angeles.

The worst day in Olympic history came on September 5th, 1972 during the Munich games. Eight Palestinian terrorists broke into the Olympic village and killed two Israeli athletes. 9 others were taken hostage. They wanted the Israeli government to set free over 400 Arab prisoners in Israel. During a battle with German policemen all hostages and the terrorists were killed.

**OLYMPIA TODAY**

The Olympic Games have become very successful over the past years. More and more people are able to watch them on TV and television stations are spending more money for the rights to broadcast the games. The IOC earns more money than ever before. With this money they help athletes in poorer countries.

Drugs have become a big problem. Some athletes take drugs before and during the games in order to help their muscles grow. When they are caught they are disqualified.
# The Olympic Games

## The Sites of the Modern Olympic Games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Athens, Greece</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>St. Louis, USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>London, England</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Antwerp, Belgium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td>Chamonix, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Amsterdam, The Netherlands</td>
<td>St. Moritz, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Los Angeles, USA</td>
<td>Lake Placid, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>London, England</td>
<td>St. Moritz, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Helsinki, Finland</td>
<td>Oslo, Norway</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Melbourne, Australia</td>
<td>Cortina, Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>Squaw Valley, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
<td>Innsbruck, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Mexico City, Mexico</td>
<td>Grenoble, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Munich, West Germany</td>
<td>Sapporo, Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Montreal, Canada</td>
<td>Innsbruck, Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Moscow, Soviet Union</td>
<td>Lake Placid, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Los Angeles, USA</td>
<td>Sarajevo, Yugoslavia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Seoul, South Korea</td>
<td>Calgary, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Barcelona, Spain</td>
<td>Albertville, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lillehammer, Norway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Atlanta, USA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nagano, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Sydney, Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>Salt Lake City, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Athens, Greece</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>Turin, Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Beijing, China</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**MAGIC MOMENTS OF OLYMPIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Jim Thorpe wins the <strong>pentathlon</strong> and the <strong>decathlon</strong> and becomes</td>
<td>the world’s greatest all-round athlete. The medals are taken away from him after it is discovered that he has played baseball before the Olympics. In 1982 the IOC gave the medals back to Thorpe’s family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Paavo Nurmi, the „Flying Finn“, wins five gold medals in <strong>track and</strong></td>
<td><strong>field</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>The African American Jesse Owens wins four gold medals in <strong>track</strong> and</td>
<td><strong>field</strong> at the Berlin games. This is embarrassing to Adolf Hitler, who wants to prove that the German people are better than all the rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Austrian skier Toni Sailer wins all races in the Olympic skiing events</td>
<td>French skier Jean Claude Killy does the same in 1968.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Abebe Bikila of Ethiopia runs the fastest marathon ever—wearing no</td>
<td>shoes. It is the third marathon he has ever run and he is the first African to win an Olympic gold medal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Bob Beamon <strong>leaps</strong> 8.9 metres in the long jump. This world record</td>
<td>holds for over 20 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>The USA’s Mark Spitz becomes the world’s most successful swimmer—winning</td>
<td>seven gold medals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Romanian-born Nadia Comaneci gets the first perfect <strong>score</strong> in gymnastics: 10.0.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Dutch <strong>speed skater</strong> Eric Heiden becomes the first athlete to win five</td>
<td>gold medals in one Olympics. The United States ice hockey team wins the gold medal for the first time after the sport has been dominated by the Russians for the past years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Ben Johnson sets a new world record in the 100 metre <strong>dash</strong>, but is</td>
<td>then disqualified after the IOC discovers that he has taken <strong>steroids</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>For the first time professional basketball players are allowed to compete</td>
<td>at the Olympics. America’s “Dream Team” with Magic Johnson and Michael Jordan wins easily.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Olympic Games

Weightlifting is a sport as old as mankind. You need a combination of power and strength, speed and concentration as well as timing. Women were allowed to lift weights for the first time at the 2000 Olympics.

Athletics is about running faster, jumping higher and throwing further than other athletes. It is the heart of the games. Today, the most popular events are athletic: the 100 m dash, the long jump or the marathon.

In today’s Olympics, men and women compete in 16 events each. The fastest swimmers compete in the freestyle race. There are also relay races for 4 swimmers.

Equestrian events were held for the first time in 1900. In the past only military officers could take part. Today there are three disciplines: Jumping, dressage and eventing.

Gymnastics have a long and proud history. The sport goes back to the ancient games, where young men were prepared for war. Today athletes compete on the floor, pommel horse, balance beam, rings etc.

**Popular Sports**

**Balance beam** = along narrow wooden board on which gymnasts perform

**Compete** = to take part

**Dash** = very quick and short race

**Dressage** = a horse rider performs many complicated movements with his horse

**Equestrian** = everything that is about horse-riding

**Eventing** = a sport in which horses do three things on three different days

**Freestyle** = you can swim any way you want

**Mankind** = all the people together

**Pommel horse** = an object that has two handles on top which you jump or swing your body over gymnasts

**Prepare** = to practice for an event

**Proud** = to be very pleased or happy about

**Relay** = 4 swimmers swim in a team—one after the other

**Spread** = to move from one place to another

**Strength** = power

**Timing** = to do something at the right time
The Olympic Games

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS!

When and where were the first ancient Olympic Games held? ______________________________
Who was the father of the first modern games? ______________________________
How often are Olympic Games held? ______________________________
What happens at the opening ceremony? ______________________________

What does the Olympic flame symbolize? ______________________________
What is a torch relay? ______________________________

What do athletes swear when they take the Olympic oath? ______________________________
What do the first three athletes of every event get? ______________________________

What does the IOC do? ______________________________

What must cities that want to hold the Olympic Games show the IOC?
1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________

What is the difference between amateurs and professionals? ______________________________

How do athletes qualify for the games? ______________________________

Why were the ancient games in Greece held? ______________________________

What kind of sports did athletes compete in there? ______________________________

Who banned the games in ancient Greece? ______________________________

Where will the next Summer and Winter Olympics take place? ______________________________

How did politics disturb the 1936 Olympics? ______________________________

What happened at the 1972 Munich Olympics? ______________________________
PUT THE NAMES OF THE CORRECT SPORT FROM THE LIST INTO THE BOXES!

cycling  boxing  figure skating  windsurfing
show jumping  fencing  soccer  judo
gymnastics  high jump  gymnastics  100 metre
ice hockey  weightlifting
PUT THE NAME OF THE ATHLETE IN FRONT OF THE SENTENCE!

__________________ was disqualified because the IOC found out that he was a professional.

__________________ was called the “Flying Finn”.

__________________ was an African American who won four track and field gold medals in Berlin.

__________________ won all the skiing events in 1956.

__________________ won the Olympic marathon running barefoot.

__________________ set a world record in the lung jump.

__________________ became the world’s most successful swimmer.

__________________ got a perfect score of 10.0 in the gymnastics event.

__________________ was the first athlete to win 5 gold medals in one Olympics.

__________________ was disqualified because he took drugs.

Nadia Comaneci  Paavo Nurmi  Abebe Bikila  Mark Spitz  Jim Thorpe
Jesse Owens  Ben Johnson  Bob Beamon  Eric Heiden  Toni Sailer
PUT TOGETHER THE SYLLABLES TO MAKE 10 DIFFERENT SPORTS!

CER
JUMP
SOC
FIELD
MING
WEIGHT
TRACK
LONG
ICE
THON
LIFT

THLON
RA
ING
HOCK
ING
SOCIETY
MACHATHON
LIFT
JUDA
Soccer
Weightlifting
Track and Field
Swimming
Ice Hockey
Long Jump
Athletics
Ceremony
FIND OUT THE NAMES OF THE EUROPEAN HOST CITIES OF THE SUMMER GAMES AND PUT THEM INTO THE BOXES IN THE MAP
MANY OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES TOOK PLACE IN THE ALPS. FIND OUT THE NAMES AND PUT THEM INTO THE MAP!
PUT THE NAMES OF THE NORTH AMERICAN HOST CITIES INTO THE MAP
(W = WINTER GAMES)
The Olympic Games

CROSSWORD 1

Across

1. Old
4. A team event, in which two or more athletes do something, one after the other
5. A wagon pulled by two horses. It was used by the old Romans and Greeks
8. Medicine that you take which is not allowed
9. Someone who legally belongs to a country
11. A promise you must take
12. To take part in a sports event
13. Another word for "sportsman"

Down

1. Someone who does something as a hobby. He does not get money for it.
2. The hot bright gas that you see when something is on fire
3. An event that has five different sports
6. A person who is kidnapped
7. The organisation that governs the games
10. A person, country or group that organises the games
The Olympic Games

CROSSWORD 1

1  A N C I E N T
2  F
3  P L
4  R E L A Y
5  N M
6  C H A R I O T E
7
8  U O O A
9  C I T I Z E N
10  T H A L
11  O A T H
12  C O M P E T E N
13  A T H L E T E

15
The Olympic Games

CROSSWORD 2

Across
5. A person who watches sports events
9. The best swimmer of the Olympics (last name)
10. Black athlete who won at the Olympic Games in Berlin. (last name)
11. The first Winter Olympics took place here.
12. A country that has held the Olympic Games many times.
13. Everything that is about horse riding
14. An athlete, whose gold medal was taken away because he had taken drugs.
15. This city hosted the games twice

Down
1. A very short race - sprint
2. Site of the 1992 Olympics
3. A sport, in which you have to be very strong and need a lot of muscle power.
4. The first modern Olympic games took place here.
6. You can swim any way you want
7. The city that held the saddest games in Olympic history
8. You skate very fast around an ice rink.
The Olympic Games

CROSSWORD 2

1  D
2  B
3  A
4  A
5  T
6  F
7  H
8  S
9  I
10  N
11  X
12  A
13  N
14  T
15  G

C H A M O N I X
U S A
E Q U E S T R I A N
J O H N S O N
G L O N D O N

S P I T Z
S O W E N S
C L N D T
F K L
I A E
G