

# THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

# INTRODUCTION

## A SPORTS EVENT UNLIKE ANY OTHER

The Olympic Games are unique. Athletes from the **entire world** take part. Their achievements are watched from both near and far by hundreds of millions of spectators. The five rings on the Olympic flag represent the international nature of the Games.

What makes the Olympic Games different from other sports events?

The Games are held every four years. They are the largest sporting celebration in the number of sports on the programme, the number of athletes present and the number of people from different nations gathered together at the same time in the same place.

The Games are held at intervals, but are part of a broader framework which is that of the **Olympic Movement**. The purpose of the Olympic Movement is to promote the practice of sport all over the world and disseminate the Olympic values. It is in this spirit that the Olympic Games are held and celebrated.

## THE SUMMER GAMES AND THE WINTER GAMES

The Olympic Games include the **Games of the Olympiad (i.e. the Summer Games)** and the **Olympic Winter Games**. The first edition of the modern Summer Games was held in 1896 in Athens (Greece), and the first Olympic Winter Games in 1924 in Chamonix (France).

The word **Olympiad** designates the **four-year period** that separates each edition of the Summer Games.

Until 1992, the Summer and Winter Games were held in the same year, but since then, the Winter Games were moved two years from the Summer Games. The Summer and Winter Games continue to be organised once every four years.

In the Summer Games, athletes compete in a wide variety of competitions on the track, on the road, on grass, in the water, on the water, in the open air and indoors, in a total of 28 sports.

The Winter Games feature 7 sports practised on snow and ice, both indoors and outdoors.

*The London 2012 Olympic Games were broadcast all over the world, via the traditional media as well as online and mobile platforms. They reached a record audience estimated at 4.8 billion people.*

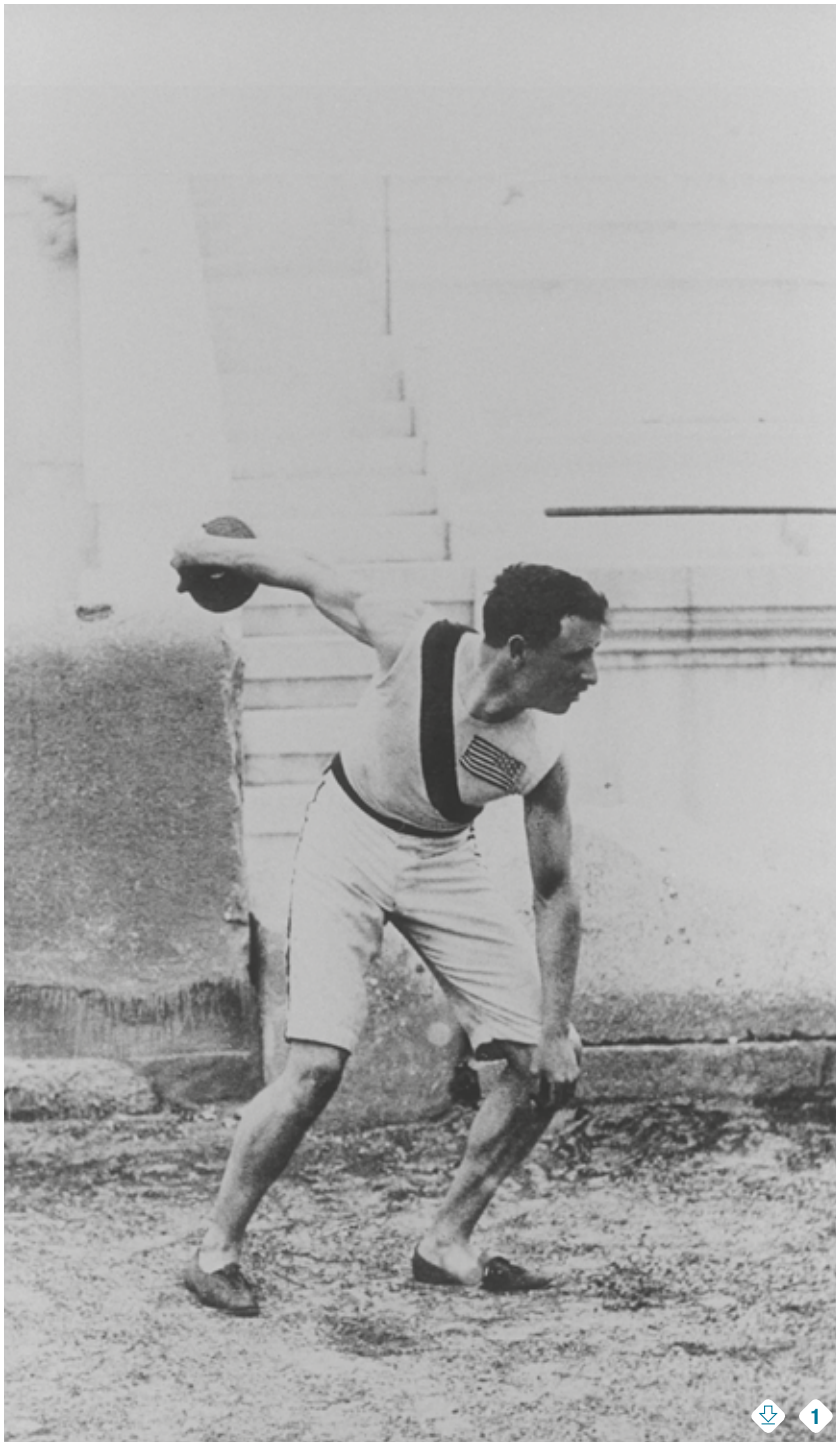


## HISTORY

It was **Pierre de Coubertin** of France who dreamt up this ambitious project, although others before him had tried in vain to revive these Games. Drawing inspiration from the ancient Olympic Games, he decided to create the modern Olympic Games. With this purpose, he founded the **International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894** in Paris. The new committee set itself the objective of organising the **first Olympic Games of modern times**.

The date of the first Games, **1896**, marked the beginning of an extraordinary adventure that has now lasted for over a century!

1. OG Athenes 1896. Athletics.  
Discus Men – Robert GARRETT  
(USA) 1st.  
© 1896 / International Olympic  
Committee (IOC)



# THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

## ELEMENTS OF THE PAST

The roots of the Olympic Games are to be found in Ancient Greece [see sheet “*The Olympic Games in Antiquity*”], and the first modern Games, in 1896, featured many references to this legacy of Greek Antiquity:

- › The Games were held in Athens, in Greece, the country where the ancient Games were held.
- › Most of the competitions were held in the ancient stadium (the **Panathinaiko Stadium**), which had been restored for the occasion.
- › Most of the **sports** on the programme of the ancient Games were included in the first modern Games.
- › The organisers invented a race inspired by an event in antiquity: the **marathon**.

Generally speaking, the modern Games strive towards a more peaceful world.

The Olympic Truce calling for a halt to all conflicts recalls the concept of the truce observed during the Ancient Games.

Sacred and respected throughout Ancient Greece, the **Olympic Truce** announced by messengers before the Games allowed spectators, athletes and officials to travel to and from Olympia in safety through the numerous battle zones. Today, the Olympic Truce is the subject of a United Nations resolution calling for a halt to hostilities during the period of the Games and the search for means of peaceful resolution in areas of tension. The athletes who support this initiative are invited to sign a “Truce Wall” in the Olympic Village.

## INNOVATIONS

While the modern Games draw their inspiration from the past, they are also quite different.

**From the outset, Coubertin proposed:**

### › **Secular Games**

The modern Games are secular, unlike the ancient Games which were dedicated to the gods.

*In antiquity, the **Panathinaiko Stadium** in Athens hosted the sports competitions known as the Panathenaea.*

### **The marathon**

*This race commemorates the exploit of a soldier who, in 490 BC, ran from Marathon to tell the people of Athens of their victory in the battle against the Persians, a distance of roughly 34.5 kilometres.*



#### › Games around the globe

In contrast with the Olympic Games of Antiquity, each edition of the modern Games takes place in principle in a **different city and country**.

#### › Longer Games

In ancient times, the Games were held first on one day, and finally over five days. Today the official duration is no more than **16 days**.

#### The Games are also evolving constantly:

##### › Since 1896, athletes from all over the world

The ancient Olympic Games were the preserve of free male Greek citizens, whereas the modern Games have always been open to **athletes from all over the world**. The 245 participants in Athens in 1896 came from 14 different countries.

The 1912 Games in Stockholm (Sweden) were the first to boast the presence of national delegations from the **five continents**. The universality of the modern Olympic Games was assured.

Today, the Summer Games welcome athletes from every country of the world, without exception.

##### › Since 1900, women join in

As in Ancient Greece, there were no female athletes at the first edition of the modern Olympic Games. In Athens in 1896, only men competed. At that time, female athletes faced many prejudices. People worried that they would lose their femininity, over-develop their muscles or become sterile. They therefore had to overcome this kind of attitude and gradually take their place at the Games. **Women** made their Olympic debut at the 1900 Games in Paris (France), in tennis and golf. Subsequently, over the course of the century, they gained access to more and more sports (e.g. swimming in 1912, athletics in 1928, volleyball in 1964, rowing in 1976, cycling in 1984 and football in 1996), but it was not until the 2012 Games in London, with the introduction of women's boxing, that women could compete in all the sports on the programme. Since the 2004 Games in Athens, more than 40 per cent of the athletes at the Games have been women.

##### › Since 1924, Games for winter sports

When Coubertin revived the Olympic Games, only summer sports were included. In the 1920s, however, snow and ice sports began to enjoy soaring popularity. A number of IOC members decided to react to this, and, in 1924, it was decided

1. OG Paris 1900. Tennis, singles Women – Hélène PREVOS  
© 1900 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)





to hold an **International Winter Sports Week** in Chamonix (France): 258 athletes from 16 countries (mainly in Europe and North America) attended. This proved a great success and, two years later, this “Week” was officially recognised as the **first Olympic Winter Games**. The future of an Olympic event dedicated exclusively to snow and ice sports was assured. At the 2010 Games in Vancouver (Canada), a total of 2,566 athletes came together from 82 countries as diverse as Ghana, Brazil, New Zealand and Pakistan.

#### › Since 1984, professional athletes at the Games

The modern Olympic Games were long open only to amateur athletes, in line with Pierre de Coubertin’s wishes. The IOC abolished this rule in 1984 (for the Games in Los Angeles), and since then professional athletes have also been able to take part.

### THE RITUALS OF THE OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONIES

The Olympic Games begin and end with big celebrations, important ceremonies in which various rituals express the identity of the Games. Today, these rituals are part of the protocol of the Games. They include the following elements:

#### Opening of the Games

- › the entry of the athletes into the stadium with their delegations (in alphabetical order, except for Greece which goes first, and the host country which brings up the rear)
- › the declaration of the opening of the Games by the Head of State of the host country
- › the address by the Games Organising Committee President
- › the speech by the IOC President
- › the entry of the Olympic flag into the stadium
- › the Olympic anthem
- › the symbolic release of doves (a symbol of peace)
- › the oath sworn by an athlete and an official from the host country (respect for the rules)
- › the entrance of the flame and lighting of the cauldron

#### Closing of the Games

- › handing over of the Olympic flag to the next Olympic host city (continuity of the Games)
- › gathering of the athletes in the stadium (brotherhood)
- › the extinguishing of the flame
- › the declaration of the closing of the Games by the IOC President

1. OG London 2012. Opening Ceremony.  
© 2012 / International Olympic Committee (IOC) / FURLONG, Christopher

*Most of this protocol had been established by the time of the 1920 Games in Antwerp (Belgium). It has been added to over the years as the Games have evolved.*

Whether through sport, art or culture, everyone can take part in the great celebration of the Olympic Games, which offer an opportunity to open up to and better understand other people.

The protocol forms part of a much broader scenography and programme. The opening and closing ceremonies are an invitation to discover the culture of the country hosting the Games, through music, song, dance, etc.

#### **SPORT, ART AND CULTURE**

In Ancient Greece, art and sport were seen as perfect partners. The ideal was to achieve harmony by exercising both the body and the mind.

Pierre de Coubertin adopted this ideal for the modern Olympic Games and proposed including art and culture in the programme of the Games.

On his initiative, architecture, sculpture, painting, literature and music **competitions** were part of the Olympic Games from 1912 to 1948.

Nowadays, the competitions have been replaced with **cultural programmes** that are completely separate from the sports competitions. Plays, concerts, ballets and exhibitions are held in the city, region and even the country hosting the Games. Numerous artists, designers, architects, choreographers and musicians play an active part in the success of the Games, be it through the construction of stadiums and other competition venues, the Look of the Games (logos, pictograms and mascots) or the opening and closing ceremonies.

# OLYMPIC SPORTS

The Olympic programme includes all the sports in the Olympic Games. The IOC sets the programme and decides which sports will be included. The IOC also has the right to add or remove any **sport**, **discipline** or **event**.

**Sport** – For a sport to be made an Olympic sport it has to be governed by an International Federation recognised by the IOC

## Examples:

Swimming at the Games is governed by the International Swimming Federation (FINA); Skating by the International Skating Union (ISU).

**Discipline** – An Olympic sport comprises one or several disciplines.

## Examples:

Water polo and diving are disciplines of swimming.  
Speed skating and figure skating are disciplines of skating.

**Event** – A discipline includes one or more events or competitions.  
An event gives rise to a result for which medals and diplomas are awarded.

## Examples:

The 10m platform for women is a diving event.  
The men's 500m is a speed skating event.

## CRITERIA FOR BEING AN OLYMPIC SPORT

In order to be included in the Olympic programme, a sport must be **governed by an International Federation** which **complies with the Olympic Charter** and applies the **World Anti-Doping Code**.

If it is **widely practised** around the world and satisfies a number of criteria established by the IOC Session, a recognised sport may be added to the Olympic programme.

Since 2000, there has been little change to the number of sports on the programme of the Summer and Winter Games, but rather changes to events in order to limit the size of the Games.

## SUMMER GAMES SPORTS

In Athens in 1896, **nine sports** were on the programme: athletics, cycling, fencing,

1. OG Beijing 2008. Athletics, pole vault – final. Elena ISINBAEVA (RUS) 1st.  
© 2008 / International Olympic Committee (IOC) / KISHIMOTO, Tsutomu







gymnastics, weightlifting, wrestling, swimming, tennis and shooting.

The Olympic programme has come a long way since then: some sports have been discontinued (e.g. polo and baseball); others were dropped and then reintroduced (e.g. archery and tennis), while several new sports have been added (e.g. triathlon and taekwondo).

At the 2004 Games in Athens, the programme included the **nine original sports** plus a further **19**: rowing, badminton, baseball, basketball, boxing, canoe/kayak, equestrian sports, football, handball, hockey, judo, modern pentathlon, softball, taekwondo, table tennis, archery, triathlon, sailing and volleyball. This represented a total of **301 events**!

The two **major sports** on the programme of the Summer Games are **athletics** and **swimming**. These are the most widely followed Olympic sports in the world. They also have the largest number of events and greatest number of participants from different countries.

**Athletics** consists of a wide range of events: jumping, throwing, and sprint, middle-distance and long-distance races. Some of these were performed at the ancient Olympic Games: foot races (varying distances), the javelin throw, the discus throw and the long jump.

The first **swimming** competitions at the Olympic Games took place in the sea or in a river. Today competitions take place in a 50m swimming pool, usually indoors. The current programme includes the following disciplines: **swimming** (freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke and butterfly), **water polo**, **diving** and **synchronised swimming**.

### WINTER GAMES SPORTS

Winter sports made their Olympic debut at ... **the Summer Games in London in 1908**! Figure skating competitions were organised for men, women and pairs. The experience was repeated at the Antwerp Games in 1920, along with an ice hockey tournament.

It was in **Chamonix in 1924** that winter sports finally got their own Olympic Games. Six sports were on the programme: bobsleigh, curling, ice hockey, figure and speed skating, skiing (cross-country and ski jumping) and the military patrol race.

Some sports were missing from the official programme for several editions of the Games before being reintroduced. One example is skeleton, which featured at the 1928 and 1948 Games in St Moritz, before returning to the programme for the 2002 Games in Salt Lake City.

The **number of sports** at the Winter Games has remained relatively stable over the years. At the **Vancouver Games in 2010**, there were seven sports – biathlon, bobsleigh, curling, ice hockey, luge, skating and skiing. However, the number

**1. OG London 2012, Swimming**  
– Michael PHELPS (USA),  
© 2012 / International Olympic  
Committee (IOC) / FURLONG,  
Christopher

**2. OG Vancouver 2010, Men  
ice-hockey** – Game for the  
bronze medal, Finland (FIN)  
3rd – Slovakia (SLO)  
© 2010 / International Olympic  
Committee (IOC) / EVANS,  
Jason



of events has increased considerably: in 2010, there were 86 on the programme!

Of the **15 disciplines** in the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, only Nordic combined is not yet open to women.

The three main sports on the Winter Games programme are **skating, skiing** and **ice hockey**.

**Skating** has the longest Olympic history, having figured for the first time on the programme of the London Games in 1908. Women made their debut in figure skating at the Olympic Winter Games, but speed skating was not open to them until 1960. Held in the open air until 1956, the skating events now take place indoors.

**Skiing** is the sport with the largest number of disciplines. **Cross-country skiing** is the oldest discipline and **snowboarding** is the newest one (1998 Games in Nagano, Japan). **Alpine skiing** appeared relatively late: it was on the programme of the 1936 Games, but it was not until the 1948 Games in St Moritz (Switzerland) that a more complete programme for men and women was organised. In 1952, giant slalom was added to the programme. Introduced in 1988, the super-G is the newest Olympic Alpine skiing event.

**Ice hockey**, like skating and skiing, is one of the sports that helped launching the Olympic Winter Games. Hockey is very popular and attracts large audiences. It is a spectacular sport in which the puck travels at speeds up to 180km/h.

### DEMONSTRATION SPORTS

Thanks to their popularity, the Games have provided a showcase for a number of sports. These were known as **demonstration sports**, which featured as an addition to the Olympic programme until 1992, when this concept was abandoned.

- › At the 1956 Games in Melbourne, there was Australian football, one of the national sports;
- › At the 1988 Games in Seoul, it was bowling, a sport unknown in the host country, Korea.
- › At the 1992 Games in Barcelona, it was Basque pelota, roller hockey and taekwondo.

There have been many different sports at the **Winter Games**. Some have been featured as demonstration sports (e.g. skijoring, bandy, winter pentathlon and freestyle skiing).

For more information about the Olympic sports, go to the IOC website ([www.olympic.org/sports](http://www.olympic.org/sports)).

1. OG Chamonix 1924,  
Figure skating.  
© 1924/ International Olympic  
Committee (IOC)





1. OG Beijing 2008. Athletics,  
100m Men – semi final, start.  
© 2008 / International Olympic  
Committee (IOC) / KISHIMOTO,  
Tsutomu



# ATHLETES AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## THE CHALLENGE OF THE GAMES

The prospect of being selected for the Olympic Games is the dream of the majority of athletes. Enormous reserves of willpower and many years of dedicated training are required to achieve such a goal. The athletes that qualify for the Games can consider themselves as being among the world's best. They will become **Olympians**, whether or not they win a medal.

**Taking part in the Games** is what matters to the majority of the competitors: having the honour of representing their country and marching behind their flag at the Opening Ceremony, mixing with elite athletes, and having the opportunity to give their best. That is what the spirit of the Olympic Games is all about! Pierre de Coubertin knew this already at the start of the 20th century:

"[...] In these Olympiads, the important thing is not winning but taking part. [...] What counts in life is not the victory but the struggle; the essential thing is not to conquer but to fight well."<sup>2</sup>

Almost a century later, at the Olympic Games in Sydney, the spirit was the same. Canadian athlete Perdita Felicien explains why taking part in the Games was so important to her:

"Even though I was eliminated in the preliminary round of the 100m hurdles, I would do it all over again in a heartbeat. Even though the months of religious training and the exhausting 30 hours of flight to Sydney only meant exactly 13.21 seconds of running on the hottest track in the world that day, it was beyond worth it."<sup>3</sup>

In order to participate in the Olympic Games, athletes have to abide by the **Olympic Charter** and the rules of the **International Federation (IF)** responsible for their sport. The IFs organise qualification events, while the **National Olympic Committee (NOC)** of the athlete's country is responsible for entering athletes to the Games.

Athletes with **more than one nationality** may compete for the country of their choice. However, if they have already represented one country either at the Games or another major sports event, they may not compete for a different country before three years have elapsed.

There is no **age limit** for competing in the Olympic Games, except for the one

1. OG London 2012, Opening Ceremony, Athletes Parade of the Costa Rica delegation. © 2012 / International Olympic Committee (IOC) / EVANS, Jason

2. Olympic Review, July 1908, p. 110. (Extract from a speech given at the Olympic Games in London in 1908).

3. Comments made on her athletics team's website, 27 November 2000.

**What is the Olympic Charter?**  
It is an official document containing all the rules to be followed and explaining the role and mission of each Olympic Movement stakeholder.





imposed by individual IFs for health reasons. In some sports, such as equestrian, fencing and sailing, athletes can enjoy very long Olympic careers, sometimes as long as 40 years!

By entering the Olympic Games, athletes are making a commitment to respect the Olympic values and agree to undergo **doping tests**. Throughout the Games, tests are carried out under the authority of the IOC and its Medical Commission. Tests may be conducted before or during the Games.

For **individual** sports, tests are performed on each athlete who places **among the top five** in each event, **plus two other athletes** (in the heats or the final) chosen at random.

For **team** sports, or other sports in which teams are rewarded, testing is performed throughout the **period of the Olympic Games**.

### LIFE IN THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE

Upon their arrival in the host city, athletes stay in the **Olympic Village**. While at the Games, their time is not devoted exclusively to competing: it is also an opportunity for them to **meet other athletes from different countries and cultures**. Communal life is good for encouraging contact between athletes from different sports or representatives from remote countries. All inhabitants of the Village agree: it is not about the comfort of the surroundings or the quality of services, what counts is the relationships created between athletes of the entire world.

Anita L. De Frantz, Olympian and IOC member, said of her experience in the Village:

*"For two to four weeks, the Village becomes the home for the elite athletes of the world. It was there that I realised that excellence comes in every shape, size, race and sex. It was there that I realised that an Olympian is one who can respect every individual based on the effort that it takes to become an Olympian. It was there that I learned that each sport takes special skills and determination for a person to ascend to the top."*<sup>2</sup>

Today's Olympic Village is almost a **city**! It is usually located close to the competition venues and its construction is taken very seriously during preparations for the Games. In London in 2012, for example, the Village accommodated over 17,000 athletes and officials!

Inhabitants of the village benefit from many advantages. They can eat in the Village restaurant 24 hours a day, have their hair cut, go clubbing or attend evening concerts.

When the Games have finished, the Olympic Village becomes a new residential area for the city, and the housing is sold or rented to the local population. Athletes have not always benefitted from this type of accommodation.

1. OG London 2012, Athletes while jogging in the Olympic Village.

© 2012 / International Olympic Committee (IOC) / EVANS, Jason

2. Olympic Message, no. 33, July 1992.

Before the Los Angeles Games in 1932 they stayed in a variety of places:

**Shipshape accommodation**

There was no Olympic Village for the athletes at the first few Olympic Games. Some of them stayed in hotels or hostels. Others chose cheaper accommodation in schools or barracks.

And some slept in the boats they had taken to the Olympic city. This was the case at the Amsterdam Games in 1928, when the Americans, Italians and Finns stayed in the harbour!

**All in the same village**

The first true Olympic Village was built for the 1932 Games in Los Angeles.

Athletes (men only) from 37 countries ate, slept and trained together.

For the first time certain community services were provided: a hospital, a fire station and a post office.

In the early days women stayed in hotels, not the Olympic Village. It was not until the 1956 Games in Melbourne that the Olympic Village was open to both sexes.



# VICTORY

The moment of victory is symbolised by the athlete stepping onto the podium to receive his or her medal. Yet this ceremony has not always existed! The various elements of the ceremony entered Olympic history at different times.

## THE MEDAL'S ICONOGRAPHY

### The Summer Games medals

In the beginning, Olympic medals varied from one Olympiad to the next. At the first modern Games in Athens in 1896, winners were rewarded with an olive wreath and a silver medal, while the runners-up received a bronze medal and a laurel wreath. **Gold, silver and bronze medals** were not awarded until 1904.

From the Amsterdam Games in **1928**, when the medals were standardised, until the 2000 Games in Sydney, the medals remained almost unchanged.

The obverse showed a seated, wingless figure of **Victory** holding a **wreath** in one hand and a **palm frond** in the other. In the background appeared an **arena** similar to the Coliseum in Rome. The reverse had to show a victorious athlete being borne upon the shoulders of the crowd. Since **1972**, only the obverse of the medal remained the same. The reverse was modified for each Olympiad.

Then, in **2004**, the iconography changed dramatically. A representation of **Nike** from the **Olympia Museum** now features on the obverse of the summer Games medals. She appears to be descending from the sky to land in the **Panathinaiko Stadium**, recalling the place where the first modern Games were held in Athens in 1896. In the background the Acropolis can be seen.

### The Winter Games medals

The Winter Games medals are not subject to the same constraints. There are no rules stipulating a particular shape or design. Even the materials may vary: the medals of the Albertville Games (France) included a crystal disc; the Lillehammer (Norway) medals had a granite element, and the medals of the Nagano Games (Japan) were partially worked in lacquer. In fact, every Olympic Winter Games has seen an original medal designed.

## MEDAL CEREMONIES

Since the Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid (USA) in 1932, the medals have been awarded on a **podium**. The winner takes the centre spot, on the highest step. He or she receives a gold medal and the title of **Olympic champion**.

The second placed athlete is to the winner's right and receives a silver medal. The

1. Athens 2004, winner's medal (gold)  
© IOC



third placed athlete is to the winner's left and receives a bronze medal. The national flags of the three winners are hoisted and the national anthem of the Olympic champion is played.

The first eight in each event receive **a diploma** and their names are read out. Only the first three receive **a medal** in addition.

### CELEBRITY OF THE CHAMPIONS

After the Olympic Games, the champions often become superstars and role models for many people. The Olympic Charter stipulates that the names of the athletes who win a gold medal must be engraved on the walls of the main stadium in the city hosting the Games.

However, a medal is not always a guarantee of celebrity. If it is won in a little known sport with low media coverage, a medal alone will not suffice to attract the interest of the sponsors or the general public.

But whether or not they are winners, everyone who takes part in the Games takes home with them the memory of an exceptional human experience.

*1. OG Vancouver 2010, Medal ceremony for cross-country ski, 50km Men mass start free.  
© 2010 / International Olympic Committee (IOC)*

# THE GAMES AND THEIR ERA

The Olympic Games are much more than just a series of sports competitions. Technological progress in the last century helped turn them into an international event eagerly awaited and followed by people all over the world. Everything that happens during the Games is reported and analysed by thousands of journalists and experts. So it is quite understandable that, at certain points in recent history, governments have exploited the Games for political or diplomatic ends (sometimes, sadly, to the detriment of sport).

## DEVELOPMENTS IN TECHNOLOGY

In little over a century, the Olympic Games have become a global event. Two major technological revolutions have contributed to this: in transport and the media.

### IMPROVED TRANSPORT – EASIER ACCESS TO THE GAMES

Depending on the city and country hosting the Games, athletes are obliged to travel greater or lesser distances. For the 1904 Games in St Louis and the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, in the USA, the number of participants was much lower because many athletes were unable to make and afford such a long journey.

**The majority of host cities prior to World War II were European, and the athletes who took part in the Games were mostly Westerners.**

In 1956, the Games took place in Oceania (Australia). For the first time, most of the 3,178 competitors travelled **by plane** to Melbourne. This novel development, which was possible thanks to the growth of air transport, quickly became essential to the organisation of the Olympic Games.

In 1964 it was the turn of the Asian continent to host the Games, which were held in the city of Tokyo in Japan; then, in 1968, it was Latin America, with the Games in Mexico City.

**The Olympic Games have now been held on every continent except Africa.**

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIA - GAMES ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

**Television** made an enormous contribution to the growing popularity of the Olympic Games. The first tests were carried out in 1936 and 1948. And the first live television broadcast of the competitions was in 1956, at the Winter Games in Cortina d'Ampezzo (Italy). **Beginning with the 1960 Games in Rome (Italy), the majority of the European continent benefited from live broadcasts of the competitions.** For the United States, Canada and Japan, a tape was flown out every day, which meant that the competitions could be screened with just a few hours' delay. With a couple of weeks' delay, the images were transferred onto

*A long journey – For the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, European athletes first had to travel to New York by boat. They then crossed the American continent by train to Los Angeles (a total travel time of three weeks!). They returned the same way.*

*Some competitors had to save up their holiday entitlement for three years in order to have the 10 weeks' leave they needed for the Olympic adventure!*





film and sent to Asia, Africa, Oceania and South America. The Olympic audience ended up being far larger than just the spectators present in the stadium. Since the 1964 Games in Tokyo (Japan), **satellites** have transmitted images with just a few seconds' delay. Today, viewers all over the world can follow the champions' achievements live. In 1968, the Olympic Winter Games in Grenoble (France) were the first to be broadcast live on colour television. Thanks to further technological developments, picture quality has improved enormously and has reached a high level of perfection. **Slow motion** shots mean that an athlete's movements can be seen in great detail and **underwater cameras** even take the audience into the swimming pool with the competitors. Television networks buy **broadcasting rights** for the Games, thus providing approximately half of the Olympic Movement's income. The IOC nonetheless enables less well-off broadcasters to show coverage of the Olympic Games. This means that sports lovers all over the world can follow the performances of the champions.

**This has helped the Olympic Games to become one of the most watched sporting events in the world!**

### POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC EXPLOITATION OF THE GAMES

Being at the forefront of the international stage, the Olympic Games have the potential to be used as a propaganda tool and an instrument of political interests.

Here are some of the better-known examples

- › 1936 in Berlin (Germany): the Nazi regime appropriated the Games. In the years leading up to 1936, several governments and sports organisations expressed their concerns about the regime and its policies. The threat of a **boycott** hung over the Games. In the end, it was more individual convictions that prevented certain athletes from attending.
- › 1956 in Melbourne (Australia): the **Suez crisis** and **Soviet oppression in Hungary** provoked a strong reaction from some countries, which refused to send their athletes to the Games.
- › 1968 in Mexico City (Mexico): American athletes Tommy Smith and John Carlos demonstrated against the **racism** in the USA. As they stood on the podium to receive their medals for the 200m, they raised black-gloved fists and bowed their heads when the American flag was raised. This gesture was their way of showing their support for the "Black Power" movement which was fighting the discrimination against black people in the USA. As a result, they were disqualified.
- › 1972 in Munich (Germany): **Palestinian terrorists** took **Israeli athletes** hostage.

1. OG London 2012,  
Photographers at the Women  
Triathlon  
© 2012 / International Olympic  
Committee (IOC) / FURLONG,  
Christopher

**What is a boycott?** –  
It is the voluntary severing  
of relations with a person,  
country or other group  
in order to exert pressure.  
Boycotts at the Olympic Games  
occur when a government  
refuses to allow its athletes  
to attend the Games.



- The event ended in tragedy, with nine hostages executed and the death of a policeman and two other members of the Israeli delegation. The terrorists were killed by the police.
- › 1976 in Montreal (Canada): 22 countries (mostly African) boycotted the Games to protest against a recent tour of South Africa, which imposed apartheid, by the New Zealand rugby team.
  - › 1980 in Moscow (Soviet Union): the United States called for a global boycott in response to the **Soviet invasion of Afghanistan**. American athletes were forbidden to take part in the Games under threat of having their passports confiscated. Other countries followed the US example and stayed away from Moscow.
  - › 1984 in Los Angeles (USA): **in response to the American boycott of 1980**, the Soviet Union refused to attend the Games. The official reasons given were the commercialisation of the Games and insufficient guarantees of athletes' safety.

#### THE DIPLOMATIC ROLE OF THE GAMES

If the Games are used for political ends, the Olympic ideal is placed under threat. Nevertheless, the Olympic Games can be used to improve relations between countries and communities.

- › Since the 1950s, the Olympic Games have provided an opportunity for **newly created countries to show the world they exist**. Their appearance at the Games has often led to more widespread international recognition (e.g. certain African countries, republics of the former Soviet Union). It has even been the case that the participation of certain athletes in the Games has preceded the political creation of their country (e.g. Timor Leste, a small country located next to Indonesia, which has been independent since 2002).
- › The end of the **apartheid regime** allowed **South Africa** to participate again in the Olympic Games at the 1992 Games in Barcelona (Spain). The victory lap, hand-in-hand, of Ethiopia's **Derartu Tulu**, who won the women's 10,000 metres, and her South African rival **Elana Meyer** symbolised this change and became one of the highlights of these Games.
- › At the Opening Ceremony of the 2000 Games in Sydney (Australia), South Korea and North Korea paraded together under a single flag. **This act was unprecedented since the breakdown in diplomatic relations between the two countries after the Korean War (1950-1953)**.
- › Also in Sydney, the status of the Aborigines was front page news, and several events were organised to make their claims known. The final stage of the torch relay was entrusted to Aboriginal athlete **Cathy Freeman**, and the culture of the Aboriginal people was a highlight of the Opening Ceremony.

1. OG Barcelona 1992  
Athletics. 10000m Women –  
final, Derartu TULU (ETH) 1st  
and Elana MEYER (RSA) 2nd.  
© 1992 / IOPP / SASAHARA,  
Koji





## THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE GAMES

### Games of the Olympiad (Summer Games)

Olympiad	Year	City	Country	Continent
I	1896	Athens	Greece	Europe
II	1900	Paris	France	Europe
III	1904	St Louis	USA	North America
IV	1908	London	United Kingdom	Europe
V	1912	Stockholm	Sweden	Europe
VI	1916	World War I: The Olympiad was not celebrated		
VII	1920	Antwerp	Belgium	Europe
VIII	1924	Paris	France	Europe
IX	1928	Amsterdam	The Netherlands	Europe
X	1932	Los Angeles	USA	North America
XI	1936	Berlin	Germany	Europe
XII	1940	World War II: The Olympiad was not celebrated		
XIII	1944	World War II: The Olympiad was not celebrated		
XIV	1948	London	United Kingdom	Europe
XV	1952	Helsinki	Finland	Europe
XVI	1956	Melbourne Stockholm (Equestrian Games)	Australia Sweden	Oceania Europe
XVII	1960	Rome	Italy	Europe
XVIII	1964	Tokyo	Japan	Asia
XIX	1968	Mexico City	Mexico	Latin America
XX	1972	Munich	Germany	Europe
XXI	1976	Montreal	Canada	North America
XXII	1980	Moscow	USSR	Europe
XXIII	1984	Los Angeles	USA	North America
XXIV	1988	Seoul	South Korea	Asia
XXV	1992	Barcelona	Spain	Europe
XXVI	1996	Atlanta	USA	North America
XXVII	2000	Sydney	Australia	Oceania
XXVIII	2004	Athens	Greece	Europe
XXIX	2008	Beijing	China	Asia
XXX	2012	London	United Kingdom	Europe
XXXI	2016	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	Latin America

1. OG Helsinki 1952  
Men's 10km walk: medal  
ceremony  
© 1952 / International Olympic  
Committee (IOC)





### Winter Games

Number	Year	City	Country	Continent
1st	1924	Chamonix	France	Europe
2nd	1928	St Moritz	Switzerland	Europe
3rd	1932	Lake Placid	USA	North America
4th	1936	Garmisch-Partenkirchen	Germany	Europe
	1940	World War II: The Olympiad was not celebrated		
	1944	World War II: The Olympiad was not celebrated		
5th	1948	St Moritz	Switzerland	Europe
6th	1952	Oslo	Norway	Europe
7th	1956	Cortina d'Ampezzo	Italy	Europe
8th	1960	Squaw Valley	USA	North America
9th	1964	Innsbruck	Austria	Europe
10th	1968	Grenoble	France	Europe
11th	1972	Sapporo	Japan	Asia
12th	1976	Innsbruck	Austria	Europe
13th	1980	Lake Placid	USA	North America
14th	1984	Sarajevo	Yugoslavia	Europe
15th	1988	Calgary	Canada	North America
16th	1992	Albertville	France	Europe
17th	1994	Lillehammer	Norway	Europe
18th	1998	Nagano	Japan	Asia
19th	2002	Salt Lake City	USA	North America
20th	2006	Turin	Italy	Europe
21th	2010	Vancouver	Canada	North America
22th	2014	Sotchi	Russia	Europe
23th	2018	PyeongChang	South Korea	Asia

The Olympiads are counted even if the Games do not take place!

1. OG Sydney 2000, Closing Ceremony – Gathering of athletes in the stadium.  
© 2000 / Kishimoto / IOC / NAGAYA, Yo

# ACTIVITIES

## SCHOOLS – SUBJECT AREA: HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**Look at** a globe or a map of the world and locate the Olympic Games host cities. Discuss the geographical distribution of the Summer and Winter Games.

**Write** an article on an athlete who has taken part in the Games but who did not win a medal: describe his/her feelings, emotions and experience.

**Find out about** an Olympic sport. Pick a sport you don't know from the list of sports on the programme of the Summer or Winter Games. Do some research and prepare a fact sheet on it, including the names of some athletes who practise the sport.

**Imagine** some costumes that could be used at the opening ceremony of the next Olympic Games. Choose a theme and sketch some designs.

**Identify** some other major events that bring people together like the Olympic Games. Make a list of them and identify their similarities and differences.

**Find** some other examples of the interplay between the Olympic Games and the historical, political or cultural situation of the time.

# SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Young readers

- › The Olympic Museum. **How well do you know the Olympic Games?**  
Lausanne: The Olympic Museum, 3rd edition, 2011
- › Clive Gifford. **Summer Olympics: the definitive guide to the world's greatest sports celebration**  
Boston: Kingfisher, 2004
- › David Fischer. **The encyclopedia of the summer Olympics**  
New York [etc.]: Franklin Watts, 2003
- › Middleton, Haydn. **Modern Olympic Games**  
Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2000

**Teachers**

- › David Miller. **The official history of the Olympic Games and the IOC: Athens to London 1984-2012 / by David Miller**  
Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2012

**Editor**

© IOC, The Olympic Museum,  
Lausanne  
3rd edition, 2013

**Authors**

The Olympic Museum  
Educational and Cultural  
Services

**English translation**

IOC Language Services

**Graphic design**

Oxyde, Lausanne  
([www.oxyde.ch](http://www.oxyde.ch))