

LEVELED BOOK • Q

# Summer Olympics Events



**Multi  
level  
H•K•Q**

Written by Terry Miller Shannon

[www.readinga-z.com](http://www.readinga-z.com)

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## The Summer Olympic Games

The modern Summer Olympic Games began over 100 years ago in 1894. They were inspired by athletic competitions held in ancient Greece. The Games are intended to promote understanding and friendship among people from all countries.

The Summer Olympics are held every four years. Each Olympics is held in a different city around the world. **Athletes** compete in hundreds of events and try their best to win gold, silver, or bronze medals for their home countries.

### Places where past games have been held:

Montreal	1976	Atlanta	1996
Moscow	1980	Sydney	2000
Los Angeles	1984	Athens	2004
Seoul	1988	Beijing	2008
Barcelona	1992	London	2012



Athletes walk in a parade at the start of the Games.

## The Olympic Torch

The Summer Olympics start with an opening ceremony. The ceremony usually includes a parade of the participating athletes. An important part of the ceremony is the lighting of the Olympic flame by a person carrying the Olympic torch.





The Olympic flame remains lit throughout each Olympics.

The torch is lit in Greece several months before the start of the games. It is then carried to the host city by a series of runners. It arrives at the Olympic stadium on the opening day of the games. By this time, it has been handed off from one runner to the next many times during its long journey.

At the opening ceremony, the final runner enters the stadium carrying the torch. He or she uses it to light the Olympic flame. The Olympic flame burns throughout the Olympics and is not put out until the closing ceremony.



basketball



soccer



volleyball



field hockey

## Events

The Summer Games include team sports such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, and field hockey. They also include many individual events. Let's look at some of the events.



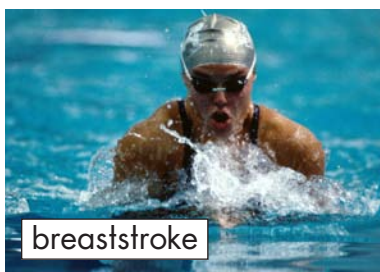
## Water Sports

Water sports include water polo, diving, and swimming competitions. Some of the swimming races are short, and swimmers swim only two lengths of the pool. Other races are longer and sometimes include more than one swimmer in a relay.





relay race



breaststroke



backstroke

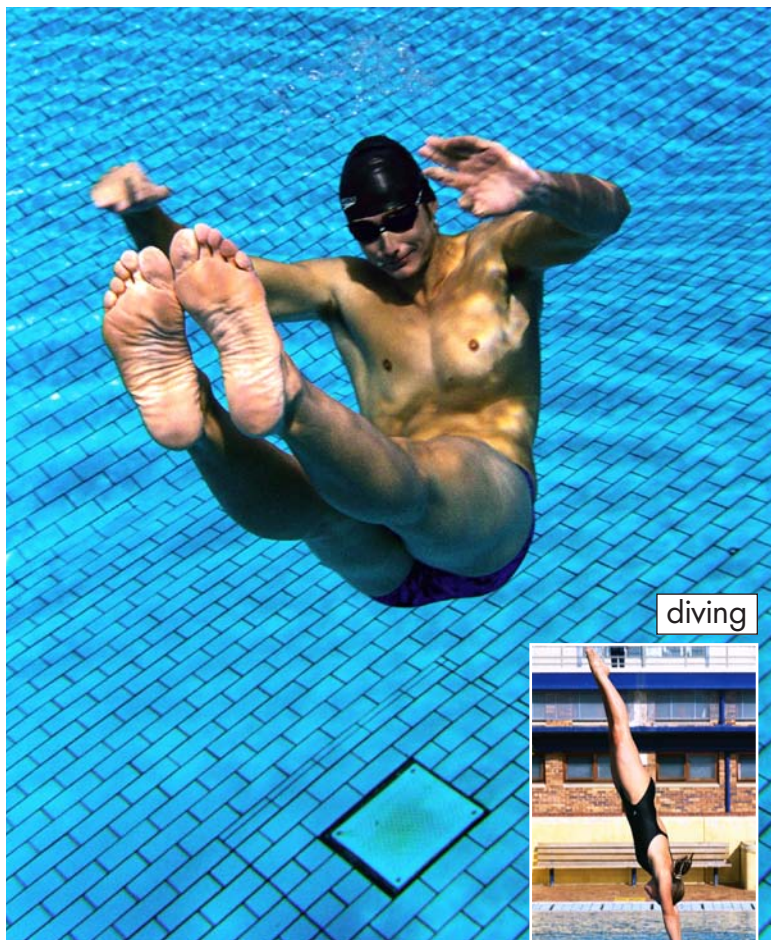


butterfly stroke



freestyle

Many swimming races allow swimmers to use only one kind of stroke. But in the freestyle event, swimmers can choose the stroke they want to use. The breaststroke, backstroke, and the butterfly are all used in different races.



diving



Divers twist and flip before hitting the water.

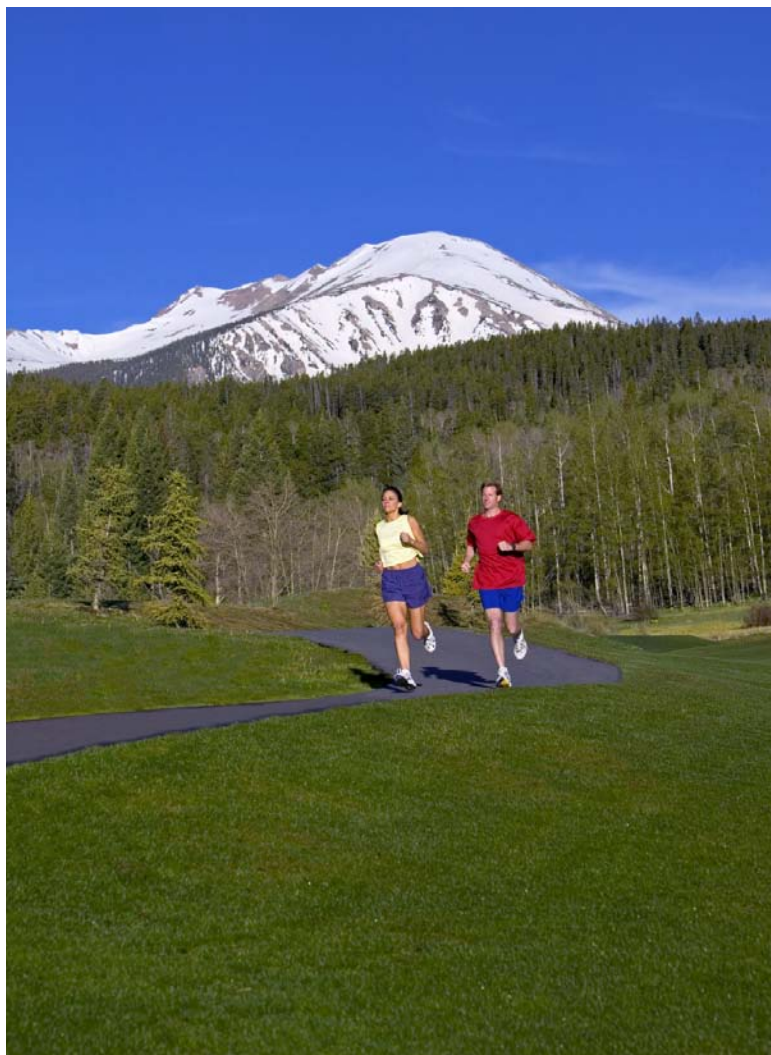
In diving events, divers jump from high above the water. Divers do complicated twists, flips, and turns while in the air. They get points for the difficulty of the dive and how small a splash they make when they hit the water.



## Track and Field

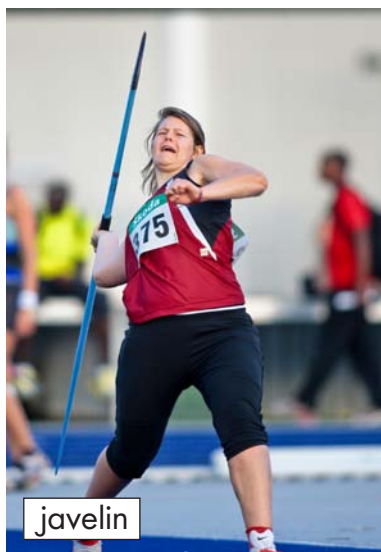
Track and field events include running, throwing, and jumping competitions. The **marathon**, the longest running event, is over 42 kilometers (26 mi) long. The shortest races are called **dashes**.





Runners often train for the Olympic Games by running in locations high in the mountains. This training helps their bodies become better at delivering oxygen to their muscles to create energy.





In throwing events, the objective is to throw a hammer, discus, javelin, or shot put as far as possible. Athletes competing in these events must be very strong.

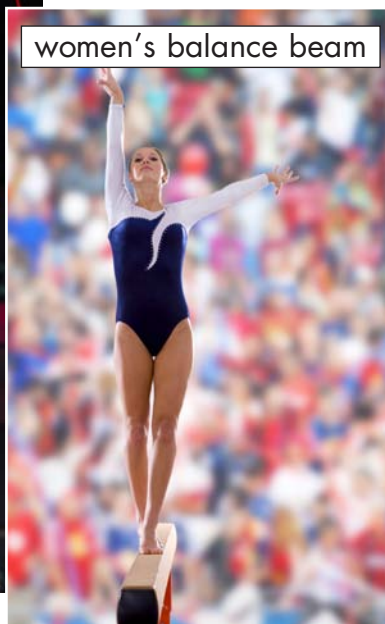


In jumping events, athletes are judged on the height or distance of their jumps. In the high jump, athletes leap over a bar. The bar is raised higher until only one person can jump it. In the long jump, athletes leap as far as they can. In the pole vault, athletes use a pole to help them leap over a very high bar.





men's rings



women's balance beam

## Gymnastics

**Gymnasts** leap, flip, and twirl through the air. They demonstrate their timing, balance, flexibility, strength, and skill. Only women compete on the balance beam and in the uneven bars events. In the balance beam events, they must turn and flip on the narrow beam. Only men compete in the rings, pommel horse, and parallel bars events. In the rings event, they hold onto the rings and flip their bodies in circles.

fencing



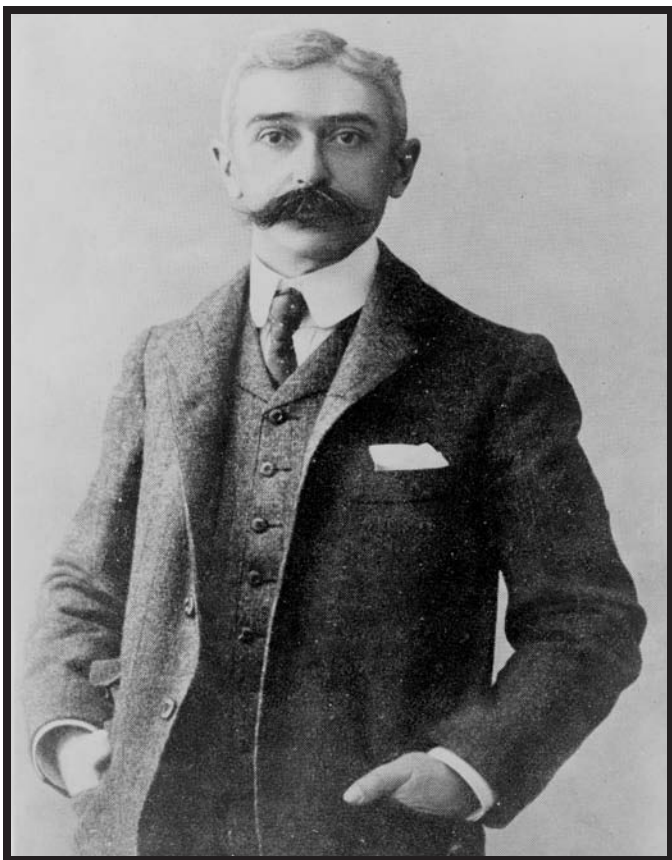
Fencing  
mask and  
sabers



## Fencing

Olympic fencers **duel** with practice swords. They score points by touching their opponents with their swords on different parts of the body. Fencers wear protective masks and clothing and use special swords so that the competition is safe. Fencers are allowed to move forward and backward as they fight, but they can only move a little from side to side. Fencers use three different kinds of swords in their competitions.





## Pentathlon

One event created specifically for the Olympics is the **pentathlon**. The founder of the modern Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, created this event. He was inspired by the *pentathlon* in the Ancient Olympics. The name pentathlon comes from the Greek words for *five* and *contest*.



The pentathlon is based on an imaginary **scenario** of a soldier who is trapped behind enemy lines. The athlete must ride a horse, shoot targets with a pistol, fight with a sword, run, and swim. The competitor with the best total score in all five events wins. Both men and women compete in the pentathlon.



Baron Pierre de Coubertin also designed the Olympic emblem with five interlocking rings.

## Summer Olympic Sports in 2012

Archery	Rowing
Badminton	Sailing
Basketball	Shooting
Boxing	Table Tennis
Canoe/Kayak	Taekwondo
Cycling	Tennis
Equestrian	Track and Field
Fencing	Trampoline
Field Hockey	Triathlon
Football	Volleyball
Gymnastics	Water sports
Handball	Weightlifting
Judo	Wrestling
Modern Pentathlon	

## Event Categories

The Summer Olympics include twenty-seven sports with hundreds of events. To find out more about the Olympics, go to [www.olympic.org](http://www.olympic.org).

## Glossary

<b>athletes</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who play sports (p. 4)
<b>dashes</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	short running events (p. 11)
<b>duel</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to fight one-on-one (p. 16)
<b>gymnasts</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who leap, flip, and twirl through the air (p. 15)
<b>marathon</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a very long running race (p. 11)
<b>pentathlon</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	an athletic competition that involves five different events (p. 17)
<b>scenario</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a possible situation or sequence of events (p. 17)

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