THE MAIN OLYMPIC TOPICS

The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece – The Modern Olympic Games
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- **Introduction**
  Origins of the modern Olympic Games, in Olympia, Greece, 8th century BC - Sites of the Panhellenic Games: Olympia, Delphi, Isthmia and Nemea – History and Mythology: explanations of the birth of the Games – Application of the sacred truce: peace between cities - Overview of Olympia, the most important Panhellenic Games site - Athletics competitions elsewhere in Greece.

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Introduction

OLYMPIA, CRADLE OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The Olympic Games as we know them today (see sheets “The Modern Olympic Games”) have a long history which goes back to ancient times.

Everything started in the Peloponnese, in Greece, some 3,000 years ago.

Sports competitions were organised at Olympia and were named after their location, hence their name of “Olympic” Games. Nobody knows exactly when they began, but the date of 776 BC is often referred to as the first written mention of the competitions.

These Games were held at the same place, every four years. This four-year period acquired the name “Olympiad”, and was used as a date system: time was counted in Olympiads, rather than years.

THE PANHELLENIC GAMES

The Games organised at Olympia led to the development of the Panhellenic Games. These included:

- The Games at Olympia (Olympic Games)
- The Games at Delphi (Pythian Games)
- The Games at Isthmia (Isthmian Games)
- The Games at Nemea (Nemean Games)

These Games were special because they brought the Greek world together (pan = all, hellene = Greek) at a time when Greece was not a single state, but a series of city-states (politically and economically independent communities). From Greece and the colonies (in Italy, North Africa and Asia Minor), people travelled to take part in or attend these Games, inspired by the shared feeling of belonging to the same culture or religion.

It should be noted that the four Panhellenic Games were never held during the same year.

It is difficult to know exactly what gave rise to these Games. Mythology is mixed up with history, and events which happened at the time were often explained as the consequences of divine intervention. This was the case for the Panhellenic Games, for which there are numerous stories attempting to explain their origin.
THE SACRED TRUCE
On the occasion of the four Panhellenic Games, a sacred truce was proclaimed. Messengers (spondorophoroi) went from city to city announcing the date of the competitions. They called for all wars to be halted before, during and after the Games in order to enable the athletes, as well as the spectators, to travel to and from the Games sites in total safety. A climate of peace was considered important during the period of competition.

GAMES FOR THE GODS
The Panhellenic Games were of major religious significance. Each of the Games was celebrated in honour of a specific god:
- Zeus, the king of the gods, at Olympia and Nemea
- Apollon, the god of light and of reason, at Delphi
- Poseidon, the god of the sea and of horses, at Isthmia
During sporting contests, it was considered that victory was accorded by the gods.

OVERVIEW OF THE SITE AT OLYMPIA
Of the four Panhellenic Games, those at Olympia were the most important.

Olympia was not a town or city, but rather a sanctuary. The site consisted of a sacred area, the Altis, marked by a boundary wall, and a secular (non-religious) area.

The sacred area contained the temples, including the one to Zeus, the altars on which sacrifices were made, and the Treasuries, small buildings erected by the city-states in which precious offerings were kept (e.g. vases and statues).

The secular area was outside the boundary wall. It contained the training areas and competition sites, plus all the buildings used for the administration of the Games or to welcome important guests.

Only the priests and the staff responsible for looking after the sanctuary lived at Olympia. At the time of the competitions, the atmosphere was very different. In addition to the athletes and spectators, merchants of all kinds flocked to the site: the number of people present for the Olympic Games is estimated to have been over 40,000.

FESTIVALS AND CONTESTS ELSEWHERE IN GREECE
In addition to the Panhellenic Games, major sports competitions were held in Athens. These were known as the Panathenian Games. They were part of the Great Panathenaea, the biggest festival in Athens, which was held every four years in honour of the goddess Athena.

Everywhere in Greece and the colonies, there were numerous local competitions, some better known than others. Each city made a point of organising them.

The status of the Panhellenic Games and the large number of local competitions illustrate the importance of physical exercise and the spirit of competition in Ancient Greek society.
The athlete

Descriptions which appear in antique literature as well as objects found in archaeological excavations (sculptures, vases, coins and tools) help us to find out more about athletes in Antiquity.

When looking at a sculpture or a scene painted on a vase, it is easy to identify the athlete by his **nakedness**. Indeed, for both training and competitions, athletes were **always nude**, to illustrate the ideal of harmony between the body and the mind. According to this ideal, it was only through training the body that the mind could be developed. This idea is found again in Roman times, as evidenced by the well-known phrase *mens sana in corpore sano*.

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GYMNASIUM AND PALAESTRA

There was a **gymnasium** and a **palaestra** in every Greek city. These places were where athletes trained and young boys were educated. It was an all-round education, including exercise for the body as well as the mind. Physical education, music, arithmetic, grammar and reading were all part of the programme.
HYGIENE AND BODY CARE
When they arrived at the gymnasium or palaestra, athletes stripped completely. Without the protection of a layer of clothing, they had to take special care of their skin.

To prepare for training, an athlete would cover his body with olive oil and then dust it with fine sand. The oil and sand combination helped to regulate his body temperature as well as providing protection from the sun and from the stick that the trainer would use to beat him if he didn’t perform the exercises correctly!

After the events, the athlete would take his strigil, a curved instrument, and scrape the sweat, oil and sand off his skin. He then finished cleaning himself with water and a sponge.

During competitions, athletes prepared and cleaned themselves in the same way.

The equipment that the athlete needed was extremely simple:
- an aryballos, a kind of small bottle, often earthenware, containing oil
- a strigil
- a sponge
These were held together by a ring which the athlete attached to the wall of the gymnasium or palaestra.

PARTICIPATION IN THE GAMES
There were three main criteria for participation in the Games: one had to be male, of Greek origin and a free man. Women, slaves and foreigners were excluded.

Most of the athletes came from well-off families. While we cannot really speak of amateurs or professionals as we know them today, only the best were allowed to participate in the Games. Participants trained individually over several months before travelling to Elis, a city close to Olympia, four weeks before the Games to join the other participants. At this point, a final selection was made: only those who were chosen would compete at the site of Olympia. The athletes took an oath, as did the judges. They promised to take part in the competitions in an honourable way, abiding by the rules.
CHEATING AND FINES
Some athletes did not always respect their oath and tried to win by unauthorised means. This kind of cheating was punished and the dishonest athletes had to pay fines. With this money, statues of Zeus were erected, known as the Zanes. Each of these statues were placed along the passageway that led to the stadium, with the name of the cheat inscribed on its base. To get to the competition site, the athletes had to walk past all the statues. This reminded them of the example not to follow!

FAMOUS ATHLETES
If physical exercise was an important part of general education in Antiquity, there were nonetheless highly specialised athletes who followed training programmes and participated in many contests.

The names of some of the great champions are still known today.

Below are the profiles of a number of them:

The famous wrestler Milo of Croton, was a principal figure during the second half of the 7th century BC. He won six times at Olympia, seven times at Delphi, ten times at Isthmia and nine time at Nemea! He became the most-crowned athlete of Antiquity, earning the title of periodonikes. Milo was not only celebrated for his legendary power, he was also known for his insatiable appetite!

Literary sources indicate that Theogenes of Thassos won over 1300 victories in the ancient contests, in boxing and pankration. He became a very important figure in his home town, where a statue to him was erected in the marketplace.

The runner Leonidas of Rhodes was a twelve-time winner of the stadium race, the double stadium and the race in armour. He was one of the few athletes victorious in three races on the same day. He even managed to repeat this feat over four Olympiads (from 164–152 BC)!

The pugilist (boxer) Diagoras of Rhodes founded a dynasty of athletes. He won in 464 BC and his sons and grandsons also went on to become champions at Olympia.

Considered as models, such great athletes were celebrated even after their death. There are examples of tombs decorated with carvings of the wreaths won during the athlete’s career. A school was even constructed over the tomb of one of them.
The Olympic Games were celebrated for over one thousand years and underwent many changes. At their peak, they lasted for five days and the sporting contests were a central element.

The programme of the Games comprised only Individual sports - team sports were not included. No water sports figured on the programme either.

WHAT WERE THE GAMES LIKE?
The programme of the Olympic Games consisted of individual sports only, there were no team sports. The competitions took place in the stadium and the hippodrome.

FIRST DAY
The athletes, as well as the judges, took an oath to respect the rules. Contest for trumpet-players and heralds followed this ceremony.

SECOND DAY
The equestrian events took place in the hippodrome. The most popular event was the four-horse chariot race (quadriga). There were also chariot races for young horses and a mounted horse race. It must be noted that the winners were not the jockeys or the charioteers, but rather the owners of the horses. This is how Kyniska, princess of Sparta and owner of a stable of horses, became an Olympic champion.
The pentathlon took place in the stadium in the afternoon. It consisted of five events: discus, long jump, javelin, running and wrestling.

> The discus throw was carried out without a run-up and all the athletes used the same discus.

> For the long jump, stone or metal halteres (weights) were used, of various shapes. The event was probably made up of five consecutive standing jumps, which required harmony of movement and a sense of rhythm. To help with this, a flute player was often present. Such figures are often represented on vases, next to the long-jumpers.

> For the javelin throw, athletes used a small leather strap which was placed around the shaft in a loop, which allowed them to give the javelin an extra rotation.

These three disciplines were only practised as part of the pentathlon. Running and wrestling, on the other hand, were also practised as individual sports.

THIRD DAY
This day was considered to be the culminating point of the Games. A great sacrifice took place: one hundred cows were killed in honour of Zeus and other divinities. Their meat was shared amongst the community of Games participants during a feast to which all were invited.
FOURTH DAY
The different races took place in the stadium. The spectators sat on the surrounding slopes and were very close to the action. The officials (organiser and judges, the Hellenodices) were the only ones seated in a stand.
In ancient times, the stadium was not oval as we know it today, but rectangular; the runners ran in a straight line. The ground was packed earth. The competitors took their place on a starting line marked out by white limestone slabs. For the longer races, the runners ran around a marker or post at each end of the stadium.

> The stade or stadion, which consisted of one length of the stadium, that is roughly 192m.
> The diaulos, two lengths or double stadium.
> The dolichos, a long-distance race (from 7 to 24 laps).
> The race in arms (in Olympia it was a diaulos), where the athletes wore a helmet and greaves, and carried a shield.

The afternoon was dedicated to combat sports: pugilism (boxing), wrestling and pankration. The drawing of lots decided which athletes would compete against each other. Unlike today, there were no weight categories. To signal the end of a fight, one of the contestants could raise a finger: such scenes are sometimes represented on vases.

> Pugilism For boxing, the pugilists' hands were protected by long leather thongs. These ancestors of boxing gloves underwent numerous modifications over time. Pieces of metal were added on the knuckles, making the punches much more violent.

> Wrestlers fought standing up, with bare hands.
There were different types of hold. The person who first touched the ground three times was the loser.

> Pankration: a type of wrestling. All moves were allowed, except for biting, gouging out eyes and putting fingers in the opponent’s nose.

FIFTH AND LAST DAY
This day was reserved for honouring victorious athletes. They were covered in ribbons and received victory palms in the stadium, before a solemn ceremony in which they were crowned with olive wreaths. Finally, a banquet was given for them, together with the politicians and judges.
MUSIC AND SINGING

Music and singing competitions were not on the programme of the Olympic Games. They were a speciality of the Games at Delphi. Well before the appearance of sports competitions, musical competitions were organised in Delphi. These comprised singing accompanied by the cithara (a type of lyre), flute solos or singing with flute accompaniment. Music and singing remained a feature of the Pythian Games even after the integration of sports competitions. Poetry and drama competitions also figured on the programme.
Winners' rewards

CROWNS, RIBBONS AND PALM FRONDS
At the modern Olympic Games, the first, second and third-placed athletes are rewarded, respectively, by gold, silver and bronze medals. At the Panhellenic Games, there was only one winner whose prize was a wreath or crown of leaves.

At each of the venues, the crowns were made with different types of leaves:

- At Olympia, it was a wild olive leaf crown
- At Delphi, a laurel crown
- At Corinth, a pine crown
- At Nemea, a wild celery crown

As well as a crown, the winner received a red woollen ribbon, the taenia. A famous statue by the sculptor Polycletus (dating from the second half of the 5th century BC) shows a victor tying the ribbon around his head. The statue is called Diadumenos and there is a bronze copy of it at the entrance to the Olympic Museum in Lausanne.

Finally, the winner often held a palm frond, another symbol of victory.
NIKE, THE MESSENGER OF THE GODS
The Ancient Greeks considered that it was the gods who decided to grant victory to an athlete. Victory was often represented in the form of a winged female character known as Nike, which means “victory” in Greek. As the servant or messenger of the Gods, Nike flew down to the chosen person, to bring them their divine reward in the form of a wreath or ribbon.

FAME
Although winners did not receive any financial reward, Olympic champions became important figures in their town or city, where they often took on a political role.

The glory of the victorious athlete brought reflected glory to all the inhabitants of his home town. When he returned from the Games, he was given a hero’s welcome and received numerous benefits for the rest of his life.

To show that he had become famous, the victor had the right to have a statue of himself erected. He could also ask a poet to write verses telling of his feats. Because they were proud of him, his fellow citizens sometimes made coins with his effigy on them, so as not to forget him and to make him known throughout the Greek world.

PRIZES IN LOCAL COMPETITIONS
The prizes awarded in local competitions had a greater material value. Amphorae filled with olive oil were often given to the winner. During this period, olive oil was extremely precious and worth a lot of money. Other treasures, such as bronze tripods (big vases with three feet), bronze shields or silver cups were also given as prizes.

In spite of this difference, the prestige of the Panhellenic Games remained unequalled. The modest crown of leaves was the highest possible reward in the Greek world, as it guaranteed its holder honour and respect from everyone.
The end of the Games

For over one thousand years, the Greeks, and later the Romans, met at Olympia to celebrate the festival in honour of Zeus and ensure that the Games remained an important event.

Thanks to the latest archaeological digs at Olympia, we now know that the Games were still being organised in the 4th century AD. In 393 AD, the Christian emperor Theodosius I forbade the celebration of pagan cults, which included the Games.

Nonetheless, the popularity of sports contests and cultural festivities continued in many Greek-influenced provinces of the Roman empire as late as the 6th century AD.

OLYMPIA, UNTIL ITS REDISCOVERY IN THE 19TH CENTURY
Following Theodosius’ decree, little by little pagan cults began to disappear and the Games were progressively abandoned. An agricultural settlement grew over the ruins of Olympia, with a church and several modest workshops. This city was abandoned during the 7th century AD and the site gradually disappeared under several metres of earth.

Thanks to the writings of ancient historians, the memory of the Games and their place in the Greek world was not totally forgotten. The Games were known to have existed, but the knowledge of their exact location had been lost.

In the 1776, the English traveller Richard Chandler discovered the site of ancient Olympia. The principal research digs were carried out a hundred years later by German archaeologists.

Today, these ruins are a precious source of information on the past glory of the Panhellenic Games and the significance of Olympia.
Explore a little further ...

Find the names of the gods mentioned in these factsheets and create an identity sheet for each one. Include a short text, a drawing of the god or goddess and the symbol which allows them to be identified.

Learn to interpret a sculpture or a painting on a vase: describe the characters, their clothing, their bodies, positions and facial expressions, and the objects (look at illustrations in books or visit museums).

Observe, sports scenes shown on vases: copy the movements and postures of the athletes in action.

Read works by ancient authors, in particular the parts about the Games and the athletes: for example, the odes by the poet Pindar (518-438 BC) or the stories of the writer Pausanias (110-180 AD).

Return to the past! You are a spectator at the Olympic Games in Antiquity:
- describe a competition of your choice, in the form of an article or comic strip;
- prepare a portrait of a victorious athlete, imagining that he comes from the same town or village as you

Compare the Ancient Games with the modern Olympic Games [see sheets “The Modern Olympic Games”].

Draw up a list of differences and a list of common features.

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The Modern Olympic Games

- **Introduction**
  The world’s most important sports event for over a hundred years – Idea of Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin – Olympic Games celebrated in a different country every four years – Games of the Olympiad (Summer Games) – Olympic Winter Games.

- **Evolution of the Games**
  Athens 1896: past heritage – Innovations: more sports, more athletes, participation of women, Winter Games – Establishment of traditions in the opening and closing ceremonies – Sport, art and culture.

- **Olympic sports**
  Criteria for inclusion in the programme of the Games – Sports, disciplines and events – The programme of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games – Leading sports and demonstration sports.

- **Athletes at the Games**
  Athletes’ lead-up to the Games – Life in the Olympic Village – Reasons for taking part, unique experience.

- **Rewards**
  Medals at the Summer and Winter Games – Diplomas and medals presented – After the Games: winners’ glory.

- **The Games in Modern Society**
  Improved transport: a benefit for the Games – Broadcasting of the Games by the media – Political and diplomatic use of the Games – Geography of the Games.
Introduction

A SPORTS PHENOMENON UNLIKE ANY OTHER

The Olympic Games have become one of the biggest sporting events of our time. 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. [see sheets "The Olympic Symbols"].

What makes the Olympic Games different from other sports events?

The Games are held every four years. They are the largest sporting celebration in terms of 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 a well-known event, but are also part of a broader framework which is that of the Olympic Movement.

The purpose of the Olympic Movement is to:
- link sport with culture and education;
- promote the practice of sport and the joy found in effort;
- help to build a better world through sport practised in a spirit of peace, excellence, friendship and respect.

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 word Olympiad designates the four-year period that separates each edition of the Summer Games. The Summer and Winter Games originally took place in the same year, but since 1992 the Winter Games have been held two years from the Summer Games. The Summer Games and the 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 seven sports practised on snow and ice, both indoors and outdoors.

HISTORY

It was Pierre de Coubertin of France who dreamt up this ambitious project, although others before him had tried to revive these Games during the 19th century, without having Coubertin’s success. 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!
Pierre de Coubertin drew his inspiration from the ancient Olympic Games which were held in Olympia (Greece) between the 8th century BC and the 4th century AD. [see sheet “The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece.”]

THE LEGACY OF THE PAST
In 1896, more than 1,500 years after the ancient Games were banned, the first modern Olympic Games featured many references to this legacy of Greek Antiquity. The IOC’s decision to hold them in Athens (Greece) was a reminder that the Olympic Games originated in Greece.

The majority of the competitions took place in the ancient stadium (the Panathenaic Stadium), which was restored for the occasion. Most of the sports on the programme of the ancient Olympic Games were echoed in the modern Games. The organisers even went as far as inventing a new race, inspired by a legendary event: the marathon race.

INNOVATIONS
Although the modern Olympic Games were inspired by the past, they are also quite different:

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.

ATHLETES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD
The ancient Olympic Games were the preserve of Greek citizens, whereas the modern Games are open to all. 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 Olympic Games was assured.

WOMEN JOIN IN
As at the ancient Games, the Olympic Games in Athens in 1896 were an exclusively male preserve. When women made their Olympic debut four years later at the 1900 Games in Paris (France), only two sports were open to them: tennis and golf.

In early 20th century society, female athletes had to deal with a great deal of prejudice: there were fears that they would lose their femininity by growing overly muscular or becoming sterile. The first female athletes had to face up to this type of preconception. Little by little, they earned a place at the Games, sport by sport, and event by event.
Some important occasions for women at the Summer Games were:

- the first appearance of women **swimmers** at the 1912 Games in Stockholm
- the first female **athletics** competitions, at the Amsterdam Games in 1928. Note that the 800m race was considered too difficult for women and was discontinued after 1928, not to be reintroduced until 1960.

From volleyball (1964), to rowing (1976), from cycling (1984) to football (1996), female Olympians have gone from strength to strength!

Women’s wrestling joined the Olympic programme in Athens in 2004. At the turn of the third millennium, over 40 per cent of the athletes at the Games were women. This was the **largest proportion of female participants** in the history of the Olympic Games.

The only sports now not open to women on the programme of the Summer Games are **boxing** and **baseball**. There is one sport, **softball**, and two disciplines, **synchronised swimming** and **rhythmic gymnastics**, in which only women participate.

**WINTER GAMES**

When Coubertin revived the Olympic Games, only summer sports were included. In the 1920’s, however, snow and ice sports began to enjoy soaring popularity. A number of IOC members decided to react to this new phenomenon. In 1924, it was decided to hold an **International Winter Sports Week** in Chamonix (France): 258 athletes from 16 countries (mainly in Europe and North America) attended.

The week was a great success and, two years later, it was retroactively named the first **Olympic Winter Games**. The future of an Olympic event dedicated exclusively to snow and ice sports was assured.

At the Winter Games in Turin (Italy) in 2006, a total of 2 508 participants came together from 80 countries as diverse as Madagascar, Brazil, New Zealand and Thailand!
**BETWEEN FESTIVAL AND RITUAL**
A party atmosphere is a feature of the Olympic Games. Each edition has an Opening Ceremony during which the sports stadium is filled with music, singing, dancing and fireworks. A Closing Ceremony in the same spirit takes place on the last day of the Games. The opening and closing ceremonies are an invitation to discover the culture of the country hosting the Games. Although most of the ceremony is creative and imaginative, there are some very strict rituals that have to be followed. Most of this protocol had been established by the time the 1920 Games in Antwerp (Belgium). It has been added to over the years as the Games have evolved.

**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.

Today, 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 athletes’ village, the city, region and even the country hosting the Games.

Whether as a participant or a spectator, the Games offer an opportunity to open up to and better understand other people by discovering a new culture. Through sport, art or culture, everyone can be part of the great festival of the Olympic Games!
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 accept or refuse any proposed new 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.

* e.g.:
Swimming at the Games is governed by the International Swimming Federation (FINA);
Skating by the International Skating Union (ISU), etc.

Discipline — an Olympic sport comprises one or several disciplines.

* e.g.:
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.

* e.g.:
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 on the Olympic programme, a **summer sport** must fulfil, amongst others, the following conditions:

- it must be **widely practised** (by men, in 75 countries on four continents; by women, in 40 countries and on three continents);
- the **World Anti-Doping Code** must be applied;
- it must not rely on mechanical propulsion (such as a motor).

Today, a **winter sport** must be widely practised in at least 25 countries and on three continents in order to be included on the programme. No distinction is made between men and women’s events.

**Summer Games sports**

In Athens in 1896, **nine sports** were on the programme: athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, weightlifting, wrestling, swimming, tennis and shooting.

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

In Athens in 2004, 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. A total of **301 events** took place!

**MAJOR SPORTS ON THE PROGRAMME**

The star attractions 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 modern 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**.

**IN THE PAST – DEMONSTRATION SPORTS**

Thanks to their popularity, the Games have been able to showcase some lesser known sports, which up to 1992 were included as **demonstration sports** alongside the official Olympic programme.

For example:
- Australian football, a national sport, at the Melbourne Games in 1956;
- bowling, a sport little known in the host country of Korea, at the Seoul Games in 1988;
- at the Barcelona Games in 1992, the local sport of Basque pelota, as well as roller hockey and taekwondo.
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 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.

The number of sports at the Winter Games has remained relatively stable over the years. At the Turin Games in 2006, there were seven sports – biathlon, bobsleigh, curling, ice hockey, luge, skating and skiing. However, the number of events has increased considerably: in 2006, there were 84 on the programme!

Of the 14 disciplines in the Olympic Winter Games, only Nordic combined and ski jumping are not open to women.

MAJOR SPORTS ON THE PROGRAMME
The three major attractions on the Winter Games programme are skating, skiing and ice hockey.

Skating has the longest Olympic history, having figured 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 to launch 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.

IN THE PAST – DEMONSTRATION SPORTS
There are many variations on snow and ice sports. Several have featured in the Olympic Games as demonstration sports (e.g. skijoring, bandy and winter pentathlon). Other sports were absent from the official programme for several editions of the Games before being reintroduced. Skeleton is one example: it appeared at the Games in St Moritz in 1928 and 1948, but was not officially part of the programme until the 2002 Games in Salt Lake City.
Athletes at the Olympic Games

THE CHALLENGE OF THE GAMES

The prospect of being selected for the Olympic Games is an ultimate goal for 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.

In practical terms, 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 for the Games.

Athletes with dual 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 a period of three years has elapsed.

There is no age limit for competing in the Olympic Games, except for those that may be 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

On 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 different countries. All of the 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. This is what gives meaning to the Olympic values of excellence, friendship and respect.

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 a special skill and determination for a person to ascend to the top.”

Today’s Olympic Village is almost a small city! It is usually located close to the competition venues and its construction is taken very seriously during preparations for the Games. In Athens in 2004, for example, the Village accommodated over 16,000 athletes and officials in more than 300 buildings the equivalent of several suburbs!

Athletes are provided with many facilities. They can eat in the Village restaurant 24 hours a day, go to the hairdresser or watch a film at the cinema. They can also surf the internet or go to discos after their competitions.

When the Games have finished, the Olympic Village is generally turned into 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. 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!

**A MINIATURE TOWN, A MINIATURE WORLD**

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.

**MOTIVATION AND PARTICIPATION**

Out of the thousands of people who enter the Olympic competitions, only a small proportion of athletes and teams reach the finals.

Participation in the Games is what counts the most for the majority of competitors: to have the honour of representing their country and parade behind their flag at the Opening Ceremony; to rub shoulders with elite athletes; and to have the opportunity to give their best. This is all part of the spirit of the Olympic Games!

Pierre de Coubertin spoke of this at the beginning 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.”

*Revue Olympique, July 1908, p.110. (from a speech given during the London Olympic Games in 1908)*

Almost a century later, at the Olympic Games in Sydney, the spirit remained the same. Perdita Felicien, a member of the Canadian team, explained how important the Olympic experience was 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.”

*Comments made on her athletics team’s website, 27 November 2000.*
Rewards

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

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 **the Nike of 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. Along with the basic gold, silver and bronze, other materials may be introduced: 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

During the Winter Games, the medals ceremonies used to take place just after the competitions. Now they are generally held in the evening at a special ceremony in the heart of the host city. In Turin, 55 of the 84 medals ceremonies were held on the **Piazza Castello**, in the historic heart of the city.

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

Since the Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid in 1932 (USA), 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 placegetter is to the winner’s right and receives a silver medal. The third 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.
CELEBRITY OF OLYMPIC 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.
Whether or not they are winners, everyone who takes part in the Games takes home with them the memory of an exceptional human experience.
The Games in Modern Society

THE GAMES BENEFIT FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT

Depending on the location of the host city, 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 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 Tokyo in Japan; and in 1968 Mexico City hosts the Games, for the first time in Latin America.

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

THE MEDIA BRING THE GAMES WITHIN REACH

Television made an enormous contribution to the growing popularity of the Olympic Games. Although tests were carried out in 1936 and again in 1948, it was not until 1956 that the Winter Games in Cortina d’Ampezzo (Italy) were transmitted live on a small scale. 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 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, 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. 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 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

- In 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.
- In 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.
- In 1968 in Mexico City (Mexico), American athletes Tommy Smith and John Carlos demonstrated against racial segregation in their country. 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 sent home.
- In 1972 in Munich (Germany), Palestinian terrorists took Israeli athletes hostage. 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.
- In 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.
- In 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.
- In 1984, in response to the American boycott of 1980, the Soviet Union refused to attend the Games in Los Angeles (USA). The official reasons given were the commercialisation of the Games and insufficient guarantees of athletes’ safety.

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

– 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. East Timor, a small country located next to Indonesia, which has been independent since 2002).

– 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 Aboriginals 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.

– At the 2004 Games in Athens, despite the war in their country, the Iraqi football team qualified for the Olympic tournament and even reached the semi-finals.
**GAMES OF THE OLYMPIAD (SUMMER GAMES)**

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<thead>
<tr>
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The Olympiads are counted even if the Games do not take place!
### WINTER GAMES

<table>
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Explore a little further...

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 of 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.

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The Olympic Movement

- **Olympism and values**
  A life philosophy — Promotion of three core values: excellence, friendship and respect.

- **The Olympic Family**
  Implementation of a structure, the Olympic Movement, governed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) — Structure of the IOC, its members — The International Sport Federations, National Olympic Committees and Organising Committee for the Olympic Games.

- **The IOC mission**
  The IOC’s missions as enacted through various Commissions: Olympic Solidarity, Women and Sport, Medical Commission, Education and Culture, Sport and Peace, Sport and Environment.

- **The IOC through time**
  Creation of the IOC in 1894 in Paris (France), on the initiative of Pierre de Coubertin. The eight presidents over a century. The IOC headquarters, in Lausanne (Switzerland) since 1915.

- **The Olympic Museum**
  Showcase of the IOC and the Olympic Movement. Legacy of the Olympic Games — Olympic philosophy as expressed through the Museum’s exhibitions and programmes.
Olympism and values

Olympism is a life philosophy which draws together sport, culture and education in the aim of creating a harmonious balance between body, will and mind. Originally promoted by Coubertin, this philosophy is an essential element of the Olympic Movement and the celebration of the Games.

For today's Olympic Movement, Olympism is constructed around three core values: excellence, friendship and respect.

EXCELLENCE
In the Olympic ideal, this value refers to giving one's best, on the field of play or in life, without over-emphasising comparative performance yet still being determined to reach one's personal objectives. It is not only about winning, but also participating, making progress against personal goals, striving to be and to do our best in our daily lives and benefiting from the healthy combination of a strong body, mind and will.

FRIENDSHIP
Men and women are at the centre of the Olympic Movement, which encourages links and mutual understanding between people. This value refers to building a peaceful and better world through solidarity, team spirit, joy and optimism in sport.
The Olympic Games inspire people to overcome political, economic, gender, racial or religious differences and forge friendships in spite of those differences. For athletes, this means forming life-long bonds with their team-mates, as well as their opponents.

RESPECT
This value represents a principle which should inspire all those who take part in Olympic programmes. Respect for oneself and one's body, respect for one another, for the rules as well as for the environment. It refers to the fair-play attitude that athletes should have, and to their commitment to avoid doping.

The Olympic spirit is all this and more!

These values are powerfully conveyed at the moment of the Olympic Games. Even between editions of the Games, however, the Olympic Movement continues to be spread through the on-going work of the members of the Olympic Family.
The Olympic Family

The philosophy of Olympism is shared by all members of the Olympic Movement. The IOC governs the Movement’s and acts as its supreme authority. Next come the organisations recognised by the IOC which conform to the principles of Olympism and follow the rules of the IOC as set out in the Olympic Charter:

- International Federations (IFs)
- National Olympic Committees (NOCs)
- Organising Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs)
- National associations and sports clubs
- Sports officials, coaches and administrators

And, of course, there are the athletes!

The structure of the family

THE IOC, THE DECISION-MAKERS
The IOC is an international non-governmental non-profit organisation which receives no public money. Its revenues come mainly from the sale of television rights for the Olympic Games and marketing programmes. It owns the rights to the Olympic Games and the symbols of the Olympic Movement. At least once a year, the members meet at the general assembly called the Session. It is on the occasion of the Sessions that important IOC decisions are taken on matters such as the election of future Olympic Games host cities, the composition of the sports programme for the Games, and the recruitment of new IOC members.

The IOC currently has a maximum of 115 active members. In addition to independent individuals, members include sports administrators and Olympic athletes chosen from amongst the Olympic Family. Members are recruited by the organisation itself and are considered representatives of the IOC in their respective countries rather than as their countries’ representative to the IOC. The members elect the President of the IOC, for a term of eight years, renewable once only for a further four years.

THE IFs, THE EXPERTS IN OLYMPIC SPORTS
The International Federations govern their sport at a global level. They ensure the promotion and development of sport and the development of the athletes who practise it, at all levels. During the Olympic Games, the IFs are responsible for the practical organisation of the sports events on the programme. All the technical aspects of a sport are their responsibility: the rules, equipment, venues, judging, etc.
Here are some examples of Olympic federations:

**Summer sports**
- International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF)
- International Gymnastics Federation (FIG)
- International Cycling Union (UCI)

**Winter sports**
- International Ski Federation (FIS)
- International Skating Union (ISU)
- International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF)

**THE NOCs, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF OLYMPISM**

There are currently **205 National Olympic Committees**, whose role is to spread Olympic values at a national level.

There are NOCs throughout the world:
- From Morocco to South Africa: 53 NOCs in **Africa**
- From Chile to Canada: 42 NOCs in **America**
- From Syria to Japan: 44 NOCs in **Asia**
- From Iceland to Russia: 49 NOCs in **Europe**
- From Australia to the Cook Islands: 17 NOCs in **Oceania**

The NOCs carry out many different functions in their respective countries, from the development of sport at all levels, to the creation of educational programmes, to the continued training of sports administrators. They are also responsible for **sending a delegation of athletes** to the Olympic Games.

The NOCs ensure that all the programmes carried out at a national level conform to the principles of the Olympic Charter.

**THE OCOGs, THE ORGANISERS OF THE GAMES**

People often think that the IOC is responsible for organising the Olympic Games. In fact, the IOC has more of a supervisor’s role, entrusting the organisation of the Games to the elected host city and the NOC of the country in which the Games will take place. It is this locally-based **Organising Committee for the Olympic Games** which manages the practical aspects of the Games preparation. At present, the OCOGs for the future Games are: Beijing 2008, Vancouver 2010, London 2012 and Sochi 2014.

The **OCOG’s task** is enormous. From the moment when the city is selected to host the Games, there are only **seven years** left to put in place all the necessary arrangements.

Based on the plans proposed in their candidature file, the Organising Committee must create or update the **competition venues, stadiums, training halls and the Olympic Village** as well as provide all of the organisational infrastructure necessary for the smooth running of the Games. To do this, the OCOGs work closely with the IFs.
The problem of **transport** is one of the parameters that the organisers have to take into consideration: a good road network and alternative transportation options such as trains, subways and airports are needed to allow the athletes and spectators to arrive in the host city of the Games and easily reach the venues.

**Medical services** must be set up on site in order to look after everyone’s health, not just that of the athletes, but also of all those working at the Games and the spectators at the Olympic venues.

Another of the OCOG’s missions is the establishment of a **cultural programme**. Concerts, plays, ballets and exhibitions held leading up to and during the Olympic Games make them different from most other sports events.

The OCOG has to **inform the public** of all the preparations and respond to questions posed by the media.

The OCOG benefits greatly from the assistance of thousands of **volunteers** who contribute to the success of the Games. The OCOG recruits, then trains people from the host country and also from abroad. The volunteers’ activities vary widely: from transporting athletes to hospitality and administration, to give just a few examples. The talents and experience of each individual are taken into account when allocating jobs.

After the Games, the final task of the OCOG is to compile the **Official Report** of the Games.
The IOC’s missions

The mission of the IOC is not limited to ensuring the celebration of the Olympic Games: it also promotes Olympism around the world, seeks to advance sport in society and gives support to sports organisations. Many of its programmes reflect the values of friendship and respect, protecting athlete’s health, guaranteeing equality between men and women, ensuring that athletes from all over the world can train and participate in the Games, promoting peace, education and culture through sport, and so on.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE POOR AND THE RICH, FOR WOMEN AND MEN

The Olympic Solidarity Commission and the Women and Sport Commission both work towards more equality in sport.

Olympic Solidarity seeks to ensure that all athletes have the same chance of participating in the Games. It awards scholarships to athletes so that they can access high-level sports facilities, benefit from a specialised coach or undergo an adapted medical test. The Commission also financially supports improvements to sports infrastructures in various countries and to train sports leaders and coaches.

The Women and Sport Commission began working for gender equality in 1995 and became a fully-fledged commission in 2004. Its goal is twofold:

- to make access to sports in general and the Olympic Games easier for female athletes;
- to increase the number of women in sports administration and management, by offering regional seminars to women sports administrators, coaches, technical officials and journalists focused on leadership, competences and management and by granting scholarships to young female athletes and coaches.

Since 1996, world conferences on women and sport are held every four years in order to analyse the progress made in the field as well as recommend new strategies and commitments.

Since 2000, six IOC “Women and Sport” trophies (one per continent, and one at world level) are awarded every year to a person or institution for their remarkable contribution to the development of women’s participation in sport or in administrative structures of sport.

In 2004, the world trophy was awarded to the FIFA Women’s World Cup and in 2006, to the Argentinean tennis player Gabriela Sabatini.
PROTECTION OF ATHLETES’ HEALTH
The Olympic Movement takes its responsibility to protect the rights, health and well-being of athletes very seriously.

The Medical and Scientific Commission was originally created to deal with the fight against doping; today, it shares this responsibility with World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

The Medical Commission’s educational mission also includes the efforts of prevention made to inform both elite and amateur athletes of the disastrous health consequences of doping.

The other main goal is to support sports medicine, biomechanics, sporting physiology, and nutrition research that are designed to protect the health of the athlete.

EDUCATION AND CULTURE THROUGH SPORT
Coubertin believed that sport contributed to the harmonious and well-balanced development of the body, the character and the mind.

As such, interaction between sport, education and culture is encouraged by the Commission for Culture and Education. Its aims are to promote Olympism and Olympic ideals throughout the world and reinforce the cooperation with educational institutions and NOCs with projects especially targeting young people. Through Olympic education, they are encouraged to maintain their interest in sport and physical activity.

In collaboration with the NOCs, the Commission organises different activities which aim to promote exchanges between the sports world and different areas of artistic activity such as literature, painting, sculpture and theatre. The festival of the arts, or cultural programme, offered during the Olympic Games is examined and approved by the Commission.

PROMOTION OF PEACE
The International Olympic Truce Foundation (IOTF) was established in 2000 by the IOC who decided to revive the concept of the Olympic Truce in close interrelation with the United Nations and its General Secretary. The IOC wants to contribute to the search for peaceful and diplomatic solutions and spread the idea that sport and peace are a “winning pair”.

To meet its objectives, the IOTF has established an International Olympic Truce Centre (IOTC) based in Athens, which is responsible for implementing projects related to the worldwide promotion of a culture of peace through sport and the Olympic ideal.

In addition, conferences on Sport and Peace are organised, where NOCs of different countries present their projects using sport as a tool to promote peace between countries in conflict.

Example of peace projects
— The NOC of Haiti initiated “Games for Peace” with its neighbour, the Dominican Republic;
— India and Pakistan organised regional championships with teams from each country;
— African countries also commit to trying to use sport as a way of resolving conflicts.
THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GAMES

Since the early 1990s, environmental protection has been a major concern of the IOC. Created in 1995, its Sport and Environment Commission works towards the promotion of sustainable development and environmental responsibility. During the construction of Olympic venues for the Games, an environmental advisor ensures that the environment is respected by critically examining the choice of materials, recycling choices, energy conservation options and so on.

The objectives set are many:

– to ensure that the Games will not have a negative impact on the environment;
– for the Olympic Games to be a motor to develop and improve the environment in and around the host city, and to leave a green legacy;
– to promote awareness on the importance of a healthy environment.
The IOC through time

AN HISTORIC DATE
The IOC was founded in Paris on **23 June 1894**, by Baron Pierre de Coubertin. To commemorate this date, the IOC decided in 1948 to introduce an Olympic Day, a sort of “birthday” of the Olympic Movement. Originally celebrated by just 9 countries, Olympic Day is now an event held around the world each 23 June. In many countries, the celebrations take the form of fun runs.

EIGHT PRESIDENTS IN OVER A CENTURY OF OLYMPISM
Contrary to popular belief, Pierre de Coubertin was not the first IOC President! The IOC’s original idea was that the country in which the Games were to be held should also take on the presidency. It was thus a Greek (**Dimetrius Vikelas**) who was chosen to be the first IOC President up until the first Games in Athens in 1896. The idea was quickly abandoned, however, and **Pierre de Coubertin** not only became the second President of the IOC, but carried on in the role for nearly 30 years, from 1896 to 1925.
To date, the IOC has had eight presidents. The **current President is Jacques Rogge**, elected in 2001 for a mandate of eight years.

NAMES OF THE PRESIDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Years</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demetrius Vikelas</td>
<td>1894 – 1896</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pierre de Coubertin</td>
<td>1896 – 1925</td>
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<td>Henri de Baillet-Latour</td>
<td>1925 – 1942</td>
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<td>J. Sigfrid Edström</td>
<td>1946 – 1952</td>
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<td>Avery Brundage</td>
<td>1952 – 1972</td>
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<td>Lord Killanin</td>
<td>1972 – 1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juan Antonio Samaranch</td>
<td>1980 – 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacques Rogge</td>
<td>2001 –</td>
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</table>

THE IOC IN LAUSANNE
Although Lausanne, on the shores of Lake Geneva, has never hosted the Games, it has been the **headquarters** of IOC since **1915**. It was Coubertin who chose this quiet city, in the midst of the First World War.
After having occupied various buildings in Lausanne, the IOC headquarters finally found their definitive home at the Château de Vidy in 1968. This is where the President’s office is situated.
Up until 1980, the IOC had only a few employees. Now, it has close to 400. Its development over the last 30 years has led to significant growth in its administration and expansion in its premises.

In recognition of the long history that unites the IOC and Lausanne, the city received the title of Olympic Capital in 1993.
The Olympic Museum

HISTORY
The idea of an Olympic Museum goes back to Pierre de Coubertin himself. At the beginning of the 20th century, the founder of the modern Olympic Games hoped to create a museum which would gather and preserve the legacy of the Games. Some years after the IOC headquarters had been set up in Lausanne, Pierre de Coubertin established an early Olympic Museum (Villa Mon-Repos). It closed its doors in 1970. In the 1980s, President Samaranch picked up on Coubertin’s idea. A provisional museum was opened in another part of Lausanne. The current Olympic Museum project began to get underway, with construction work starting in Ouchy in 1988. The inauguration took place in 1993, on the 23 June, a symbolic date in the history of the Olympic Movement. The Museum celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2003, having welcomed over 2 million visitors in this time!

ACCESS TO THE MEMORY OF THE GAMES
A storehouse of memories, the Museum holds the IOC’s and the Games’ historical archives of written documents, photos and films. Accounts of the Games of Antiquity, sports equipment used from 1896 to the present day, medals, posters, mascots, and many other souvenirs of the Games make up its collections. Through the exhibitions, visitors can discover a great number of these treasures. Bringing together the public and the legacy of the Olympic Games makes the Museum a lively and dynamic place.

THE ARCHITECTS
Pedro Ramirez Vazquez (Mexico): creator of many large constructions, such as the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City in 1964.
Jean-Pierre Cahen (Switzerland): creator of several school sites and large constructions in and around Lausanne.

JUAN ANTONIO SAMARANCH SAID:
“The Olympic Museum is for all those who have a passion for sport and the Olympic Movement, all those who are interested in history, culture and art, and all those who are not indifferent to the future of our society.”
LINK BETWEEN THE IOC AND THE PUBLIC
Few people are familiar with the IOC’s undertakings outside the Olympic Games. The role of the Olympic Museum is to act as a window on the institution and to encourage external contacts, at both regional and international levels.

While the IOC strives to strengthen the Olympic Movement through specific programmes, the Museum offers its contribution by promoting knowledge of the Olympic Movement amongst the general public. It gives the visitors the opportunity to reflect about sport and Olympism in various ways:

– a permanent exhibition about the history of Olympism and the evolution of the Games, as well as temporary exhibitions featuring themes linked to sport; educational programmes, publications for teachers, visits and workshops, as well as an Olympic Week.
– cultural events ranging from concerts to lectures, festivals to performances.

It also encourages multicultural exchange. Like the athletes from every country who attend the Games, the Museum’s visitors come from five continents. From children to elderly persons, all demonstrate the worldwide interest in the Games and underline the wide appeal of the Museum.

A LABORATORY OF Sorts
The activities led by the Museum help to develop competences that can be further used by external partners in various projects around the world.
Explore a little further...

Feel the Olympic spirit! Put together a file made up of examples from sport or everyday life’s situations which illustrate the Olympic values of friendship, respect and excellence. Next, add in some of your own sports experiences – were there times where you would have liked to act differently, or would have liked others to behave differently?

Imagine that a city / town of your country is bidding to host the Olympic Games. Why would it be the ideal place for the Olympic competitions? List the existing sports facilities. What would need to be constructed? Create a mini candidature file including the strong points of your region.

Do a press study on the IOC. Read the newspapers for one month and collect all the articles mentioning a member of the Olympic Family (the IOC, an IF, a NOC, an OCOG, etc.). Write a review, commenting on the news.

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The Olympic flame and torch relay

- **Introduction**
  The flame, from Olympia to the stadium by relay.
  2

- **Origins and Evolution**
  Symbolic use of fire in Olympia - The flame in Antiquity - Heralds of the sacred truce - Today’s flame-lighting ceremony.
  3

- **Relay history, itineraries and modes of transport**
  First summer and winter relays – Itineraries and themes - Original forms of transport.
  6

- **Relay facts and figures at a glance**
  Some examples of summer and winter relays: total distance in kilometres, number of runners, countries crossed and final torch bearer.
  9

- **Torches and design**
  Technological and aesthetic creativity in imagining supports for the Olympic flame.
  11
Introduction

FLAME
In the context of the modern Games, the Olympic flame represents the positive values that Man has always associated with fire. The purity of the flame is guaranteed by the way it is lit using the sun’s rays.
The choice of Olympia as a departure point emphasises the link between the Ancient and Modern Games and underlines the profound connection between these two events.

RELAY
The flame is carried by relay all the way to its final destination. Although it is usually carried by runners on foot, other modes of transport are also used.
For air transport, the flame is sheltered in a security lamp, similar to a miner’s lamp. At night time, it burns in special cauldrons. All along its route, the flame heralds the upcoming Olympic Games and transmits a message of peace and friendship amongst peoples.

STADIUM
The highlight of the opening ceremony of the Olympics is the entrance of the Olympic flame into the stadium. The identity of the final torchbearer is kept secret until the last moment. It is often a personality from the sports world or a young person symbolising hope for the future.
The final torchbearer often does a lap of the stadium before lighting the monumental cauldron with the Olympic flame. A symbolic release of doves evokes the climate of peace in which the Olympic Games should take place.
The flame remains lit for the duration of the Games and is only extinguished at the closing ceremony.
Evolution from the origins

Fire for mankind is...

SYMBOLISM OF FIRE
Fire has always played a very important role in the life of Man. The mastery and use of fire figure amongst the most important achievements of humanity. Its place in the beliefs of most ethnic groups is proof of this. The Ancient Greeks, for example, explained the presence of fire on earth through the myth of Prometheus.

The divine origin of fire made it a sacred element and the Greeks maintained perpetual fires in front of their principal temples. The flame was obtained when the sun’s rays were captured at the centre of a recipient called a skaphia, the ancestor of the parabolic mirror used today for lighting the Olympic flame, causing an intense heat which allows a flame to be obtained.

FIRE IN OLYMPIA
In the sanctuary of Olympia, where the Ancient Olympic Games took place, a flame burned permanently on the altar of the goddess Hestia, situated in the Prytaneum (building used for the large banquets held in honour of the athletes at the end of the Games). Also obtained from the heat of the sun’s rays, this fire was used to light the other fires of the sanctuary.

Such fires were lit on the altars of Zeus and Hera, situated in front of their temples. To honour these gods, animal sacrifices were made in the same place. Today, nothing remains of the altars, but the present ceremony for the lighting of the Olympic flame in front of the temple of Hera acts as a reminder of these events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMAGE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image 1</td>
<td>GREAT ALTAR OF ZEUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 2</td>
<td>TEMPLE OF HERA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PROMEmEHUS stole fire from the gods to give to Man. As a punishment, he was chained to a rock by Zeus, father of the gods. Every day, an eagle came to devour his liver, which grew back every night.

Prometheus defied the gods with his theft of fire but by the same act he also revealed the secrets of knowledge, wisdom and the human spirit to Man.

HESTIA — (Roman name Vesta) virgin goddess of the hearth. In the Roman religion, the Vestals were the guardians of the city’s fire.

ZEUS — (Roman name Jupiter) father of the gods of Olympia, he brought order and justice to the world. The Games in Olympia and Nemea were held in his honour.

HERA — (Roman name Juno), sister and wife of Zeus, she reigned with him. In Olympia, her cult was probably linked to that of another, Older goddess of fertility. Hera herself was associated with birth.

RITUAL LIGHT WARMTH COOKING PROTECTION CREATION
TORCH RACES IN ANTIQUITY
There was never a relay organised for the either ancient Olympic Games or other Panhellenic Games (organised in Nemea, Delphi and Isthmia). However, in Athens, flame races called lampadedromia were organised to honour certain gods, including Prometheus. The flame was transmitted by runners and the first competitor to arrive at the altar of the god had the honour of renewing its fire.

HERALDS OF THE SACRED TRUCE
At a set time before the start of the ancient Olympic Games, messengers wearing olive crowns left Elis to announce in other cities the exact date of competitions. They invited the citizens to come to Olympia and proclaimed the sacred truce (ekecheiria), that is, the obligation to halt combats one month before and during the period of the Games. In this way, the athletes and spectators could travel without fear to Olympia and back home.

Elis — The sanctuary of Olympia was situated on the territory of the city of Elis, some 50 km to the north.

lampadedromia — Greek word for the ancient torch relays. They were part of religious ceremonies rather than sporting events.
Lighting of the flame today

SUMMER GAMES
It all begins in Olympia, Greece. A few months before the opening of the Olympic Games, a ceremony is organised on the original site of the Olympic Games, at the ancient sanctuary of Olympia. The flame is lit in front of the ruins of the Temple of Hera by actresses playing the part of priestesses. The choreography and costumes used in the ceremony are based on those of Antiquity.

The flame is lit according to the ancient method of the sun’s rays in the parabolic mirror. The Olympic flame can only be lit in this way. The flame is placed in an urn and transported into the ancient stadium where it is given to the first runner by the high priestess responsible for this operation.

This process takes place months before the opening of the Games, in order to allow for the relay to take place and bring the flame to the host city.

WINTER GAMES
Before the introduction of a torch relay for the Winter Games in Oslo 1952, fire was present in the stadium on two occasions – at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in 1936 and St Moritz in 1948. Since 1964, the torch has been lit in the same way as for the Summer Games, with one difference: the handing over of the flame to the first runner takes place near the monument to Pierre de Coubertin, situated in a copse close to the stadium.

WHAT IF THE SUN ISN’T SHINING?
As a precaution, on a sunny rehearsal day before the official ceremony, a flame is lit according to the traditional method. In this way, even if the sun is not out on the day of the ceremony, the torch can be lit from this flame, which is kept in a security lamp.
Relay history, itineraries and modes of transport

History of the first torch relays – summer and winter

In 1936, Carl Diem, Secretary General of the Organising Committee of the Games of the XI Olympiad in Berlin, proposed the inclusion of a torch relay in the programme of the Olympics. The flame was lit in Olympia and transported to Berlin via a torch relay. This first summer relay had to overcome several practical problems:

- the site of Olympia was hard to access and roads had to be specially built;
- planning of the itinerary required a lot of travelling for that period in time;
- the absence of suitable products (torch, cauldron, etc.) meant that research into specialist technology had to be undertaken, such as tests with the sun’s rays and different optical instruments.

In the context of the Winter Games, the first relay took place during the 1952 Games in Oslo. This first relay did not start in Olympia, Greece, but in the valley of Morgedal in Norway.

- the region, considered as the birthplace of skiing, was chosen as a reminder of the origins of this sport;
- the flame was lit in the hearth of the chalet belonging to Sondre Norheim, a legendary figure in Norwegian skiing.

At the Winter Games in Cortina d’Ampezzo in 1956, the flame was lit in front of the Capitole in Rome, as the city had just been elected host of the Games of the XVII Olympiad. The tripod used for the ceremony was sent from Olympia.

At the Winter Games in Squaw Valley in 1960, the flame was once again lit in Norway, at Sondre Norheim’s chalet. The inscription on the torch “Olympia to Squaw Valley” is a reference to an attempt to start the relay in Olympia, which did not succeed as the time period was too restricted.

Since the Innsbruck Games in 1964, the relay for the Winter Games has begun in Olympia.

Itinerary of the relay

BASIC ROUTE

Choosing a route for a relay is not as easy as drawing a straight line between Olympia and the host city of the Games! Each relay has its own “flavour” and allows for the discovery of the history and culture of a new part of the world.

From Olympia to Athens ... the organisation of the lighting of the flame in Olympia is always handled by the Greek Olympic Committee. This Committee also organises the transport of the flame by runners to Athens or, more precisely, to the Panathenaic stadium which was used for the 1896 Games.
From Athens to the host city... the rest of the relay to the host city of the Games is handled by the Olympic Games Organising Committee (OCOG). This Committee chooses the theme of the relay, which then helps them determine the regions to be crossed, the stops planned and the different types of transport. The following are some examples of themes which have influenced the itineraries of the flame.

Thematic routes – some examples of significant relays

The relay of peace – London 1948
In a Europe sorely afflicted by the war, the 1948 relay carried a welcome message of peace. The first runner, Corporal Dimitrelis, took off his military uniform before carrying the flame, commemorating the sacred truce observed in Ancient Greece. The planned route highlighted border crossings, where festivities were organised to celebrate the return of peace. The relay went through Lausanne, Switzerland. In homage to the restorer of the Olympic Games, a ceremony was organised at Pierre de Coubertin’s tomb in the Bois-de-Vaux cemetery.

The ancient Relay – Rome 1960
The relay shone the spotlight on the two poles of classical civilisation: Athens and Rome. Lesser-known ancient sites in Greece and Italy were thus brought to the public’s attention. For the first time, the relay was televised and the event closely followed by the media.

The relay to the New World – Mexico City 1968
The relay retraced the steps of Christopher Columbus to the New World. The idea was to underline the link between Mediterranean and Latin-American civilisations and between ancient (Greco-Latin) and Pre-Hispanic civilisations. A direct descendant of the great navigator, Cristóbal Colón de Carbajal, was the last runner on Spanish soil. The Olympic flame made a stop at the Great Pyramid of the Moon in Teotihuacan. A “New Fire” ceremony was organised which, in the Aztec tradition, was celebrated to mark the end of a 52-year cycle. The reappearance of the sun at dawn symbolised the renewal of the world.

The oriental relay – Seoul 1988
The relay showcased the traditions of Korea. Its route, which was a zigzag from east to west, symbolised the harmony to be found in the balance between two opposite poles. The torchbearers did not wear the official uniform provided by the Games Organising Committee, but instead wore regional or traditional costumes. The runner who brought the flame into the stadium was Sohn Kee-Chung, Olympic champion of the marathon in Berlin in 1936, under the name of Kitei Son. At the time, his medal was awarded to Japan, as Korea was under Japanese rule.

The “Down Under” relay – Sydney 2000
The relay had a twofold goal: to situate Australia within Oceania and to promote the culture and heritage of the different regions in the country. The start of the relay on the Australian continent was in the “red centre” at Uluru (Ayer's Rock), a sacred site for the indigenous population. The Aboriginal athlete Nova Peris-Kneebone, Olympic field hockey champion, was the first runner in the relay. The enthusiasm of the crowd along the relay route grew bigger and bigger. One million spectators welcomed the arrival of the flame in Sydney. In a ceremony which recalled the elements used in the design of the torch (fire, water, earth), Cathy Freeman “walked on water” before lighting a circle of fire which revealed itself to be the monumental cauldron.
The Olympic flame and torch relay

Originality of transportation

Traditionally, relays have been carried out on foot (for Berlin 1936, London 1948 and Moscow 1980 the relays were entirely run in this way). Although at the beginning, runners were mainly selected from amongst athletes, gradually the general public, including children, old people and people with disabilities, began to participate as well. With the celebration of the Olympic Games throughout the world, the flame had to travel by plane. The modes of transport have slowly become more and more diversified, not only for practical reasons, but also to showcase the particularities of the regions crossed.

The flame in the snow! Legendary Norwegian skiers (or their descendants) carried out the entirety of the transport of the flame. (Oslo 1952) — The flame went into the Arctic Circle at Inuvik, with stages carried out by snow-bike and skidoo. (Calgary 1988)

The flame in the water, on the water and under water! In the sea off Veracruz, Mexico, swimmers carried the flame from the boat Durango to the shore. (Mexico 1968) — A diver swam across the port of Marseilles holding the flame out of the water. (Grenoble 1968) — The flame travelled on the frigate Cataluña for the passage between Greece and Spain and arrived on Spanish soil in Empuries, the gateway to Greek civilisation on the Iberian peninsular (circa 600 B.C.) (Barcelona 1992) – A diver carried the flame under water at the Great Barrier Reef. (Sydney 2000)

The flame in the air, through the air and in space! The flame made its first trip in an aeroplane. (Oslo 1952) — It later traveled faster than the speed of sound on its journey from Athens to Paris – on Concorde! (Albertville 1992) — The wonders of technology were highlighted when the Canadians organized the transmission of the flame by satellite between Athens and Ottawa. (Montreal 1976) — For the first time in the history of the Olympics, the transfer of the flame took place between two parachute jumpers. It also made an impressive entry at the opening ceremony of the Games, carried by a ski jumper during his actual jump! (Lillehammer 1994) — The torch (but not the flame) was carried into space by astronauts. (Atlanta 1996 and Sydney 2000)

The flame on horseback and on a camel! To mark the fact that the equestrian events were held separately from the other Olympic events, the torchbearers for the journey of the flame to Stockholm carried the flame entirely on horseback. (Melbourne/Stockholm 1956) — Horses played a special role again when the history of the Pony express was featured as a part of a torch relay. (Atlanta 1996) — They were replaced by camels when the flame crossed the Australian desert. (Sydney 2000)

The flame in the Wild West! The modes of transport that are used bring to mind great moments in American history. For example, the flame traveled in an Indian canoe, on a Mississippi steamboat, and on a wagon of the Union Pacific (the first transcontinental railroad). (Atlanta 1996)
Relays facts and figures at a glance

Summer Games

BERLIN 1936
Total distance ➔ 3 187 km (including special stages in Kiel and Grünau)
Countries crossed ➔ Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany
Number of torchbearers ➔ 3 331
Final torchbearer ➔ Fritz Schilgen, symbol of German sporting youth

TOKYO 1964
Total distance ➔ 26 065 km (including air transport)
Number of torchbearers ➔ 101 866 (this high number is explained by the fact that in Japan, 1km was covered by the bearer of the flame, two reserve runners and up to 20 accompanying people)
Countries crossed ➔ from Greece to Japan with stops in the following countries- Turkey, Lebanon, Iran, Pakistan, India, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan. Three routes inside Japan
Final torchbearer ➔ Yoshinori Sakai. Born the day the atomic bomb was dropped on his city, he was nicknamed "Hiroshima Baby"

MONTREAL 1976
Total distance ➔ 775 km
Countries crossed ➔ Greece, Canada
Number of torchbearers ➔ approx. 1 214
Final torchbearer ➔ Sandra Henderson, an English speaker, and Stéphane Préfontaine, a French speaker. For the very first time, two people lit the cauldron together. The two teenagers symbolised Canadian youth and the two founding peoples of Canada. Contrary to certain rumours, the young "couple" did not subsequently get married!

SYDNEY 2000*
Total distance ➔ 27 000 km (Australia)
Countries crossed ➔ Greece, Guam, Palau, Micronesia, Salomon Islands, Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia
Number of torchbearers ➔ 800 (Greece), 1 500 (Oceanial, 11 000 (Australia)
Final torchbearer ➔ Cathy Freeman, Aboriginal athlete, medallist in athletics in 1996 and future Olympic champion (Sydney 2000)

ATHENS 2004*
Total distance ➔ over 78 000 km
Countries crossed ➔ Greece, plus international route covering all five continents and visiting all previous Summer Games host cities as well as Beijing.
Number of torchbearers ➔ approx. 7 700 (Greece), approx. 3 600 (internationally)
Final torchbearer ➔ Nikolaos Kaklamanakis, 1996 Olympic champion in sailing (mistral event)
Winter Games

OSLO 1952
- Departure: from Morgedal, valley in the Telemark region, Oslo
- Total distance: ~ 225 km
- Countries crossed: Norway
- Number of torchbearers: 94 (skiers)
- Final torchbearer: Eigil Nansen, grandson of the explorer, savant and politician Fridtjof Nansen, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1922

LAKE PLACID 1980
- Total distance: 12 824 km (of which 1600 km in the USA)
- Countries crossed: Greece, USA (from Langley, Virginia to Lake Placid, New York State)
- Number of torchbearers: 52 (26 men and 26 women representing the different states of America, the District of Columbia and the town of Lake Placid)
- Final torchbearer: Dr Charles Morgan Kerr, psychiatrist, University of Arizona

CALGARY 1988
- Total distance: 18 000 km in Canada, figures not provided for Greece
- Countries crossed: Greece, Canada
- Number of torchbearers: ~ 7 342
- Final torchbearer: Robyn Perry, 12 years old, future Olympic hope in figure skating

TORINO 2006*
- Total distance: 11 300km
- Number of torchbearers: 10 001
- Countries crossed: Greece, France (to former Olympic Winter Games host city Albertville) and Italy

NB:
- Figures concerning the relays are in accordance with those cited in Olympic Torch Relays by Walter Borgers:
  - Total Distance refers to the route of the relay, from Olympia to the host city of the Games.
  - Countries Crossed are those countries which organised welcome ceremonies or relays on their territory.
  - The Final Torchbearer is the person who lights the cauldron during the opening ceremony of the Games
- Exceptions which come from another source are marked with an asterisk:
  *Sydney 2000 and *Athens 2004 figures are from the Official Report of the Olympic Organising Committee
  *Torino 2006 figures are from the IOC website
Torches and design

Technological and aesthetic creations

For each edition of the Games, a new model of torch is designed to very high technical and aesthetic standards!

THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF THE OLYMPIC TORCH
It must conform to exact technical standards. During the relay, the flame must never go out. The torch must be able to stand up to difficult weather conditions (such as wind, rain, snow and extreme heat) and the most unusual modes of transport. It must also be capable of burning longer than the amount of time reserved for the relay leg, in case the runner has any problems on route.

In 1936, when the first relay was organised, experiments were necessary to determine the best shape for the torch and the most suitable combustible. Magnesium, gunpowder, resin, olive oil... all these products (and many others!) have been used to fuel the Olympic Flame. These days, a gas cartridge in the body of the torch is the most popular solution chosen. The type of gas used can influence the colour of the flame (from white to yellowy-red) and its intensity.

THE LOOK OF THE OLYMPIC TORCH
In the early days of the relay, the torch models were more or less the same. With the evolution of the Olympic Games, the shapes, colours and materials used have become more and more varied. This diversity shows not only the will to differentiate editions of the Games, but also a desire to present, through the object, the particularities of the host country.

The Nagano (1998) torch, for example, takes its inspiration from the traditional Japanese “taimatsu” torch, whereas the Sydney (2000) torch is reminiscent of the Opera House and the curved shape of a boomerang.

Nowadays, torches are produced in great quantities and, as a result, runners sometimes have the possibility of buying their torch after their participation in the relay.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE TORCH AND FLAME AT THE STADIUM
On the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Games, a torch of a different design or material from the one used in the rest of the relay may be used. A smoke apparatus is sometimes added so that the public can see the arrival of the flame in the stadium and easily follow its route through the crowd right up until the moment the cauldron is lit.
Explore a little further...

Imagine the organisation of a torch relay. What is the message conveyed by the flame? What is the route of the relay? What are the places or monuments to be showcased and used as stops for the flame in your region? How would you choose the modes of transport? What criteria would you use to select the runners?

Study the symbolism of the more recent Olympic torches. Look for the relationship between the shape, materials and colours used in the torch and the culture of the city or country where the Games took place.

Compare the role of the Olympic Flame in the Games with the role of fire in other ceremonies you know about. What do fire and light bring to these ceremonies?

Discover the history of fire. How do you explain the importance given to this element in all the civilisations of the world?

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Olympic Games Posters

- **Introduction**
  What is a poster?
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  What is an Olympic poster?
  Official Olympic posters.
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  Olympic Summer Games official poster — Rome 1960.
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  Significant elements — Role in the communication of the Games.
Introduction

WHAT IS A POSTER?
The poster is a form of visual communication, specific to public places, in which words, pictures and/or symbols are used together to convey a message.

The roots of the modern poster lie in Antiquity, where for instance in ancient Greece, mobile wooden panels called *axons* were used to inform the general population of decisions made by the authorities. Citizens of ancient Rome consulted the public *album* which consisted of a whitewashed wall on which official decisions were written.

The invention of printing techniques in the mid 15th century, together with rising literacy levels, meant that information of general concern became more and more common in public places. Advances in printing techniques in the 18th century also played a fundamental role in the further development of poster art.

Since the mid 19th century, the poster has become a main advertising medium and a form of expression for many artists. The modern poster is born!

In the past, posters often had a majority of text in order to convey the chosen message. Today’s posters, on the contrary, communicate with a strict minimum of text, relying heavily on signs and symbols, logos and images. The choice of colour is another important factor in modern poster art. Bold or contrasting colours are often used in order to attract the eye and make people take notice.

The role of a poster is to inform and promote. Whether the poster is used in the domain of politics, culture, sport, tourism or advertising, instant recognition and immediate comprehension remain the principal factors in the choice of graphic design.
POSTER-MAKING TECHNIQUES

Posters, by definition, rely on being able to create multiple productions. This would be impossible without printing technology.

There are numerous different printing methods. In general, early official posters were lithographs and more recent official posters are offset lithographs.

The process involves copying the original image onto another surface (plate or cylinder), applying ink and then running it through a printing press, which transfers it to a sheet of paper.

The introduction of the computer in the creation process for original designs is the most recent evolution in poster art. Although such new methods mean that traces of the artistic medium are more difficult to find than in the Olympic posters of the past, new technology in the hands of today’s designers adds endless creative possibilities designers of the past could only have dreamed of.

Lithography is a technique of reproducing images, also known as the “flat printing technique”. It was invented in 1798 by Aloys Senefelder. The term, derived from the Greek word lithos meaning stone, describes the art of reproducing an image executed directly on a stone plate.

Offset lithography is a printing method in which the image is printed from a stone or metal plate onto a cylinder coated with rubber. The cylinder is then used to transfer the image, non-reversed, to the paper.
Announcing the Games

WHAT IS AN OLYMPIC POSTER?
An Olympic poster communicates information about the Olympic Games. Each edition of the Games results in the creation of a substantial number of posters for advertising or communication purposes. Posters may feature the Olympic torch, mascots or pictograms, specific Olympic sports, competition sites, the Olympic village, cultural festivals or may seek to recruit volunteer helpers.

WHAT IS AN OFFICIAL OLYMPIC POSTER?
The official Olympic poster promotes a specific edition of the Olympic Games. Usually selected by the Organising Committee, it is part of a specific “look and feel” of the Games. Over time, it becomes the image or symbol of that edition of the Games.

THE FIRST OLYMPIC POSTERS
The first modern Games were held in Athens (Greece) in 1896. No official Olympic poster was created to promote the specific edition of the Games. It was not until the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm (Sweden) that an official poster was planned for and executed.

Since 1912, host cities have been in charge of organising the promotion and advertising of each edition of the Games. In 1924, the first Olympic Winter Games were held; since then, official Olympic posters have been produced for both Summer and Winter Games.

THE PROCESS OF SELECTION
In order to create the official Olympic poster, the Organising Committee of each edition of the Games generally sets up a poster contest. This contest may be open to all, to artists from the host country, or to specific artists pre-selected by the OCOG. The poster that wins first prize becomes the official poster of the Games and offers the artist or designer the opportunity to have his work circulated throughout the entire world.

Occasionally, a poster design has managed to impose itself completely on its own. For example, in 1920, the artwork on the official poster came from the cover of a book printed in 1914, called “Will we have the VIIth Olympiad in Anvers in 1920?”. This image was already strongly identified with the host city of the Games.

For the 1952 Helsinki Games (Finland), the poster design that had been chosen for the cancelled Games of 1940 was revived.

Artists submitting designs for official Olympic posters are often given strict guidelines for content. The designer does not necessarily have complete artistic freedom but must often adapt to a certain image of the Games. This does not mean that the end result is not of artistic merit! In fact, communicating a specific desired message to the viewer is often the role of a graphic designer.
The distribution of the Olympic poster

In order to bring together athletes and spectators from around the world, Games organisers did not always have the highly developed modes of communication of today. For instance, radio was not used until the 1928 Games in Amsterdam (The Netherlands) and television not before the 1936 Games in Berlin (Germany); this meant the promotion of the Games was essentially dependent on print. The poster was therefore an important method of announcing the Games.

Making the Games a truly international event was a real challenge for the organisers of the first Olympiads. The official poster of 1912 was produced in 16 languages, which shows the importance for Games organisers of being understood by a large number of people. Although there was little time for the distribution of the poster abroad, it was sent to 30 different countries and posted in locations as varied as hotels, restaurants, stores, travel agencies, transport companies, sporting clubs and even in doctor’s rooms. In the following years, Games organisers called on consulates and embassies of the host country as well as citizens living abroad in order to ensure the distribution of the poster.

In spite of the efforts made to translate posters and ensure efficient distribution networks, sometimes the poster design itself can cause communication difficulties. When the Stockholm official poster was issued, it was often criticised as being “too daring”, even though the nudity of the athletes made reference to the Games of Antiquity. It was not distributed in certain countries, even though the artist added ribbons in order to mask a certain amount of the nudity. Further remarks were made concerning the order of the 21 national flags presented in the poster. Actually, the artist had based the order of the flags on a colour scheme and not on politics. The Organising Committee defended their choice and left the poster as it was, as the artistic quality of the work was not in question.

With time, other forms of media, particularly television, have come to relate the information once communicated mainly by posters. Today, we no longer the need to put the exact dates of the Games on the official poster, nor to geographically situate the host city, as on the poster for the 1932 Lake Placid Games. The promotion of the Games, including related practical information, is now effectively communicated via television, radio and internet.
The Context

It is important to situate the 1948 St. Moritz (Switzerland) official poster in its social and political context. The 1940 Olympic Winter Games were to be held in Sapporo (Japan) but their candidature was withdrawn in 1938 due to the war with China. The candidature for the Games first shifted to St. Moritz and then to Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Germany). However, with the advent of the Second World War, cancellation of the Olympics was inevitable. No Olympic Games were organised in 1940 or in 1944. Finally, after the war in 1948, Switzerland, as a neutral country, offered favourable conditions for hosting this international sporting event.
READING THE IMAGE

Under a vast sky, two skiers cross a snow-covered landscape of sunlit mountain peaks.

- **The Alpine Sun**
  The alpine sun is of primary importance in this poster, filling the sky with its radiating sunbeams and taking up a large portion of the image. This seems a very appropriate choice, as St. Moritz is known for its “champagne climate”, boasting 322 days of glorious sunshine per year.

  The image of the sun has been associated with St. Moritz for a very long time. A sun designed in 1930 by graphic artist Walter Herdeg became the registered trademark of St. Moritz in 1937. Herdeg’s trademark sun, although not represented in the official poster, is part of the 1948 St. Moritz Olympic emblem and is found on other Games posters, athletes’ bibs and participant badges.

- **The Couple**
  The poster shows a man and a woman on skis, viewed from behind. They appear particularly small in relation to the dominant motif of the sun. Surprisingly for an Olympic poster, they don’t seem particularly athletic. They look more like fashionable and relaxed tourists than athletes participating in an international sporting competition.

  The couple’s brightly-coloured ski-clothes are representative of 1930s fashion. The man is shown tanned, an image associated at this time with good health, leisure and travel, as well as a certain quality of life. When tanning came into fashion in the 20’s, the negative effects of sun-exposure were still unknown!

- **The Mountains and Snow**
  The snow-covered mountains in this image obviously relate to the theme of winter and skiing. St. Moritz is one of the world’s most famous ski resorts, and cannot be disassociated from this winter sport.

  The sun-flooded, alpine view is clearly accented. The St. Moritz ski area, with the Piz Nair, boasts a top elevation of 3,057 metres. The width of ski slope depicted in the poster is worthy of note, as is the fact that the couple seems to be alone, “on top of the world”, as the St. Moritz slogan states.

- **The Snowflakes**
  Ten very large snowflakes (almost as large as the sun) fill the sky and appear as the culminating point at the end of the sun’s rays.

  The snowflakes, thickly outlined in black, appear as cut-outs. It is interesting to note the bold colours chosen: red, blue, orange and yellow, which are far from realistic! Certain forms clearly represent snowflakes while other shapes seem to resemble flowers.

  After 1948, the snowflake is often used as a symbol in official Winter Olympic posters.
- **The Sky**

The sky takes up the majority of the image. Its colour changes from light blue where it touches the immaculate white mountaintops, to dark bluish-green and then to greenish-black, the largest part.

The effect created in the sky can be seen as similar to frost on a window-pane, accentuating the winter aspect. The choice of the colour green may however suggest an area such as a forest or a pasture.

- **The Olympic Rings**

The symbol of the Olympic rings represents the union of the five continents and the meeting of athletes from all nations at the Olympic Games. In the 1948 St. Moritz official poster, the Olympic rings are situated just above the text, where their colours stand out against the bright white snow of the background.

The first time the Olympic rings are used in an official Olympic poster is for the 1928 St. Moritz Games.

- **The Swiss Shield**

The Swiss shield is seen in the top right-hand corner, perhaps as a counterbalance to the Olympic rings. The message is clear: the nations of the world are coming to Switzerland for the Olympic Games.

- **The Text**

The text reads “Olympic Winter Games 1948 St. Moritz Switzerland”, giving the title of the event, the year and the place where the Games are to be held. A second poster was made which also gives the exact dates of the event (30.01.1948 – 08.02.1948).

In order to ensure global communication, the text was translated into several languages.
- **The Designers**
  This poster appears to be a cooperative work between Fritz Hellinger, a Swiss poster artist from Basel, and a photographer named Keerl. Both names are found inscribed in the top left-hand corner of the poster. As no clear explanation has been left behind in the archives, it is unclear whether Hellinger based his artwork on a photograph taken by Keerl or whether a collage of photography, drawing and cut-out was used.

- **Composition and Style**
  The design of the 1948 St. Moritz official poster is notably asymmetrical. The main element of the composition, the sun, is situated in the left third, while the two remaining thirds are filled with the sky. This “imbalance” is compensated for by the extension of the sun’s rays and the counterweight of the vast sky.
  The style draws on the Swiss travel poster, presenting the alpine landscape. It is also characteristic of the two-dimensional style of the “Swiss school” in which all traces of perspective are suppressed.

- **What is the message?**
  The message of this poster is dual: to inform the public of the coming Olympic Winter Games and to promote the ski resort of St. Moritz. The sunshine and snow-covered mountains depicted in the poster undoubtedly aim to encourage tourism in this post-War period.
  The couple appears “on top of the world”, highlighting the exclusiveness of the ski station, while the rays of sunshine they bathe in emphasize St. Moritz’s famous climate. The image very clearly encourages winter tourism, and perhaps less obviously, tourism in summer (as seen in the green tint of the sky and the snowflake “flowers”). Overall, the image presented is clearly one of leisure sports and pleasure, promoting St. Moritz as a Swiss tourism “mecca”.
  Supporting this theory, aside from the clear tourism poster style, is the fact that this poster was issued by the Swiss National Tourist Office (SNTO) in both an Olympic and non-Olympic form. A travel poster, using the exact same design, was also issued in 1948 with the text “Vacances en Suisse” (Holidays in Switzerland). This was not by chance, as the President of the Commission for Propaganda and Advertising for the St. Moritz Organizing Committee was also Director of the SNTO.
The CONTEXT
When Rome was designated to host the 1960 Olympic Games, a clear decision was made to bring the city’s rich history to the forefront through this international sporting event. As well as the new sport infrastructures which were built, a number of ancient sites were restored and used to hold Olympic competitions: the wrestling events were held in Basilica of Maxentius, gymnastics in the Baths of Caracalla, and the Arch of Constantine served as the finish line of the marathon.
READING THE IMAGE

The poster shows the upper part of a column, known as a capital, decorated with human figures. At the top a she-wolf can be seen, feeding two infants. Text, dates and the Olympic rings complete the picture.

- The Wolf feeding Romulus and Remus

The she-wolf and twins represent the popular myth of the founding of Rome.

Legend has it that the twin boys were the offspring of the Roman god of war, Mars, and the nephews of the King of Alba Longa. The king, fearing a challenge for the crown, set the twins afloat in a basket on the Tiber River, which later floated ashore and was found by a female wolf.

Nursed by the she-wolf, the twins were later adopted by a shepherd and named Romulus and Remus. According to tradition, the adult Romulus and Remus founded the city of Roma in 753 B.C., on the site where they were discovered by the she-wolf. Later, in a quarrel for leadership, Romulus killed Remus and became sole ruler of Rome.

The image of the she-wolf and the twins is based on the sculpture of the Lupa Capitolina (Capitoline Wolf), which dates from the VIth century BC. The original sculpture had been damaged during Antiquity and was restored during the Renaissance. The twins we see today date from this period.

The sculpture has become a well-known symbol of the city of Rome.

- The Belvedere Capital (upper element of the column)

The capital featured on the poster is a reference to the Belvedere capital. This decorative architectural element was originally found in the Baths of Caracalla, built in the early third century AD. The Baths, richly decorated with artwork, housed cold, warm and hot water pools, plunge baths, a space for the practice of gymnastics, a large enclosed area for running and games, a library and gardens.

The Belvedere capital was later removed from the site of the ancient Baths of Caracalla to decorate the palaces of the Vatican.

The presence of the Belvedere capital on this Olympic poster, refers to the ancient Baths and accentuates Roman heritage of physical movement. For this reason, the Organizing Committee of the Rome 1960 Games decided to hold the gymnastics competition in this early third century “sports complex”.

- On the Capital: the Athlete and the Crowd

The scene represented is of an athlete crowning himself with his right hand while holding a palm leaf of victory in his left. While he himself is nude, those surrounding him are toga-clad. Several other athletes are also wearing crowns, a symbol of victory.

- The Text

The text on the poster uses Roman numerals rather than Arabic numbers, which reinforces the “antique” identity of these Games. It reads “Games of the XVII Olympiad, Roma, 25.VIII – 11.IX” ; and, on the capital, “Roma MCMLX”.

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The information provided is complete: the name of the event, the edition of the Games, the Olympic symbol, the specific dates, the year and the location. As with other posters in the past, as a result of the amount of text used and for communication purposes, the poster was translated into 11 languages.

The Olympic rings are placed between the name of the city and the dates of the Games, communicating the nature of the event and its international status.

- **The Designer**
  Armando Testa is a key figure in modern Italian graphic design, and more specifically in advertising. Originally a painter, he became a commercial artist with a vision which led to the creation of the advertising agency Studio Testa in 1956. In his work for well-known clients (Pirelli tyres, Lavazza coffee, the airline Alitalia, etc.) he displays an unconventional creativity as well as a sense of humour. ‘‘Armando Testa’’ is now an international Italian advertising agency working in the field of communication (media, television and internet), based on the original vision of its founder.

- **Composition and Style**
  Three years before the Games, a poster contest was set up for Italian designers with clearly defined content stipulations: the idea of Olympic sport in Rome, the Olympic rings, and the text ‘‘Games of the XVII Olympiad — Rome — MCMLX’’. Although 249 designs were submitted, the Jury did not find any to be to their liking. No prize was awarded, but rather a second competition was organised in which 12 of the most qualified Italian poster artists were invited to participate.

  Armando Testa was awarded the prize for best design in this contest. He was nonetheless asked to make several specific modifications while keeping the same overall artistic inspiration and feel. Testa presented a second project, which was still found to be lacking. The elements to be included in the poster were indicated even more specifically: a pillar with capital and the Capitoline Wolf, the Olympic rings, and the previously mentioned text. Testa’s final project was accepted and went on to become the official poster.

  The design of the 1960 Rome official poster is symmetrical, organised around a central axe, which gives an impression of harmony. The colours of the Capital and the column are subdued, yet stand out from the neutral white background. The artist has found a balance between the classical elements and his personal style and vision. He proposes a modern version of the Capital and Wolf, simplifying the design by using outlines. The overall design remains simple and eye-catching.

- **What is the message?**
  The Capitoline Wolf, the Belvedere capital, the Baths of Caracalla and, of course, the Olympic Games: the poster brings together the past and the present, clearly establishing the link between ancient and modern Rome, and between sport and culture.
The visual history of the Games

The official Olympic posters provide a visual history of the image of each edition of the Olympic Games. They act as witnesses to both the styles and values of their time as well as the social and political context of the era.

**SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS**

These posters, which span a century of Olympic history, draw on a specific vocabulary of symbols which can be divided into two main groups. The first includes figurative elements of significance for the host country such as public monuments, statues, flags, landscapes or cityscapes. The second puts more of an accent on graphic elements (e.g. poster of Mexico City 1968) or on the emblem of the Games (a design featuring the Olympic rings together with other distinctive elements). The most recent posters rely heavily on this form of communication and any text tends to be limited to the name of the host city and the year of the Games.

The Olympic rings themselves are usually what makes official posters immediately identifiable. Indeed, since 1928, the year they first appeared, the rings have been the overall unifying element on official posters.

**ROLE IN THE COMMUNICATION OF THE GAMES**

The official Olympic posters show the evolution not only of the Games themselves but also of design and poster art from 1896 to today. They are an Olympic tradition, and serves to remind us of each edition of the Games. Windows on the past, they let the Games of yesterday live and breathe.
Explore a little further...

**Imagine** the Olympic Games were to be hosted by your home town (or a near-by city). Design an Olympic Games poster. What elements would you find important to include and why?

**Observe** in detail an official Olympic Games poster. Try to analyse the choice of representation, the colours chosen, as well as any other significant elements. Situate the poster in its social and political context.

**Compare** two posters and try to decipher which is the more modern of the two. How does each poster relate to the period in which it was produced? How do its “look and feel” help identify its origins?

**Choose** another major sporting or cultural event and analyse the poster created for it.

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**SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The official Olympic Posters are featured on the website www.olympic.org

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