

**FLEYDO ENGLISH SCHOOL**

A1 Reading Challenge

# How the Olympics Started

*Long ago in Greece, the Olympic Games started. They are still here today!*

<b>Level</b>	A1 (Beginner)
<b>Age Group</b>	Teens (11-16)
<b>Topic</b>	True Stories
<b>Duration</b>	~10 minutes
<b>Vocabulary</b>	12 words
<b>Quiz</b>	5 questions

## Article

Every four years, something big happens. People from all over the world come together. They watch sports on TV. They cheer for their country. The streets are full of flags. The best athletes in the world **compete**. They run, they swim, they jump. They want to win a **medal**. This is the Olympic Games. It is the biggest sport event in the world. But how did the Olympics start? The story is very, very old. It started almost 3,000 years ago, in **ancient** Greece.

### The First Olympic Games

The first Olympic Games were in 776 BCE. That is a very long time ago! The Games were in a place called Olympia, in Greece. The name "Olympics" comes from this place. The Games were a special party for a Greek god. His name was Zeus. The Greeks loved Zeus. They wanted to make him happy. So they had big sports games for him. The Games were every four years. People came from all over Greece. They came on foot, by horse, or by boat. They walked for many days to get to Olympia. There were no cars and no trains then. It was a big trip!

### What Sports Did They Play?

The first Olympic Games had only one sport. It was a foot race. Men ran a short distance, about 192 metres. The first **winner** was a cook named Coroebus. He was very fast. After this, the Games got bigger and bigger. They added new sports. There was a long race. There was a race with a horse. There was wrestling. People threw things — like a heavy ball or a long stick. There was also a sport called pankration. It was a kind of fighting. It was very hard. The men did all these sports without clothes! They thought it was beautiful. They put olive oil on their bodies.

### Only Men Could Compete

In **ancient** Greece, only men could be in the Olympics. Women were not allowed. They could not even watch the Games. There was a different sport event for women. It was called the Heraea Games. Women ran in races for the goddess Hera. But this was a small event. The big Olympics were only for men. The men in the Games were strong and trained for many years. The winners did not get money. They did not get **gold** or **silver**. They got a special prize: a crown made of olive leaves! This was a big honour. They became famous in their towns. People made statues of them.

### Peace During the Games

In **ancient** Greece, the cities often fought with each other. There were many wars. But during the Olympics, they had a special rule. There was no fighting. No war. This was called the "Olympic Truce." It meant **peace** for everyone. Soldiers could not carry

weapons to Olympia. People from different cities could travel safely to the Games. This idea was very important. The Games brought people together. They forgot their fights for a while. They watched sports together. They were friends, just for those days.

## The End of the Ancient Games

The **ancient** Olympic Games were every four years for almost 1,200 years. That is a long, long time! But then something happened. In 393 CE, a Roman emperor stopped the Games. His name was Theodosius. He did not like the old Greek gods. The Games were a party for Zeus, so he stopped them. After that, the Olympics were gone for a long time. About 1,500 years passed. People forgot about the Games. The old buildings in Olympia fell down. Trees and grass grew over them. The Olympic **flame** went out.

## The Modern Olympics Begin

Then, in the late 1800s, something new happened. A French man had a big idea. His name was Pierre de Coubertin. He loved sports. He thought sports could bring people together. He wanted to start the Olympics again. He worked hard. He talked to many people. In 1894, he made a big plan. Two years later, in 1896, the first **modern** Olympic Games started. The place was Athens, in Greece. About 240 athletes from 14 countries came. There were races, swimming, gymnastics, and other sports. All the athletes were men. The Games were a big success. People loved them. They wanted more!

## The Games Today

Today, the Olympics are very different from 1896. Many more athletes come now. There are about 11,000 athletes. They come from more than 200 countries. There are men and women. Women started joining in 1900. Now, half the athletes are women. There are many more sports too. There are about 300 events. People run, swim, do gymnastics, play football, ride bikes, and much more. There are winners for first, second, and third place. The first place gets a **gold medal**. The second place gets a **silver medal**. The third place gets a **bronze** medal.

## The Olympic Symbol

The Olympic flag is famous. It is white. On it, there are five rings. The rings are blue, yellow, black, green, and red. They join together. The five rings are a special symbol. They show the five parts of the world: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. They show that all the world comes together for the Games. The flag was made by Pierre de Coubertin in 1913. There is also the Olympic **flame**. Before each Games, the **flame** is lit in Olympia, Greece. It travels to the new city. People carry it from country to country. The flame burns for the whole Games. When the Games are over, the flame goes out.

## Summer and Winter Games

Today, there are two kinds of Olympics. There are the Summer Games. They have running, swimming, and most other sports. The Winter Games are different. They have winter sports like skiing, ice skating, and ice hockey. The Winter Games started in 1924. They are also every four years, but at a different time. Now, every two years, there is an Olympic Games — sometimes summer, sometimes winter.

## Why We Love the Olympics

The Olympics are special for many reasons. They bring countries together. For two weeks, people from everywhere watch sports together. The Games show us amazing things. Athletes run faster, jump higher, and swim further than ever before. We see new heroes. We see big smiles when athletes win. We see kind moments when athletes help each other. The old Greeks had a good idea. Sports can bring **peace**. Sports can make us friends. Almost 3,000 years later, this idea is still true. The Olympics started with one race, in one place, in one country. Today, they are a party for the whole world.

## Vocabulary

Word	Meaning
<b>ancient</b>	very, very old; from a long time ago
<b>athlete</b>	a person who is good at a sport
<b>compete</b>	to try to win against other people
<b>medal</b>	a small flat piece of metal you get when you win
<b>gold</b>	a yellow, shiny, expensive metal
<b>silver</b>	a white, shiny metal
<b>bronze</b>	a brown-yellow metal
<b>winner</b>	the person who wins
<b>modern</b>	of today; not old
<b>flame</b>	the bright, hot, moving shape of fire
<b>ring</b>	a round shape, like a circle
<b>peace</b>	a time when there is no fighting or war

## Comprehension Quiz

### 1. Where did the Olympic Games start?

- A) In Italy
- B) In Greece
- C) In Egypt
- D) In China

### 2. When were the first Olympic Games?

- A) 100 years ago
- B) 500 years ago
- C) 1,000 years ago
- D) Almost 3,000 years ago

### 3. Who started the modern Olympic Games?

- A) A French man named Pierre de Coubertin
- B) An English king
- C) An American president
- D) A Greek athlete

### 4. How many rings does the Olympic flag have?

- A) Three
- B) Four
- C) Five
- D) Six

### 5. How often are the Olympic Games today?

- A) Every year
- B) Every two years
- C) Every four years
- D) Every ten years

## Answer Key

#	Answer	Question
1	<b>B</b>	1. Where did the Olympic Games start?
2	<b>D</b>	2. When were the first Olympic Games?
3	<b>A</b>	3. Who started the modern Olympic Games?
4	<b>C</b>	4. How many rings does the Olympic flag have?
5	<b>C</b>	5. How often are the Olympic Games today?