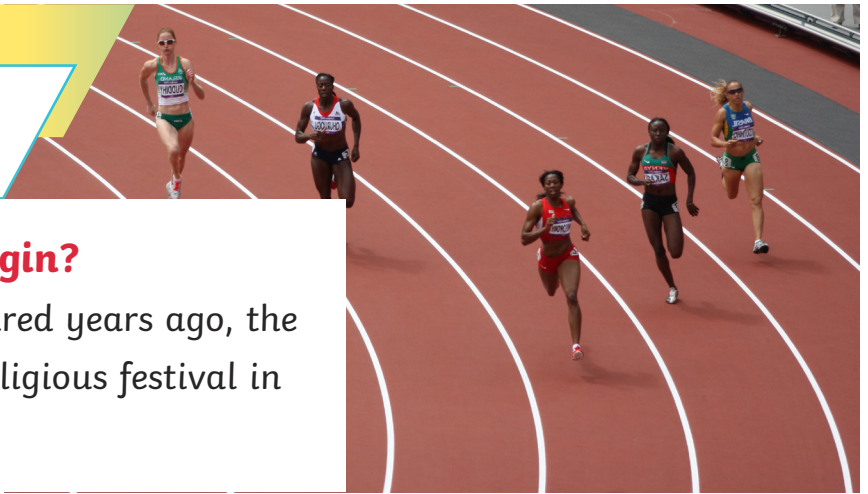


The Games



When did the Olympics begin?

Over two thousand seven hundred years ago, the Olympics began as part of a religious festival in Olympia in ancient Greece.

Ancient Greek Games

The Greeks took part in the Olympic Games for over one thousand years to celebrate the Greek god, Zeus. Only men and boys were allowed to participate in events such as wrestling, boxing, long jump, javelin, discus and chariot racing. The Games occurred every four years until the Greek Empire was defeated, and the Games were forbidden.

Modern Games

In 1894, the Games were resurrected and a special International Games Committee was formed. The modern Games have taken place every four years since, with athletes from all over the world taking part in different events.

Medals

Medals are awarded to athletes who come 1st, 2nd or 3rd in their event. Gold is awarded to the winner who comes 1st, silver is awarded to 2nd place and bronze to 3rd place.

The Torch

In ancient times, it is said that the torch was lit outside the Temple of Hera using flames created from rays from the Sun's rays. Messengers took the torch around Greece so that people knew about the Games. The modern torches of the Summer and Winter Games are still lit in Olympia. Several thousand people take turns carrying the torch relay-style from Olympia to the country and venue of the Games.

The Games

The Rings

One of the symbols of the modern Games is five interlocking rings. The five rings are blue, yellow, black, green and red. They represent the five continents, or parts of the world, which took part in the first modern Games.

Para-Games

The Para-Games take place after the Summer and Winter Games. These inclusive Games mean high performance athletes with disabilities can compete on the world stage across the sporting codes.

Sports

Over the years, the sports included have evolved along with the Games. In recent times, a number of sports have been added to (or removed from) the Summer Games, including breakdancing, surfing, skateboarding and golf.

Mascots

Mascots have been associated with the Games for many years. The mascots for the country hosting the Games play an important role in welcoming athletes and visitors and act as ambassadors embodying the spirit of the Games.

The Modern Games

The modern Summer and Winter Games are considered by many to be the only worldwide, multi-sport, athletics competition in the world. Over 200 countries participate in events across the Games.