

The Evolution of the Olympic Games: Tradition Meets Innovation

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

INTERACTIVE ONLINE TEST

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Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

- A** The Olympic Games have a rich history that dates back to ancient Greece, where they were held in Olympia every four years. These early games celebrated athletic prowess and were closely tied to religious ceremonies honoring Zeus. Athletes competed in various events, including running, wrestling, and chariot racing. The original Olympics were not merely a sports competition; they represented a unifying force among the city-states of Greece, fostering a spirit of camaraderie and respect. However, the games faded after the rise of the Roman Empire and were eventually abolished in 393 AD. It wasn't until the late 19th century that the modern Olympic Games were revived, thanks to the efforts of Baron Pierre de Coubertin. He envisioned a global event that would promote peace and international understanding through sports.
- B** Today, the Olympics have evolved significantly, blending tradition with modernity. The first modern Olympics took place in Athens in 1896, featuring 13 countries and 43 events. Fast forward to the Tokyo 2020 Games, which, despite being postponed due to the pandemic, showcased over 11,000 athletes from 206 nations competing in more than 300 events. Innovations such as technology-enhanced training, live broadcasts, and the introduction of new sports like skateboarding and surfing have transformed the experience for both athletes and spectators. The Olympics continue to adapt, emphasizing sustainability and inclusivity. As the world changes, the Olympic Games remain a powerful symbol of unity, drawing people together to celebrate human achievement and resilience.

Vocabulary Glossary

Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
prowess	great skill or ability in a particular activity or field	<i>The young chess player showed great prowess in the tournament.</i>
camaraderie	a feeling of friendship and trust among people in a group	<i>There was a sense of camaraderie among the team members.</i>
abolished	ended or stopped something officially	<i>Slavery was abolished in the country many years ago.</i>
revived	brought back to life or activity	<i>The old play was revived and became popular again.</i>
enhanced	made better or improved	<i>The new smartphone has enhanced features compared to the old one.</i>
inclusivity	including all kinds of people and treating them equally	<i>The school promotes inclusivity in all its programs.</i>
resilience	the ability to recover quickly from difficulties	<i>The community showed resilience after the storm.</i>
sustainability	the ability to continue or last in a way that does not harm the environment	<i>Using solar power is a step towards sustainability.</i>

Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. The team showed great _____ and won the championship against all odds.
2. The company _____ an old product line that had been discontinued.
3. The new policy aims to improve _____ by welcoming everyone.
4. The government _____ the outdated law to reflect modern values.
5. Her artistic _____ was evident in her beautiful paintings.
6. The project focuses on _____ to protect the planet for future generations.

Comprehension Questions

These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.

Question 1

What was the significance of the original Olympic Games beyond sports?

- A. They were a religious festival dedicated to Zeus.
- B. They were a way to train soldiers for war.
- C. They were a means to collect taxes from city-states.
- D. They were a commercial event to sell goods.

Question 2

How did the Tokyo 2020 Games differ from the first modern Olympics?

- A. They included fewer countries and events.
- B. They were canceled due to the pandemic.
- C. They featured new sports and a large number of participants.
- D. They were held in Athens instead of Tokyo.

Question 3

Why were the original Olympics eventually abolished?

- A. The Roman Empire did not support them.
- B. They became too expensive to organize.
- C. They were no longer interesting to people.
- D. Weather conditions made them difficult to hold.

Question 4

What was Baron Pierre de Coubertin's vision for the modern Olympics?

- A. To create a new religious festival.
- B. To promote peace and understanding through sports.
- C. To develop a new form of government.
- D. To establish a global trade network.

Question 5

What role does sustainability play in the modern Olympics?

- A. It is ignored in favor of technological advancements.
- B. It is a key focus along with inclusivity.
- C. It is seen as unnecessary and costly.
- D. It is only considered in the host city's planning.

Discussion & Writing Prompts

Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).

1. In Paragraph 1, it is mentioned that the original Olympics fostered camaraderie among Greek city-states. How do you think modern international events achieve similar results today?

2. Paragraph 2 describes the introduction of new sports like skateboarding and surfing at the Tokyo 2020 Games. What new sports do you think could be included in future Olympics, and why?

3. The passage notes that the Tokyo 2020 Games had over 11,000 athletes from 206 nations. What challenges and benefits do you think come with organizing such a large international event?

Answer Key

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 A

Q2 C

Q3 A

Q4 B

Q5 B

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 resilience

FIB2 revived

FIB3 inclusivity

FIB4 abolished

FIB5 prowess

FIB6 sustainability

Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

1. What was the significance of the original Olympic Games beyond sports?

✓ A — They were a religious festival dedicated to Zeus.

They were closely tied to religious ceremonies honoring Zeus, as stated in the passage.

✗ B — They were a way to train soldiers for war.

The passage does not mention the games as military training.

✗ C — They were a means to collect taxes from city-states.

There is no mention of tax collection in the passage.

✗ D — They were a commercial event to sell goods.

The passage does not describe the games as a commercial event.

2. How did the Tokyo 2020 Games differ from the first modern Olympics?

✓ C — They featured new sports and a large number of participants.

The passage notes the introduction of new sports and over 11,000 athletes at Tokyo 2020.

✗ A — They included fewer countries and events.

Tokyo 2020 had more countries and events than the first modern Olympics.

✗ B — They were canceled due to the pandemic.

The games were postponed, not canceled.

✗ D — They were held in Athens instead of Tokyo.

The games were held in Tokyo, not Athens.

3. Why were the original Olympics eventually abolished?

✓ A — The Roman Empire did not support them.

The passage states that the games faded after the rise of the Roman Empire.

✗ B — They became too expensive to organize.

The passage does not mention cost as a reason.

✗ C — They were no longer interesting to people.

Lack of interest is not mentioned in the passage.

✗ D — Weather conditions made them difficult to hold.

Weather is not noted as a factor in the passage.

4. What was Baron Pierre de Coubertin's vision for the modern Olympics?

✓ B — To promote peace and understanding through sports.

Coubertin aimed to promote peace and international understanding through sports, as stated in the passage.

✗ A — To create a new religious festival.

Religious festivals are not mentioned in his vision.

✗ C — To develop a new form of government.

The passage does not mention a new form of government.

✗ D — To establish a global trade network.

Trade networks are not part of his vision according to the passage.

5. What role does sustainability play in the modern Olympics?

✓ B — It is a key focus along with inclusivity.

The passage emphasizes that sustainability and inclusivity are important in the modern Olympics.

✗ A — It is ignored in favor of technological advancements.

The passage does not suggest sustainability is ignored.

✗ C — It is seen as unnecessary and costly.

The passage highlights sustainability as important, not unnecessary.

✗ D — It is only considered in the host city's planning.

The passage suggests it is a broader focus, not limited to the host city.

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