

Tokyo Olympics 202X?

A Before you read

What do you know about the Olympic Games? Are the following facts all correct? Discuss them in class, and then read the text and check your answers.

1. There are Olympic Games in the winter and the summer.
2. They are held every four years.
3. The places chosen for the games are selected by a special committee.
4. No country can host the Olympics twice.
5. Both male and female athletes have always taken part.
6. The number of sports never changes.
7. There are special games for able-bodied athletes and also for athletes with disabilities.
8. The symbol of the Olympics is a white flag with five different coloured rings on it.
9. The Olympic flame is taken from Greece to the opening ceremony before the Games begin.
10. The Olympic Games have never been cancelled.

B Reading

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was founded in 1894 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin. This is the committee that is still in charge of the Olympic Games today. Their job is deciding which country is going to host the Olympic Games, which types of sports there will be, who can take part and many other important things also including who will provide the money to finance the Olympic Games.



The first Olympic Games were held in 1896 in Athens, Greece. 250 male athletes from 14 countries took part in 42 events. Nowadays there are nearly 340 events in 33 sports (50 disciplines), and over 11,000 male and female athletes from over 200 countries take part. There are only five countries (Australia, France, Great Britain, Greece and Switzerland) which have taken part in all of the Olympic Games. Although they have not always taken part, the USA has won the most medals. Since the first Olympic Games in the summer of 1896, there are also now Winter Olympics for snow and ice sports, the Paralympic Games for athletes with disabilities and even the Youth Olympic Games for athletes between 14 and 18 years of age.

Due to the cost and preparation time needed to build stadiums and for athletes to get top fit, the Olympic Games are not held every year. They are every four years, but winter and summer Olympics are not held in the same year. Instead they are held two years apart.

Tokyo Olympics 202X?

There are a number of traditions that are associated with every Olympiad, whether in the summer or the winter. There is the Olympic flag, on which the rings represent the five continents, and the six colours are those that appear on all the national flags. There is also the Olympic flame, which is lit by the rays of the sun in Olympia, Greece, and is taken around Greece before it is transported to the host country, where there is a Torch Relay before the Opening Ceremony. The Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Olympic Games are two other very important parts of the Games. At the Opening Ceremony the countries present their athletes, who proudly walk behind their nation's flag. At the Closing Ceremony successful athletes proudly wear their medals. There are Olympic medals, with a design unique to each Olympic Games, for first, second and third place. Nowadays the athletes also receive flowers and usually a gift of the Olympic mascot as a soft toy.

There are often changes to the sports included in the programme of events to ensure that the Olympics remain relevant to sports fans of all generations. This also allows sports that are popular in the host country to be added to the programme in order to improve local interest. In Tokyo there are five new sports and 15 new events. For the first time ever karate, sport climbing, surfing and skateboarding will be included in the Olympic programme, and baseball and softball will be included again for the first time since 2008. In the Paralympics, sailing and seven-a-side football will be replaced by badminton and taekwondo. Sailing and seven-a-side football have been dropped due to an insufficient international reach. Badminton and taekwondo were chosen from a long list that also included electric wheelchair hockey and amputee football, which weren't chosen this time.

The 29th Summer Olympic Games should have been held in Tokyo, Japan, from 24 July until 9 August 2020. The 16th summer Paralympics should have followed them, also in Tokyo, two weeks later. It is the second time that Tokyo has prepared for the summer Olympic Games and the second time they have been postponed or cancelled there. In 2020 they have been postponed due to Covid-19 (alias the Corona Virus) and in 1940 they were cancelled due to the outbreak of the Japanese Chinese War on 16th July 1938.

The 2020 (now 2021) Summer Olympics are officially known as the Games of the XXXII Olympiad or also the Recovery Olympics. This name refers to the Fukushima tsunami and nuclear disaster in March 2011. If they will be re-named after their postponement remains to be seen. The Torch Relay starts in Fukushima, the site of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster and also the site of the Fukushima Stadium, where the Olympic baseball and softball matches will be played. Tokyo was chosen in 2013 by the IOC (International Olympic Committee) to hold the 2020 Summer Olympic Games. Madrid and Istanbul competed for the honour and may be the hosts in the future.

It is the first time in the history of the Olympic Games that the Summer Games have been postponed, although they have suffered a number of problems. For example, in 1916 the Summer Olympics were supposed to be held in Berlin but due to the outbreak of World War I, they were cancelled. In 1940 and 1944, due to World War II, the Summer Olympics were cancelled again and not held until 1948 when the war was over. Then they were held in London. As a consequence of World War I, the Summer Olympics of 1920 were moved from Budapest (as they had been an ally to Germany and the IOC was mainly dominated by the French) to Antwerp in Belgium. Neither Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary nor Turkey were invited to take part.

Tokyo Olympics 202X?

Due to problems in and between different countries, a few nations were forbidden from participating. From 1964 until 1992 South Africa was suspended because of apartheid. The Moscow Olympics of 1980 were boycotted by the USA due to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Four years later, The Soviet Union boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics saying that there wasn't enough security, or was it really as a reply to America's boycott in 1980?

Sadly, there have also been athletes killed at Olympic Games, which means their dates also go down in history. In 1972, the Olympics were held in Munich and 11 Israeli athletes, coaches and judges were murdered by Palestinian terrorists. In the Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta a bomb exploded, killing two people at the 1996 Summer Olympics.

Although the Olympic Games are a world event themselves, events around the world can seriously affect them.

C Looking at language

1. Find words in the text that mean the same as these words.

1. started	
2. men and women	
3. result	
4. delayed	
5. because of	
6. stopped from taking part	
7. didn't take part	
8. take place	
9. will always be remembered	

2. Match the words on the left with the correct words on the right.

There is one more than you need.

1. Winter Olympics	a) Torch Relay
2. Paralympics	b) organisers
3. Olympic flame	c) Olympics postponed
4. Olympic flags	d) disabled athletes
5. IOC	e) Olympics cancelled
6. World War I and World War II	f) snow and ice sports
	g) coloured rings

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3. Write explanations for these sports that will be new at the next Olympics.

1. karate: _____.

2. sport climbing: _____.

3. surfing: _____.

4. skateboarding: _____.

E Writing

Choose one of these topics to write about.

1. Sky Brown from Team Great Britain qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games when she was only 11. She would have been 12 years and 12 days old at the opening ceremony. She was to represent Great Britain in the brand-new skateboarding events, in the team of only five skateboarders.

What can you find out about other young world athletes whose dreams were taken away from them when the Tokyo 2020 Olympics were postponed until 2021? Write an article of about 150 words for your school magazine.

2. Research what other problems there have been at Olympic Games (Winter or Summer). Think about why athletes and even complete teams have been disqualified or had their medals taken away from them and what tests and checks athletes have to do before, during and after competing in international sporting events.

Present your information to your class in groups of three. Each of you should talk for five minutes.

A Before you read

1. (T) 2. (T) 3. (T) 4. (F) 5. (F) 6. (F) 7. (T) 8. (T) 9. (T) 10. (F)

B Reading

Timeline:

1894: IOC was founded

1896: the first summer Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece

1916: the Olympic Games were cancelled because of World War I

1920: the Olympic Games were moved from Budapest to Antwerp

1940 + 1944: the Olympic Games were cancelled because of World War II

1948: the Olympic Games were held in London

1972: at the Munich Olympic Games 11 Israelis were killed by Palestinian terrorists

1980: the USA boycotted the Olympic Games in Moscow

1984: Russia (the Soviet Union) boycotted the Olympic Games in Los Angeles

1996: a bomb exploded at the Atlanta Olympic Games and killed two people

2020: the Tokyo Olympic Games are postponed to 2021

C Looking at language

1.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. founded | 6. suspended |
| 2. male and female | 7. boycott |
| 3. consequence | 8. be held |
| 4. postponed | 9. go down in history |
| 5. due to | |

2.

- | | |
|-------|-------|
| 1. f) | 4. g) |
| 2. d) | 5. b) |
| 3. a) | 6. e) |

There is no match for c)

3. Students write their own explanations.

E Writing

1. Here's an article about young athletes:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/01/09/sport/2020-young-athletes-to-watch-spt-intl/index.html> 

2. Here is a websites to get started with:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Olympic_Games_scandals_and_controversies 