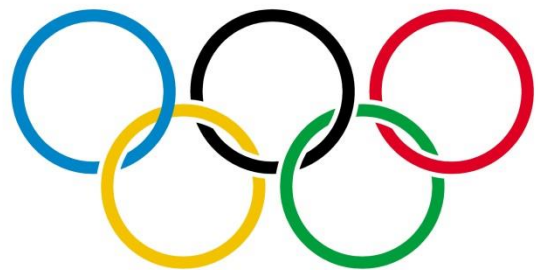


The Olympics- where did it all begin?

The Olympics -or the 'Games of the Olympiad' - has become a world wide event however this was not always the case. The Summer Olympic Games (the competition as we know it now) was first held in 1896 in Athens, Greece and there was a particularly important reason why Greece was the first country chosen to house this famous event. Held every four years, in honour of the Greek God Zeus, records show the Ancient Olympic Games actually began in 776 BC in Olympia. Despite the games beginning in Athens, many changes have occurred over the years to make the Olympics the event that it is today.

The Modern Olympic Games.

The Modern Olympic Games are based on the Olympic Games of Ancient Greece. Since the 1904 Olympics, medals are awarded in each event, with gold medals for first place, silver for second and bronze for third. Competitors qualify for individual sports in the Olympics by placing in a major international event or by achieving a sufficient qualifying time. There are a limited number of positions for each nation in each Olympic event but every



countries around the world send their best athletes (men and women) to compete. Great Britain is the only country to have won at least 1 gold medal at every Summer Olympics! London, United Kingdom, hosted the Summer Olympics in 1908, 1948, and 2012, making London the only city to host the event on three occasions. Due to the two World Wars there were no Olympic Games in 1916, 1940 or 1944. The 5 rings of the Olympic flag represent Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas, they are linked together in friendship. Every national flag of the world has at least one of the rings colours, blue, black, green, yellow, and red. There are many events in the Modern Olympic games, such as:

- Athletics
- Cycling
- Boxing
- Fencing
- Gymnastics
- Tennis

- Swimming
- Horse riding

The Ancient Olympic Games

Although some of the events are similar, there are some major differences between the modern games and the past. At the first one-day [Olympic Games in Ancient Greece](#), the only event was a short sprint from one end of the stadium to the other. Gradually more events were added to make four days of competitions. They included wrestling, boxing, long jump, throwing the [javelin](#) and [discus](#), and chariot racing. In the pentathlon, there



were five events: running, wrestling, javelin, discus and long jump. One of the toughest events was the race for [hoplites](#) (men wearing armour and carrying [shields](#).) The running track was much wider than a modern one. Twenty people could run at once. Only men from each city state could compete in the Olympics in Ancient Greece. Even though a different event was held for women, only strong Spartan women were really interested in this!

At the Ancient Greek games, winners were given a wreath of leaves, and a hero's welcome back home. Winners might marry rich women, enjoy free meals, invitations to parties, and the best seats in the theatre. Now, winners settle for a gold medal! The Olympic flame is lit at Olympia in Greece every two years (Summer and [Winter Olympics](#)) before it journeys to the next host nation where it is paraded around until the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron at the opening ceremony.

