

The Olympics in Our Era

IN 394 AD THE ROMAN EMPEROR ABOLISHED THE

Ancient Olympic Games for religious and political reasons. Over 1500 years later, the French educator Baron Pierre de Coubertin decided to organize Olympic Games for our day. In 1894, he organized the International Olympic Committee. His vision was “[that] all nations gather. Not for combat or debate but to celebrate the hope of peace and a shared love of competition.” He realized that sport can break down barriers of language, culture, nationality, age, and gender and build bridges between people all over the world. The Modern Olympic Games was born, uniting countries, athletes, and spectators, to help create a better world.

Pierre de Coubertin felt that the Modern Olympic Games would promote world peace and set an example of excellence for young people. His dream for the Games was that they would:

- ▶ Create in the youth of the world a personal attitude of self worth and dignity that extends far beyond the formal Games.
- ▶ Celebrate the health, values and athletic talent of youth, honor the individual athlete and unite the communities of the world in peace.
- ▶ Provide opportunities through sport for the youth of the world to become better acquainted with the nations and peoples of other countries without regard to sex, race, color or religious beliefs.



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The first Modern Games were held in 1896, in Athens, Greece, near the site of the original games of 776 BC. With the exception of the years during World Wars I and II, the Games have been held every four years from then until the present. The Olympic Winter Games was not held until January of 1924 and took place in Chamonix, France. At these first Olympic Winter Games, there were 258 athletes and more than 10,000 spectators.

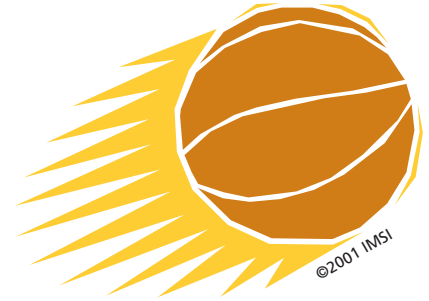
Since the original Olympic Winter Games in 1924, the Olympic Winter Games has become an important part of Olympic sports history.

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Primary Grades

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Be a Good Sport

Play a group game. Discuss the concept of sportsmanship. Ask: "What did you do during the game that demonstrated good or bad sportsmanship?" Read or review the fact sheet "Olympics in our Era." Explain how Pierre de Coubertin had a great dream. He hoped to encourage world peace through good sportsmanship. Ask: "How might good sportsmanship bring people together?"



GEOGRAPHY: Where in the World is...

Locate Athens, Greece, and Paris, France, on a world map. Explain how both Greece and France relate to the ancient and modern games.

Intermediate Grades

(Adapt Primary Grade ideas)

LANGUAGE ARTS: The Olympics in Our Era

Read the fact sheet, "The Olympics in Our Era." Identify new words to use as vocabulary and spelling words.

HISTORY: When Did it Happen?

Create an Olympic timeline using the dates from the fact sheet.

MATH: Past and Present

Find all the dates listed in the fact sheet. Subtract the dates to find the number of years from the Ancient Olympic Games in 776 BC to:

- ▶ Time of their cancellation in 394 AD
- ▶ Time of de Coubertin in 1894 AD
- ▶ First Modern Olympic Game 1896 AD
- ▶ First Olympic Winter Game in 1924 AD
- ▶ Salt Lake City Olympic Winter Games in 2002 AD

Add these facts to the timeline.

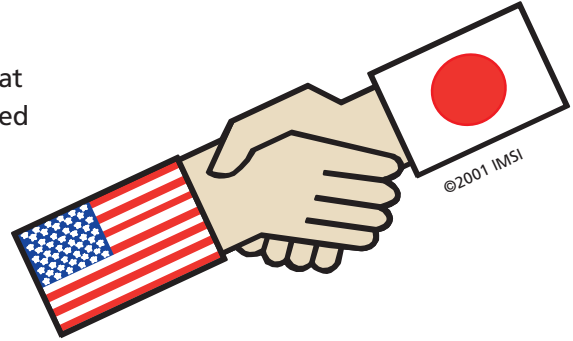
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The Olympics in Our Era (continued)

CHARACTER EDUCATION: Vision of Peace

Reread the statement: “All nations gather. Not for combat or debate but to celebrate the hope of peace and a shared love of competition.”

Review de Coubertin’s dream for the Games. Discuss how international sports can contribute to world peace. Ask: “How might we use de Coubertin’s ideas within the school?” Write goal statements for the school based on de Coubertin’s dream. Sponsor an Olympic “Vision of Peace” week, in which students are reminded of the Olympic Goals. Create prizes for students who promote identified school goals.



SOCIAL STUDIES: One School, One Country™

Form pen pals with students from your partner country. Track the progress of the athletes from both the U.S. and your partner country.

LANGUAGE ARTS: de Coubertin’s Dream

Write an essay describing how the Modern Olympic Games promote world peace and set a good example for young people.