

# Those Amazing Olympic Games

Did you know women were not allowed to compete in the Olympics until 1900? For more amazing facts, keep reading.

## First Olympic Games

The first Olympic Games were held in 776 BCE in Olympia, Greece. They continued until the year 393 CE, when the emperor banned the Games. No Games were held for 1,500 years, until 1894, and they have been held every four years ever since. Today, more than 200 countries compete in the Olympic Summer Games and more than 80 countries take part in the Winter Games.

## Famous Olympic Symbols

The symbol for the Olympics is five interlocking rings, which represent the five major regions of the world: Africa, the Americas (North and South America), Asia, Europe, and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, and nearby islands). The rings are black, blue, green, red, and yellow—colours chosen because at least one appears in every country's flag.

## Lighting the Torch

Each Olympics begins with the lighting of the Olympic torch. It is lit in Olympia, Greece, using the Sun and a mirror. Then the flame travels to the host city, usually carried by many different people in a relay. The flame is kept burning until the close of the Olympic Games.

## Paralympic Games

The first official Paralympic Games for people with disabilities were held in 1960. Only athletes in wheelchairs competed in these Games. The 1976 Summer Games were the first games in which athletes with different disabilities competed.

## Medal Winners

American swimmer Michael Phelps has won more Olympic medals in total, and more Olympic gold medals than any other competitor. He has won 23 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze medals.

The youngest Olympic competitor ever was a 10-year-old Greek gymnast. Dimitrios Loundras competed in 1896 and won a bronze medal. The oldest competitor was a Swedish shooter named Oscar Swahn. He was almost 73 when he won a silver medal in 1920.

Only four athletes have won medals at both the Summer and Winter Olympics. These winners include Canadian Clara Hughes, who won medals for speed skating and cycling.

## “Those Amazing Olympic Games”—Think About It!

1. How many medals has Michael Phelps won in total?

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2. What is the age difference between the youngest Olympic competitor ever and the oldest ever?

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3. Which of the colours in the Olympic rings appears in Canada’s flag?

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4. Would you like to attend an Olympic Games? Explain your thinking.

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5. How many Olympic rings are there? What colours are they?

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6. What do the Olympic rings represent?

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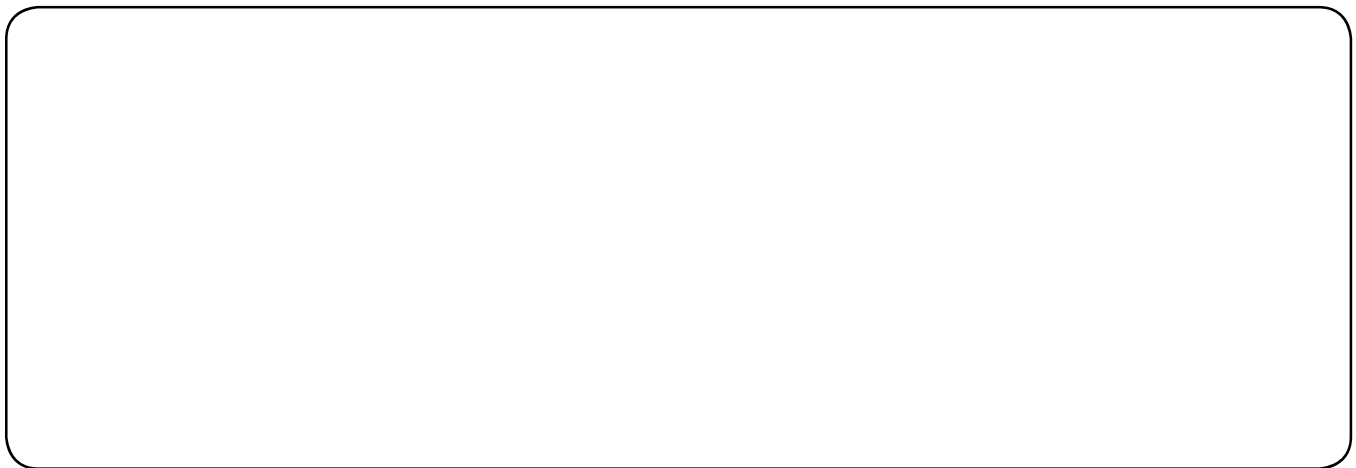
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## “Those Amazing Olympic Games”—Think About It! (continued)

7. Character traits are a way to describe someone’s personality. Here are three character traits that an Olympic athlete usually has. Explain why each character trait is important.

| Character Trait   | Explanation |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Competitiveness:</b><br>likes to compete with others |             |
| <b>Focus:</b> ability to concentrate on just one thing  |             |
| <b>Drive:</b> strong urge to do something               |             |

8. Draw a picture showing your favourite Olympic sport.



Explain why this is your favourite Olympic sport.

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