



The Official Olympic Flag

Created by Pierre de Coubertin in 1914, the Olympic flag contains five interconnected rings on a white background. The five rings symbolize the five significant continents and are interconnected to symbolize the friendship to be gained from these international competitions. The rings, from left to right, are blue, yellow, black, green, and red. The colors were chosen because at least one of them appeared on the flag of every country in the world. The Olympic flag was first flown during the 1920 Olympic Games.

The Olympic Creed

Pierre de Coubertin got the idea for this phrase from a speech given by Bishop Ethelbert Talbot at a service for Olympic champions during the 1908 Olympic Games. The Olympic Creed reads: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."

The Olympic Motto

In 1921, Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, borrowed a Latin phrase from his friend, Father Henri Didon, for the Olympic motto: *Citius, Altius, Fortius* ("Swifter, Higher, Stronger").

The Olympic Oath

Pierre de Coubertin wrote an oath for the athletes to recite at each Olympic Games. During the opening ceremonies, one athlete recites the oath on behalf of all the athletes. The Olympic oath was first taken during the 1920 Olympic Games by Belgian fencer Victor Boin. The Olympic Oath states, "In the name of all competitors, I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules that govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honor of our teams."

The Olympic Flame

The Olympic flame is a practice continued from the ancient Olympic Games. In Olympia (Greece), a flame was ignited by the sun and then kept burning until the closing of the Olympic Games. The flame first appeared in the modern Olympics at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam. The flame itself represents a number of things, including purity and the endeavor for perfection. In 1936, the chairman of the organizing committee for the 1936 Olympic Games, Carl Diem, suggested what is now the modern Olympic Torch relay. The Olympic flame is lit at the ancient site of Olympia by women wearing ancient-style robes and using a curved mirror and the sun. This flame begins its Olympic Torch Relay by touring Greece. The flame is normally taken to the country where the games will be held (usually by airplane). The flame is then carried around the country where the games are to be held, using a series of torches carried by people running, walking, riding horses and camels, scuba diving, and using other means of human conveyance. The last runner uses a torch to light the large Olympic torch which burns throughout the games. The flame is extinguished during the closing ceremony. A new Olympic torch is designed for each of the games.



The Medals

The Olympic medals are designed especially for each individual Olympic Games by the host city's organizing committee. Each medal must be at least three millimeters thick and 60 millimeters in diameter. Also, the gold and silver Olympic medals must be made out of 92.5 percent silver, with the gold medal covered in six grams of gold.



Real Gold Medals

The last Olympic gold medals that were made entirely out of gold were awarded in 1912.

The First Opening Ceremonies

The first opening ceremonies were held during the 1908 Olympic Games in London.

Opening Ceremony Procession Order

During the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the procession of athletes is always led by the Greek team, followed by all the other teams in alphabetical order (in the language of the hosting country), except for the last team which is always the team of the hosting country.

Olympic Events:

The events in the Summer Olympics include: archery, badminton, baseball, basketball, boxing, canoeing, cycling, diving, equestrian, fencing, football (soccer), gymnastics, handball, hockey, judo, kayaking, marathon, pentathlon, ping pong, rowing, sailing, shooting, swimming, taekwondo, tennis, track and field (many running, jumping, and throwing events), triathlon, volleyball, water polo, weightlifting, wrestling (freestyle and Greco-Roman).

The events in the Winter Olympics include: ice hockey, figure skating, speed skating, snowboarding, luge, bobsleigh, skeleton (a type of sledding), curling, cross-country skiing, freestyle skiing, slalom, downhill (Alpine) skiing, ski jumping, Nordic combined (skiing plus ski jumping), and biathlon (skiing and shooting).

A History of the Olympics

According to legend, the ancient Olympic Games were founded by Heracles (the Roman Hercules), a son of Zeus. Yet the first Olympic Games for which we still have written records were held in 776 BCE (though it is generally believed that the Games had been going on for many years already). At this Olympic Games, a naked runner, Coroebus (a cook from Elis), won the sole event at the Olympics, the stade - a run of approximately 192 meters (210 yards). This made Coroebus the very first Olympic champion in history.

The ancient Olympic Games grew and continued to be played every four years for nearly 1200 years. In 393 CE, the Roman emperor Theodosius I, a Christian, abolished the Games because of their pagan influences.

Approximately 1500 years later, a young Frenchman named Pierre de Coubertin began their revival. Coubertin is now known as le Rénovateur. Coubertin was a French aristocrat born on January 1, 1863. He was only seven years old when France was overrun by the Germans during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Some believe that Coubertin attributed the defeat of France not to its military skills but rather to the French soldiers' lack of vigor.* After examining the education of the German, British, and American children, Coubertin decided that it was exercise, more specifically sports, that made a well-rounded and vigorous person.

Coubertin's attempt to get France interested in sports was not met with enthusiasm. Still, Coubertin persisted. In 1890, he organized and founded a sports organization, Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques (USFSA). Two years later, Coubertin first pitched his idea to revive the Olympic Games. At a meeting of the Union des Sports Athlétiques in Paris on November 25, 1892, Coubertin stated,

Let us export our oarsmen, our runners, our fencers into other lands. That is the true Free Trade of the future; and the day it is introduced into Europe the cause of Peace will have received a new and strong ally. It inspires me to touch upon another step I now propose and in it I shall ask that the help you have given me hitherto you will extend again, so that together we may attempt to realise [sic], upon a basis suitable to the conditions of our modern life, the splendid and beneficent task of reviving the Olympic Games.**

His speech did not inspire action. Though Coubertin was not the first to propose the revival of the Olympic Games, he was certainly the most well-connected and persistent of those to do so. Two years later, Coubertin organized a meeting with 79 delegates who represented nine countries. He gathered these delegates in an auditorium that was decorated by neoclassical murals and similar additional points of ambiance. At this meeting, Coubertin eloquently spoke of the revival of the Olympic Games. This time, Coubertin aroused interest.

The delegates at the conference voted unanimously for the Olympic Games. The delegates also decided to have Coubertin construct an international committee to organize the Games. This committee became the International Olympic Committee (IOC; Comité Internationale Olympique) and Demetrios Vikelas from Greece was selected to be its first president. Athens was chosen for the revival of the Olympic Games and the planning was begun.

1896 - Athens, Greece

The very first modern Olympic Games opened in the first week of April 1896. Since the Greek government had been unable to fund construction of a stadium, a wealthy Greek architect, Georgios Averoff, donated one million drachmas (over \$100,000) to restore the Panathenaic Stadium, originally built in 330 BCE, with white marble for the Olympic Games.

Since the Games were not well publicized internationally, contestants were not nationally chosen but rather came individually and at their own expense. Some contestants were tourists who happened to be in the area during the Games. Athletes wore their athletic club uniform rather than a national team one.

Pole vaulting, sprints, shot put, weight lifting, swimming, cycling, target shooting, tennis, marathon and gymnastics were all events at the first Olympics. The swimming events were held in the Bay of Zea in the Aegean Sea. Gold medalist, Alfred Hoyos Guttmann described it: "I won ahead of the others with a big lead, but my greatest struggle was against the towering twelve-foot waves and the terribly cold water." (Guttmann, pg. 19) Approximately 300 athletes participated, representing thirteen countries.

* Allen Guttmann, *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 8.

** Pierre de Coubertin as quoted in "Olympic Games," *Britannica.com* (Retrieved August 10, 2000 from the World Wide Web).

Summer Olympic Games Sites

1896 - Athens, Greece
1900 - Paris, France
1904 - St. Louis, United States
1908 - London, United Kingdom
1912 - Stockholm, Sweden
1920 - Antwerp, Belgium*
1924 - Paris, France
1928 - Amsterdam, Netherlands
1932 - Los Angeles, United States
1936 - Berlin, Germany
1948 - London, United Kingdom*
1952 - Helsinki, Finland
1956 - Melbourne, Australia
1960 - Rome, Italy
1964 - Tokyo, Japan
1968 - Mexico City, Mexico
1972 - Munich, West Germany (now Germany)
1976 - Montreal, Canada
1980 - Moscow, U.S.S.R. (now Russia)
1984 - Los Angeles, United States
1988 - Seoul, South Korea
1992 - Barcelona, Spain
1996 - Atlanta, United States
2000 - Sydney, Australia
2004 - Athens, Greece
2008 - Beijing, China
2012 - London, United Kingdom

Winter Olympic Games Sites

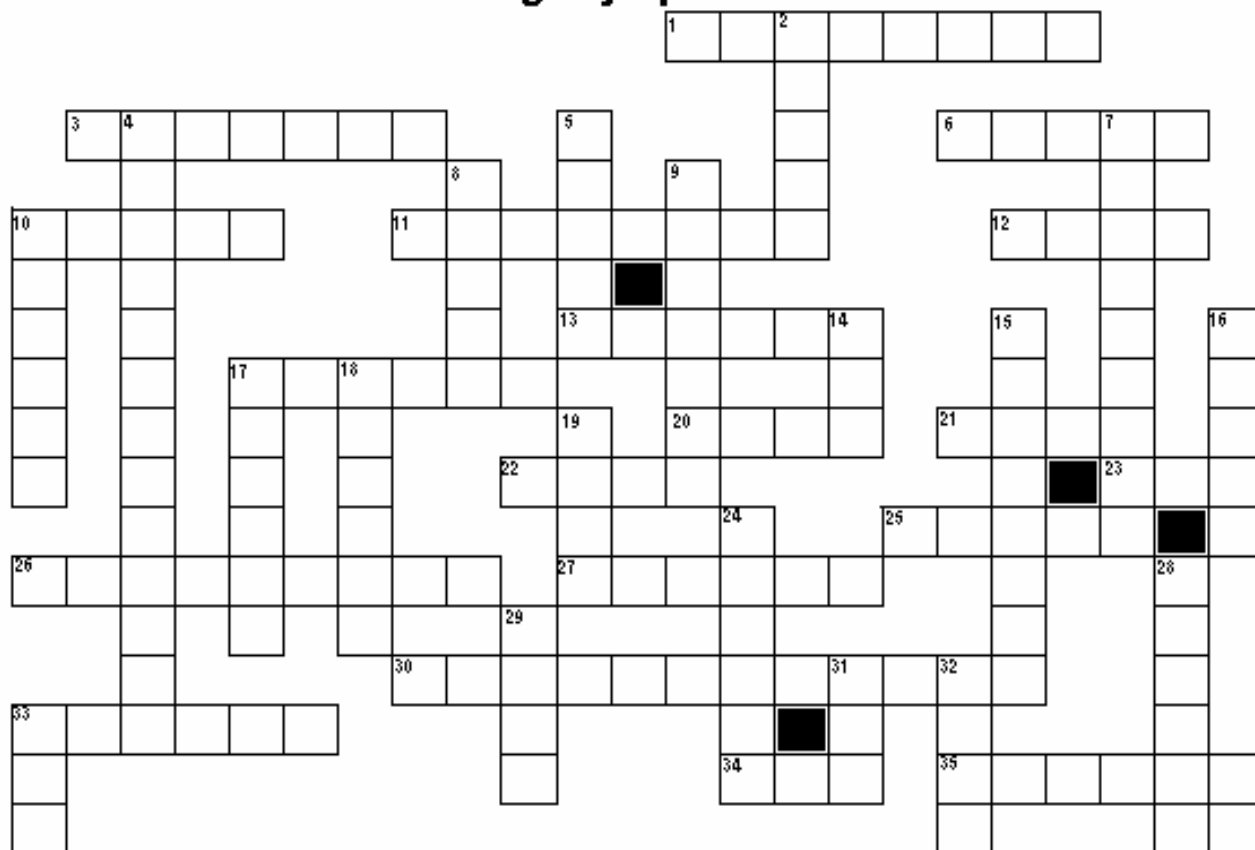
1924 - Chamonix, France
1928 - St. Moritz, Switzerland
1932 - Lake Placid, N.Y., United States
1936 - Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany
1948 - St. Moritz, Switzerland*
1952 - Oslo, Norway
1956 - Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy
1960 - Squaw Valley, California, United States
1964 - Innsbruck, Austria
1968 - Grenoble, France
1972 - Sapporo, Japan
1976 - Innsbruck, Austria
1980 - Lake Placid, New York, United States
1984 - Sarajevo, Yugoslavia (now Bosnia and Herzegovina)
1988 - Calgary, Alberta, Canada
1992 - Albertville, France**
1994 - Lillehammer, Norway**
1998 - Nagano, Japan
2002 - Salt Lake City, Utah, United States
2006 - Torino (Turin), Italy
2010 - Vancouver, Canada

* Due to World War I and II, Summer Olympic Games were not held in 1916, 1940, and 1944. Due to World War II, Winter Olympic Games were not held in 1940 and 1944.

** The 1992 and 1994 Winter Games are two years apart due to the transition of the Winter Games to alternating even-numbered years with regard to the Summer Games.

***Turin, Italy, was the locale of the 2006 Winter Olympics Games. The opening ceremonies were on Friday, February 10, 2006; the closing ceremonies were on Sunday, February 26, 2006. The 2008 Summer Olympics will be held in Beijing, China; the 2010 Winter Olympics will be held in Vancouver, B.C., Canada.

Enchanted Learning Olympics Crossword Puzzle



Across

1. A very long race
3. Where many games take place
6. This holds the flame
10. One of the colors of the Olympics Flag's rings
11. The games
12. How many years apart the ancient Olympics were held
13. The metal used in the second place medal
17. Tennis and diving occur during these Olympics
20. The metal used in the first place medal
21. ___ put
22. One of the colors of the Olympics Flag's rings
23. International Olympic Committee abbrev.
25. One of the colors of the Olympics Flag's rings
26. An Olympic event containing three sports
27. Where the ancient Olympics took place
30. The tallest mountain in Greece
33. The location of the Summer 2000 games
34. What a gold medal recipient did
35. The capital of Greece

Down

2. The Olympics flag has five of these
4. A summer Olympics event
5. The Olympic _____
7. The French man who revived the Olympics
8. The hottest part of the Olympics
9. The athletes live in the Olympic _____
10. The metal used in the third place medal
14. One of the colors of the Olympics Flag's rings
15. Olympic competitors
16. _____ and field
17. Athletic events
18. What the top three winners in each event receive
19. An Olympic symbol
24. One of the colors of the Olympics Flag's rings
28. A short, fast, running event
29. A winter sport
31. The only original Olympics contestants
32. The location of the Winter 2002 games
33. The flame is started using the rays of the _____

Olympics Find It! Quiz

Name _____

1. This word starts with a "G." It is the name of the country where the Olympic Games began in ancient times. What is it?

2. This word starts with an "A." It is the name of someone who excels at a sport. What is this word? _____

3. This word starts with a "T." It is an object that carries a flame. What is it? _____

4. This word starts with an "S." It is a large building in which many sports events are held. What is it called? _____

5. This word starts with an "S." It is a hot season of the year in which some Olympic Games are held. What is it? _____

6. This word starts with a "W." It is a cold season of the year in which some Olympic Games are held. What is it? _____

7. This word starts with an "F." It is the number of rings in the Olympics flag. What is it? _____

8. This word starts with an "M." It is an award given to the top three people in each event in the Olympics. What is one of these called?

9. This word starts with a "G." It is a precious metal. The top athlete in each event receives an object coated with this metal. What is this metal?

10. This word starts with an "S." It is a valuable metal. The second-best athlete in each event receives an object coated with this metal. What is this metal? _____

11. This word starts with a "B." It is a metal alloy (a mixture of other metals). The third-best athlete in each event receives an object coated with this metal. What is this metal? _____

12. This word starts with a "B." It is a team sport that involves a big orange ball and a hoop. It is included in the summer Olympics. What is it called?

13. This word starts with a "B." It is a team sport that involves a small white ball and a bat. It is included in the summer Olympics. What is it called? _____

14. This word starts with a "I." In the Winter Olympic games, you'll see figure skaters and hockey skaters wearing these on their feet. What are they? _____

15. This word starts with an "I." It is the name of the country that hosted the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. What is it? _____

