

## DISCUSS

Discuss the following questions with a partner for at least five minutes.

1. What are the Olympics?
2. Do you like or dislike the Olympics? Why?
3. Do you have any favorite sport from the Summer Olympics? How about the Winter Olympics?

## INSTRUCTIONS

**Step 1:** Listen to the article about the ancient Olympics. It's about three minutes and thirty seconds long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

**Step 2:** Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

**Step 3:** Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

**Step 4:** Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

## QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. When did the ancient Olympic Games begin?
2. What myths does the article mention?
3. How often were the Olympic Games held?
4. Who participated in the ancient games?
5. What does the article say about wars?
6. What events were there?
7. Why did the Olympic Games end? When did they end?

**the ARTICLE**

Listen again to the article.



The ancient Olympic Games began in 776 BC. No one now knows the reasons for the first game. There are myths, though. One myth tells about a hero named Heracles. He won a race and then declared that the same race should take place every four years. Another myth suggests that the Greek god Zeus started the Olympics!

The name of the athletic contest comes from Olympia, the place where the games were held. Like the modern Olympics, these ancient games were held every four years. Athletes and spectators from the ancient city-states traveled across Greece to participate and watch. In later years, Greeks from all over the Mediterranean came, too. Some historians believe that the city-states even stopped wars so people could safely get to the games. And if an athlete were in the army, he could leave to join the contest. Only free men who spoke Greek could participate, though. In addition, the athletes had to take an oath. They swore that they had practiced for the games for ten months or more.

Unlike the Olympic games of today, there were fewer events. In fact, there was only one event at first, a race the length of the stadium. Several more running events were added later, including one in which the contestants had to wear armor and carry a shield. This was called the "Hoplite race." There was boxing and wrestling, chariot racing, and the discus throw, javelin throw, and long jump. With more events, the Olympics became longer. They eventually lasted five days. The first day and final day had religious ceremonies, and the second, third, and fourth days were dedicated to sports. The last day also had a great feast for all the participants.

The ancient Olympic Games ended in 393 AD when the Roman Emperor outlawed the games and festival.



## **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)**

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2. Read or listen to the article again. Can you give a one or two sentence summary for each paragraph?

paragraph 1:

paragraph 2:

paragraph 3:

paragraph 4:

3. Would you want to go to the modern Olympics? Why/not?

## **ANSWERS**

<b>QUESTIONS</b>
1. The ancient Olympic Games began in 776 BC.
2. One myth tells about Heracles. Another myth suggests that the Greek god Zeus started the Olympics!
3. Like the modern Olympics, the ancient games were held every four years.
4. Only free men who spoke Greek could participate in the games. They came from all over the Mediterranean.
5. Some historians believe that the city-states even stopped wars so people could safely get to the games.
6. There were several running events. There also was boxing and wrestling, chariot racing, and the discus throw, javelin throw, and long jump.
7. The ancient Olympic Games ended in 393 AD when the Roman Emperor outlawed the games and festival.
<b>EXTENSION ACTIVITIES</b> - Give a one or two sentence summary of each paragraph.
1. Paragraph one introduces the origins of the ancient Olympic Games.
2. Paragraph two tells who came to the games to watch and participate, where they were from, and how they could travel there.
3. This paragraph lists the different events of the games. It also mentions how many days the games took place.
4. Paragraph four states when and why the games ended.