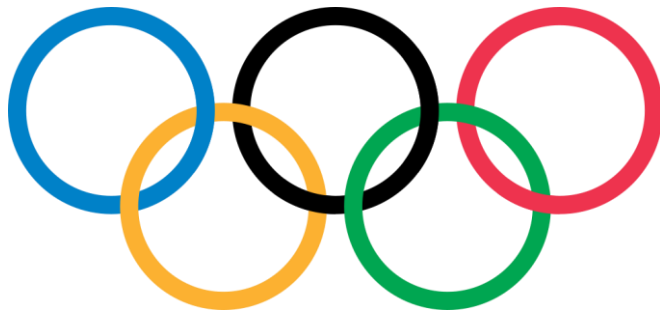


Did you know?

The Summer Olympics



Like many public events over the past year, the Tokyo Olympics have been postponed for one year. Finally on 23 July 2021 we can all watch (the socially-distanced) 2020 opening ceremony.

The Olympic games of the modern era were revived, after almost 1,500 years in abeyance, in 1896 in their birthplace of Athens. The main architect for this rebirth was Baron Pierre de Coubertin, an educator from France who had an internationalist vision to bring the countries of the world together. After the successful games in Greece, they then went to Paris and then St Louis (where they were overshadowed on both occasions by the world fairs) and then in 1908, at the last minute to London, as the original host, Rome, had to pull out after the eruption of Vesuvius.

Stockholm was the host city in 1912, and subsequently Coubertin was able to regain control and promote the ideology of the 'pursuit of peace and intercultural communication through international sport', an ideology which has, for the most part, been successfully adhered to. Games did not take place during World War I and there was a 12-year hiatus during World War II; the games in Berlin 1936 were marked by stains of National Socialism and in the Munich 1972 games there was the tragedy of the Israeli hostages; in 1980, US athletes boycotted the Moscow games and in retaliation, Russian athletes boycotted the Los Angeles Olympics four years later.

One of Coubertin's demands was that the official languages of the games should be French and English plus the language of the host country. Indeed, French was so important to him that French actually had dominance over English and if there was doubt over any translation, the French version should always have precedence.

While these language aims may have been sustained a hundred years ago, there is growing evidence these days that French is not as prominent as Coubertin would have wished. In Rio de Janeiro in 2016, for example, Olympic Committee members noted that French was more or less invisible.

If you are ever in the Olympic Park in Munich, you can walk through Coubertinplatz, a memorial to the founder of the modern Olympics and see the stadia built specially for the games. On the eve of the *Games of the XXXII Olympiad* in Tokyo, postponed for one year by a global epidemic, what would Baron Pierre de Coubertin think of the development of the games from 14 nations and 241 male athletes in 1896 to the behemoth of today with over 205 competing nations and 11,000 athletes? And not much evidence of the French language...

If you would like to have your own *English Classroom Olympics*, then we have prepared five classroom Olympic games for you: *Marathon, table tennis, 30 second sprint, volley ball* and *message-relay*.

Did you know?



English Classroom Olympics



Teacher's notes – Here are five activities that all need super Olympic power!

Marathon – your students will need stamina for the marathon.

- 🏅 Explain that students are going to take part in a spelling marathon. Revise the alphabet first.
- 🏅 Have a practice round – ask each student to say and spell a three-letter word.
- 🏅 Now start the game in earnest!
- 🏅 In turn ask each student to spell out a four-letter word. Make sure each student spells a different word.
- 🏅 If the student spells their four-letter word correctly, they can move on the next round: a five-letter word.
- 🏅 Then a six-letter word. (Carry on as long as you think the students have the stamina!)
- 🏅 Each round, change the order in which you ask the students, or the same person will always have an advantage.
- 🏅 Encourage students not to use formations of words already used. For example, if a student says: 'G-I-V-E' in the first round, then in the next round don't allow 'G-I-V-E-S'.
- 🏅 Carry on until the last person is standing!
- 🏅 To add to the fun: each student spells their words and the other students shout out what the word is.

Table tennis – or ping pong. A game of quick responses.

- 🏅 Divide students into threes, Student A, Student B and Student C.
- 🏅 Explain that they are going to play *Word Ping Pong*.
- 🏅 Student C is the judge. Student A 'serves', by saying the first word of a sentence, for example: *The*. Student B needs to reply as fast as possible and say something that makes grammatical sense, for example: *horse*, then Student A should reply with the next word, for example: *lives*. Student B might say: *in* and Student A might reply: *a* followed by Student B saying *field*. If a student can't think of another word to say, or they pause for more than 5 seconds they lose the round. The judge's decision is final.
- 🏅 Student B begins the next round playing against student C, while student A judges. In the final round, Student B is the judge while A and C play.

Did you know?

30s sprint – the fastest wins!

- 🎯 Tell students that they have to work as fast as possible to get to the 30 second line.
- 🎯 Pick a topic you want to revise (fruit, vegetables, birds, flowers, clothes, furniture or prepositions – or you could pick a letter of the alphabet).
- 🎯 Make sure everyone has a pen and paper.
- 🎯 Tell them they have 30 seconds to find as many words as possible from the category you give them.
- 🎯 The person with most (correctly spelt) words wins.

Volley ball – may the best team win!

- 🎯 Prepare word categories which can be used by students. This could be something you want to revise such as fruit, vegetables, clothes, furniture or prepositions – or you could pick countries in Europe, states in the USA, trees, flowers, birds or you could pick a letter of the alphabet.
- 🎯 Divide the class into two teams: A and B.
- 🎯 Tell students they are going to play volley ball with words: the 'ball' is going to be thrown over the net, backwards and forwards, from one team to the other.
- 🎯 In each team number students 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on and explain that this order has to be kept for the game.
- 🎯 Explain that you will give the class a category, for example **furniture**, and student 1 in Team A should find an example of this category, for example *sofa*. Then student 1 in Team B must say another word, for example *chair*, then student 2 in Team A says *bed* followed by student 2 in Team B who says *cupboard*. Each student – in the correct sequence - in each team says a word and once the last student in Team B has answered, it returns to student 1 in Team A again.
- 🎯 The order of responding has to remain in the order given, so although student 5 is bursting to say *wardrobe*, they cannot answer if student 4 cannot think of a word.
- 🎯 If a student cannot answer or gives a wrong answer, the point goes to the opposing team.
- 🎯 Give a different category to student 1 in Team B to start the new round.
- 🎯 Start each new round, alternating between Team A and Team B, with a new player, so that everyone has the same dis/advantage. Round three starts with Team A student 2, and so on.
- 🎯 The team with the most points wins.

Did you know?

Relay - getting the message-baton to the finishing line.

- 🎯 Divide the class into groups of 4: Student A, B, C and D. Tell students this is a SILENT relay race.
- 🎯 Give all student A's a short description, such as: *The dog jumped over the wall* or *The mouse slept under the chair* or *The man and woman climbed the mountain* (You could make the sentence more complicated, *It was midnight and...* or *After a big lunch of cheese...* or *It was raining when...*) and ask student A to draw it.
- 🎯 Student A shows their picture to Student B.
- 🎯 Student B then writes a summary of the picture and shows the summary to student C.
- 🎯 Student C draws an image and shows their picture to student D who writes a summary of the picture.
- 🎯 The first relay team to have a second written message wins the game.
- 🎯 Now compare the original sentence with the final sentence and see whether the message-baton has really reached the finish line!