

Commonwealth Games



There's an international sporting event in July and August: but Germany, the USA and China won't be taking part. Why? Because it's only open to members of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The *Commonwealth Games* have come a long way since their inauguration in 1930 under the name *The British Empire Games*. Then, only 11 nations participated; there were only six sporting disciplines and women could only take part in the swimming events. In July this year in Glasgow there will be over 50 countries taking part in 17 sporting disciplines – and women will be participating in all of the events in the *XX Commonwealth Games*.

The Commonwealth is an intergovernmental organization of 53 member states, most of whom were previously territories of the British Empire. The Commonwealth covers almost one quarter of the global land area and has members in every continent:

from Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya in Africa to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in Asia; from Malta, Cyprus and the United Kingdom in Europe to the Maldives and Mauritius in the Indian Ocean; from Canada in North America to Guyana in South America; from Tonga, Samoa and Kiribati in the Pacific to Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Jamaica in the Caribbean.

Like the *Olympic Games*, the *Commonwealth Games* runs on a quadrennial cycle and has taken place every four years since 1930, apart from the interruption of the Second World War in 1942 and 1946. It is hosted in different parts of the Commonwealth: Australia has hosted the games five times, Canada four times and New Zealand three times. This year the games return to Scotland for the third time (Edinburgh hosted the games in 1970 and 1986).

In 2010 the XIX games were held in India for the first time and Delhi welcomed over 6,000 participants from 71 Commonwealth teams who competed in over 272 events throughout the two weeks. Australia headed the medal table, with India second and England third. There were 21 sporting disciplines and these are similar to those in the summer Olympics, but include the additional sports of crown green bowls, netball and rugby sevens – games which are popular in Commonwealth countries. (If there are 53 members of the Commonwealth of Nations how can there be 71 teams participating in the games? Because a number of British

overseas territories, Crown dependencies, and island states compete under their own flag. The four Home Nations of the United Kingdom - England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland - also send separate teams.)

Only six teams have attended every *Commonwealth Games*: Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales. Australia has been the highest scoring team for eleven games, England for seven and Canada for one.

From 23 July to 3 August in Glasgow you can expect a truly international event – but don't expect to see any German flag waving.

To find out more about the *XX Commonwealth Games* click [here](#)

If you would like to use the *Commonwealth Games* as a topic in your lesson, we have provided you with two activities. You'll find them in the following **Teacher's notes** and on the **Worksheet**.

Teacher's notes

Activity 1 (level A2.2 upwards) 10+ mins

- On the board write *Commonwealth*. Ask students if they know what it is. Explain some of the main features of the Commonwealth of Nations.
- Ask students to write the numbers 1 to 10 on a sheet of paper. Explain that you are going to read out the names of ten countries, and students should decide if these countries are in the Commonwealth or not, by writing *yes* or *no* next to each number.
- Read this list aloud: 1 *Nigeria*, 2 *Switzerland*, 3 *Canada*, 4 *India*, 5 *Brazil*, 6 *Vietnam*, 7 *New Zealand*, 8 *Scotland*, 9 *China*, 10 *United States of America*.
- Give students time to check their answers with a partner and then check answers in class.

Key: 1 *yes*, 2 *no*, 3 *yes*, 4 *yes*, 5 *no*, 6 *no*, 7 *yes*, 8 *yes*, 9 *no*, 10 *no*

Activity 2 (level A2.1 upwards) 15+ mins

- Copy Activity 2, **Play, do, go** (see Worksheet) – one for each student.
- Ask students if they know of any international sporting event taking place this summer - NOT the *World Cup*.
- Explain that the *Commonwealth Games* is taking place in Glasgow in July. (If you haven't already done Activity 1, then you will need to explain *Commonwealth*.)
- On the board write *handball*, *yoga* and *skiing* in one column and *make*, *play* and *do* in a second column.
- Ask students which verb collocates with which sport. (*play handball*, *do yoga* and *go skiing*).
- Remind students: the rule is (usually!) *play* team sports and ball sports; *do* individual sports and fighting sports; *go* with activities ending in *-ing*.
- Give each student a copy of **Play, do, go** and ask them to complete the exercise. Help with any unknown vocabulary.
- Check answers together.
- In pairs, students discuss which of these sports they like a) doing themselves, b) watching live, c) watching on television.

Key: 1 play hockey, 2 go swimming, 3 go running, 4 do gymnastics, 5 go diving, 6 play rugby, 7 do judo, 8 do athletics, 9 play tennis, 10 go cycling, 11 play squash, 12 do a triathlon

Activity 3 (level A2.1 upwards) 15+ mins

- Copy Activity 3, **Which event?** (see Worksheet) - one for each student.
- On the board write:
I'd like to watch the _____. It's three sports in one: cycling, running and swimming.
- Ask students which sporting event completes the sentence. (triathlon)
- Give each student a copy of **Which event?** and ask them to complete the exercise.
- Help with unknown vocabulary, but tell students at lower levels they don't need to understand every word. Encourage students to look for key words to help them identify the correct answers.

Key: a) swimming, b) diving, c) boxing, d) cycling, e) shooting, f) marathon, g) gymnastics

Worksheet

Activity 2: Play, do, go

Read the following list of sports.

Complete the phrases using one of the verbs:

play | do | go

- | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 _____ hockey | 2 _____ swimming | 3 _____ running |
| 4 _____ gymnastics | 5 _____ diving | 6 _____ rugby |
| 7 _____ judo | 8 _____ athletics | 9 _____ tennis |
| 10 _____ cycling | 11 _____ squash | 12 _____ a triathlon |

Discuss with your partner which of these sports you like a) doing yourself, b) watching live, c) watching on television.

Activity 2: Which events?

Pete and Jen are discussing which events to see at the Commonwealth Games.

Complete the conversation using these words:

boxing | cycling | diving | gymnastics | marathon | shooting | swimming

Pete: I'd like to see the a) _____, especially the men's breast stroke.

Jen: Yes, that sounds exciting. I think the b) _____ from the 10m platform will be good, too. There'll be a big splash!

Pete: And what about the c) _____? Women are taking part for the first time this year.

Jen: No, I don't want to see women fighting and hitting each other. But I'd like to see the d) _____. I can't believe how fast they go on two wheels.

Pete: Yes, that sounds good. And what about e) _____? They have a gun and fire at moving targets.

Jen: That sounds boring! I'd rather watch the f) _____. The competitors have to run more than 26 miles - let's go and cheer them on.

Pete: That's a good idea. And what about the g) _____? The parallel bars, the horizontal bar - those guys have big muscles!

Jen: Then I'd definitely like to see that!