

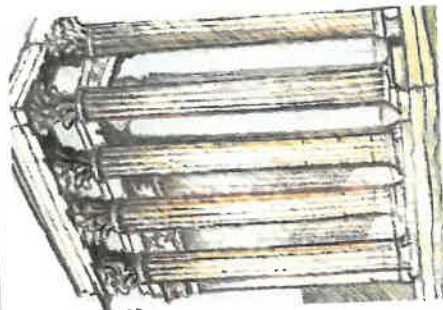
The original Olympics

Life in ANCIENT GREECE

Read the information in the four books about sport in Ancient Greece and answer the questions.



ANCIENT GREECE



34

In Ancient Greece there were many sports competitions but the four biggest ones were known as the Panhellenic Games.

People came from all over the Greek world to take part. Many buildings were erected for the Games. These were for competitors, important people who came to watch, and religious ceremonies. At Olympia there was a Temple of Zeus. The statue of the god was about 13 metres high and was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

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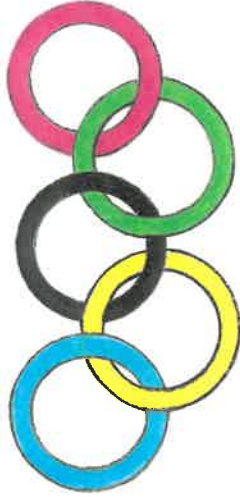
The Olympic Games were held in honour of the god Zeus. No one knows exactly when they began, but official records were kept from 776 BC. At first there was only one event, running, but others were added later, such as wrestling.

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boxing, chariot racing, horse racing and the pentathlon. The prizes were olive wreaths, palm branches and woollen ribbons. If any athlete had performed really well, a statue was put up in his honour.

3

The History of the Olympics



four

Of all the Panhellenic competitions, the Olympic Games were the most important. They were held every four years at Olympia and only lasted one day until the 77th Olympiad when this was extended to five days. Running, wrestling and boxing took place in the Stadium. Chariot and horse racing were held in the Hippodrome.

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..... PEOPLES OF THE PAST



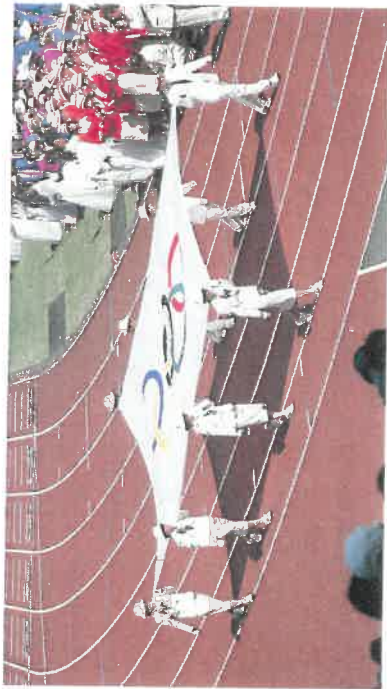
There were many local sports competitions held in Ancient Greece. It was very important for the men to be fit as they often had to go to war.

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THE ANCIENT GREEKS



The modern Olympics



The ancient Olympic Games were established about 3000 years ago as part of a religious festival to salute and honour the Greek gods, in particular Zeus. The festival contained many different competitions, including music and theatre performances, as well as sporting events.

In contrast, the modern Olympics are organised as a method of saluting the athletic talents of individual sportsmen and sportswomen from all nations, and for two weeks it is hoped that the conflict between different countries will be replaced by friendly competition.

The Olympic Games were completely forgotten for more than fifteen centuries, and during this time an earthquake and landslide destroyed and buried the original stadium.

In 1875 German archaeologists discovered pieces of the old stadium building, which gave a Frenchman, Pierre de Coubertin, an idea. He thought different nations would learn to live together more peacefully if their young men and women came together to compete and enjoy sports, so he organised an international sports congress, which launched the Olympic Games as we know them today. In honour of the ancient Olympics the first of the modern Olympic Games was held in Greece, at Athens in 1896, when thirteen countries competed in 42 events in nine different sports.

The nine sports in the first modern Olympics were:

cycling	tennis	athletics
fencing	shooting	weightlifting
gymnastics	swimming	wrestling



In 1924 the Winter Olympics were started and they, like the summer event and the original Greek festival, are held every four years.

Each time the Games are held they get bigger and more lavish, and they now generate vast amounts of money from sponsors and television companies, who are prepared to pay large sums to be involved.