

Unit 5 The History of Sports and Competition

Task 1 Reading

Before you read

Match the words on the left with their definitions on the right:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. To chase | to train an animal to live with humans |
| 2. Tool | to follow sb. or sth. in order to catch them |
| 3. To bring about | an instrument held in hand |
| 4. To domesticate | to make sth. happen, to cause a change |
| 5. Patient | an unusual and impressive event or sight |
| 6. Keen on | able to wait for a long time |
| 7. Spectacle | wanting to do sth., very interested |

The Origins of Sports

It is possible to search for the origins of sports in primitive matters of survival. Some sports and disciplines such as running and throwing can be associated with chasing and killing animals. Tools that were once used for killing have been transformed into symbolic instruments like bats, rackets and clubs.

The coming of farming brought about a revolutionary change in the human way of living – hunting skills were no longer needed. Instead, farmers had to develop the skills of domesticating and feeding animals, they had to be patient and responsible. Nevertheless, people still went hunting for pleasure and excitement.

Greek civilisation is probably the first culture to integrate sports and competition into civic life. Athletic excellence was a heroic, mythical success. The Greek ambition was to win and little attention was paid to such things as “fairness”. Greeks were also very keen on physical perfection and part of the competition was to show the muscular bodies of men, but not women. One of the ideals of Greek games was *kalos kai agathos*.

The games were probably less important as a spectacle than they were as a point around which to organize training. Fitness and strength were important qualities of warriors as much as sports performers.

After you read

Decide whether these statements are true or false:

1. Many sports are similar to the methods people once used for getting food.
2. When people started farming and domesticating animals, they did not want to hunt any more.
3. The best Greek athletes were considered to be chosen by gods.
4. Women were allowed to take part in the Games.
5. The Games in ancient Greece were held primarily to entertain the crowds.

Task 2: THE OLYMPIC GAMES

a) Explain what the expressions below mean in the context of the Olympics:

Torch

Olive wreath

Medal

Venue

(For more vocab go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESRue4aUpFk>)

b) Complete the text:

The ancient Olympic Games were held in _____, Greece, every four year from at least _____ BC, until they were banned by Emperor _____ in 389/393/394 AD (date is unclear).

Originally, there was only one race, a _____ event, and the prize for the winner was an olive wreath. As time went on, other races and sports were added. A unique feature of the Games was that at the time of the staging, countries which were at _____ laid down their weapons, competed and returned to the war after the event.

The Modern Olympics as we know it was the brain-child of a Frenchman _____. He first proposed the idea of restaging the festivals of ancient Greece. In 1894 an Olympic Congress met in _____ and decided to stage its first Modern Games in Athens in _____.

The Games were not held in the years 1916, _____ and 1944 due to the First and Second World Wars.

c) Do you know any interesting facts from the history of the Games? Prepare a few quiz questions for your colleagues.

Task 3: Listening – Great moments in the history of the Olympics

The **1968 Olympics Black Power salute** was an act of protest by the African-American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos during their medal ceremony at the 1968 Summer Olympics in the Olympic Stadium in Mexico City. As they turned to face their flags and hear the American national anthem they each raised a black-gloved fist and kept them raised until the anthem had finished. Smith, Carlos and Australian silver medallist Peter Norman all wore human rights badges on their jackets. In his autobiography, *Silent Gesture*, Tommie Smith stated that the gesture was not a "Black Power" salute, but a "human rights salute". The event is regarded as one of the most overtly political statements in the history of the modern Olympic Games. (Wikipedia.org)

Watch the video to find out more about the event, athletes' motives and consequences.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qck5arjMGBg>)

Task 4: Michael Phelps

Complete the text with suitable verbs in past simple

Quotes

"Records are always made to be broken no matter what they are."

Early Life

Phelps began swimming when his two older sisters, Whitney (born in 1978) and Hilary (born in 1980), _____ a local swim team. At age 7, Phelps was still "a little scared" to put his head under water, so his instructors allowed him to float around on his back. Not surprisingly, the first stroke he _____ was the backstroke.

After he saw swimmers Tom Malchow and Tom Dolan compete at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta, Phelps began to dream of becoming a champion. He _____ his swimming career at the Loyola High School pool. He met his coach, Bob Bowman, when he started training at the North Baltimore Aquatic Club at the Meadowbrook Aquatic and Fitness Center. The coach immediately _____ Phelps's talents and fierce sense of competition and began an intense training regime together. By 1999, Phelps had made the U.S. National B Team.

At the age of 15, Phelps _____ the youngest American male swimmer at an Olympic Games in 68 years. While he didn't win a medal at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia, he would soon become a major force in competitive swimming.

World-Renowned Olympic Medallist

In the spring of 2001, Phelps _____ the world record in the 200-meter butterfly, becoming the youngest male swimmer in history (at 15 years and 9 months) to ever set a world swimming record. He then _____ his own record at the 2001 World Championships in Fukuoka, Japan, with a time of 1:54:58, earning his first international medal.

Phelps became a superstar at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, where he _____ eight medals (including six gold), tying with Soviet gymnast Aleksandr Dityatin (1980) for the most medals in a single Olympic Games.

In 2012, Phelps's Olympic medal count increased to 22, setting a new record for most Olympic medals (beating gymnast Larisa Latynina's prior record of 18). At the 2012 Olympic Games, _____ in London, he won four gold medals, in the 4-by-200-meter freestyle relay, 200-meter individual medley, 100-meter butterfly and 4-by-100-meter medley relay; and two silver medals, in the 4-by-100-meter freestyle relay and 200-meter butterfly. Phelps also _____ the record for the most gold medals won in a single Olympics (eight gold medals at Beijing in 2008).

After the London Olympics, Phelps _____ he was retiring from his sport. Phelps, however, gave some indication of a possible return in July 2013. The stellar swimmer would not rule out a possible Olympic bid for the 2016 summer games in Rio de Janeiro. According to ESPN.com, Phelps told the press that "I don't know what's going to happen in the future" in terms of a return to competition.

(<http://www.biography.com/people/michael-phelps-345192?page=3>)