**Summer Olympic Games Facts**

Check out our fun Summer Olympic Games facts for kids. Learn the prize awarded to winners in the Ancient Olympic Games, which country has been most successful at the Modern Olympics, what the Olympic rings signify and much more.



* The Summer Olympic Games or the 'Games of the Olympiad' were first held in the modern era in 1896 in Athens, Greece.
* The Modern Olympic Games are based on the Olympic Games of Ancient Greece.
* Held every four years, in honour of the Greek God Zeus, records show the Ancient Olympic Games began in 776 BC in Olympia and weren't halted until 394 AD.
* The prize for event winners in the Ancient Olympics was an olive branch wreath.
* Since the 1904 Olympics, medals are awarded in each event, with gold medals for first place, silver for second and bronze for third.
* Competitors qualify for individual sports in the Olympics by placing in a major international event or by achieving a sufficient qualifying time in sanctioned meets. There are a limited number of positions for each nation in each Olympic event. Nations qualify for team sports via continental qualifying tournaments.
* [Greece](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/greece.html), [Australia](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/australia.html), [France](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/france.html), Great Britain and [Switzerland](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/switzerland.html) are the only countries to have had representatives at every Summer Olympic Games.
* As of 2012, the [USA](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/unitedstates.html) has won more Gold (976), more Silver (758), more Bronze (666) and more total medals (2400) than any other nation at the Summer games.
* Great Britain is the only country to have one at least 1 gold medal at every Summer Olympics.
* The United States has hosted the Summer Olympics more times than any other nation, four in total, St Louis 1904, Los Angeles 1932 & 1984, and Atlanta 1996.
* London, United Kingdom, hosted the Summer Olympics in 1908, 1948, and 2012, making London the only city to host the event on three occasions.
* Due to the two World Wars there were no Olympic Games in 1916, 1940 or 1944.
* The 1956 Olympics, were held in Melbourne, Australia, the first time the games had been held in the Southern Hemisphere. Apart from the equestrian events that is, which had to be held 5 months earlier in Stockholm, [Sweden](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/sweden.html), as Australian quarantine had restricted entry due to foot-and-mouth disease in the UK at the time.
* After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the 1980 Olympics held in Moscow were boycotted by 66 nations, including the United States and [Canada](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/countries/canada.html).
* The last few Olympics have seen a record number of nearly 11,000 people, from a record number of 204 countries, competing in a record number of 28 sports and 41 disciplines over a record 302 events.
* The 5 rings of the Olympic flag represent Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas, they are linked together in friendship. Every national flag of the world has at least one of the rings colours, blue, black, green, yellow, and red.
* The Olympic flame is lit at Olympia in Greece every two years (Summer and [Winter Olympics](https://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/sports/winterolympics.html)) before it journeys to the next host nation where it is paraded around until the lighting of the Olympic Cauldron at the opening ceremony.
* Tug of war was contested as a team event at every Summer Olympics from 1900 to 1920.