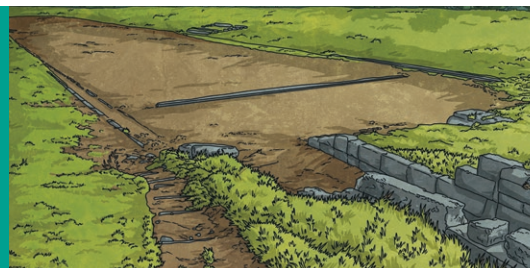
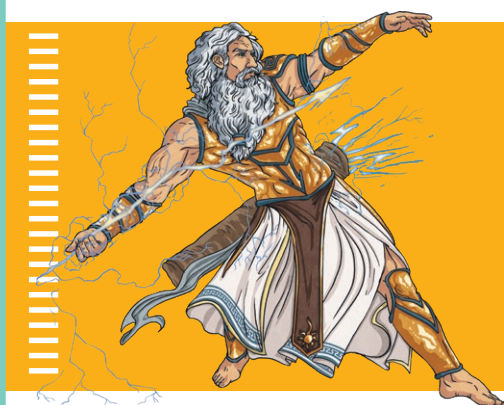


The History of the Olympic Games



The Olympic Games were thought to have started over 2,700 years ago in ancient Greece. Read on to find out about the first ancient Games and the beginning of the modern Games.

The First Olympic Games



The first ancient Olympic Games were believed to have started in 776 BC. These Games took place in Olympia, Greece. They were held every four years and contained several sporting events. However, the main focus was as a religious ceremony to honour the king of the Greek gods, Zeus.

Zeus is said to have travelled to Olympia from his home in Mount Olympus in 1200 BC. He announced his visit by throwing his thunderbolt from Mount Olympus into Olympia. This became the setting for the first ancient Olympic Games. People travelled from all over Greece to see the Games and visit the Temple of Zeus.

Ancient Olympic Events

Running

During the running events, competitors would run up and down a track that was 192 metres long. Despite being rebuilt several times, the track always stayed the same length. Some people believe that this is because 192 metres is how long the Greek hero Hercules could run on a single breath.

Wrestling and Boxing

The wrestling and boxing matches seen at the ancient Olympic Games were often much more violent than those seen today. One of the most dangerous matches was known as pankration. In this match, the only rule was that you couldn't bite your opponent or poke them in the eye.

Long Jump

Competitors in the long jump would hold large weights in their hands and swing their arms around. This would help them to jump longer distances. A man on a flute often played music for the athletes that would help them to time their jumps.



The End of the Ancient Olympic Games

When ancient Greece was invaded by the Roman Empire in the 2nd century BC, the Games continued. However, it is thought that the quality began to go downhill. In AD 67, a Roman emperor named Nero took part in the chariot race, which was a dangerous race on chariots pulled by horses. Although he fell off during the race, he still told everyone that he was the winner.

By AD 393, an emperor named Theodosius I called for the ancient Olympic Games to be cancelled. This ended the Games after nearly 1,200 years.



The Modern Olympic Games

Around 1,500 years later, a French baron named Pierre de Coubertin suggested the idea of holding an international athletics competition. He wanted it to be held every four years just like the ancient games in Olympia. When his idea was accepted, he started the International Olympic Committee.

The first modern Olympic Games were held in 1896 in Athens, Greece. Since then, the modern Olympic Games have been held every four years. Throughout their history, the modern Games have been cancelled or postponed four times. Once in 1916 due to the First World War, in 1940 and 1944 due to the Second World War and again in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Questions

1. When were the first ancient Olympic Games believed to have started? Tick one.

- ☐ 776 BC
- ☐ 1200 BC
- ☐ AD 67
- ☐ AD 393

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- ☐ Emperor Theodosius I called for the ancient Olympic Games to be cancelled.
- ☐ Pierre de Coubertin suggested the idea of an athletics competition.
- ☐ The ancient Olympic Games started.
- ☐ The first modern Olympic Games were held.

3. Where were the first modern Olympic Games held?

4. Look at the section titled **The End of the Ancient Olympic Games**.

What do the words **began to go downhill** mean?

5. Fill in the missing words.

A man on a _____ often played _____ for the athletes that would help them to time their jumps.

6. Summarise what you have learnt about the first Olympic Games using 20 words or fewer.

7. Which event from the ancient Olympic Games would you most like to take part in? Explain your answer.

8. How do you think Pierre de Coubertin felt during the first modern Olympic Games in 1896?

Answers

1. When were the first ancient Olympic Games believed to have started? Tick one.

- ☒ **776 BC**
☐ 1200 BC
☐ AD 67
☐ AD 393

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 2** Emperor Theodosius I called for the ancient Olympic Games to be cancelled.
3 Pierre de Coubertin suggested the idea of an athletics competition.
1 The ancient Olympic Games started.
4 The first modern Olympic Games were held.

3. Where were the first modern Olympic Games held?

The first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece.

4. Look at the section titled **The End of the Ancient Olympic Games**.

What do the words **began to go downhill** mean?

The words 'began to go downhill' mean that the quality of the games began to get worse.

5. Fill in the missing words.

A man on a **flute** often played **music** for the athletes that would help them to time their jumps.

6. Summarise what you have learnt about the first Olympic Games using 20 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: They were held in Olympia every four years and were a religious ceremony to honour Zeus.

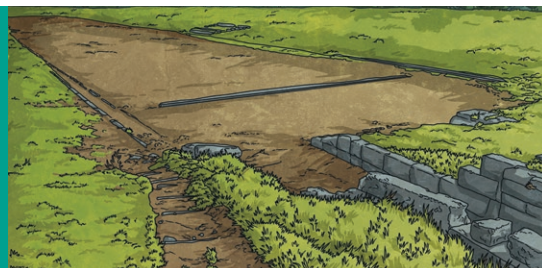
7. Which event from the ancient Olympic Games would you most like to take part in? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would most like to take part in the long jump because holding weights in your hands and swinging your arms around sounds like a lot of fun. I also like the idea of doing that to music.

8. How do you think Pierre de Coubertin felt during the first modern Olympic Games in 1896?

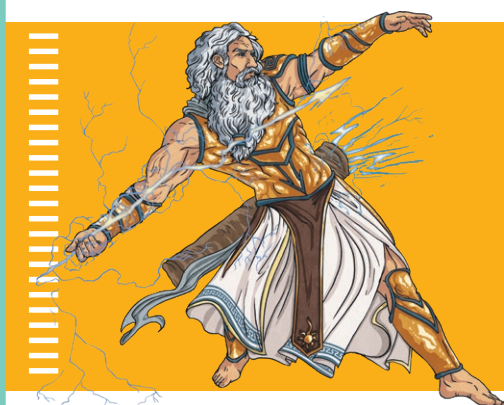
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Pierre de Coubertin felt excited and nervous at the first modern Olympic Games. Excited because he was finally seeing his plan become a reality and nervous because it might not work out as well as he had hoped.

The History of the Olympic Games



Thought to have started over 2,700 years ago in ancient Greece, the Olympic Games have a rich history but where did it all begin? Read on to find out about the first Games, how they ended and the resurfacing of the modern Olympic Games.

The First Olympic Games



It is believed that the first ancient Olympic Games were held in 776 BC. These Games took place in Olympia, Greece and were held every four years. Although sporting events played a large part, the main focus was as a religious ceremony to honour the king of the Greek gods, Zeus.



Zeus is said to have travelled to Olympia from his home in Mount Olympus in 1200 BC. He announced his visit by throwing his thunderbolt from Mount Olympus into Olympia. This became the setting for the first ancient Olympic Games.

As part of the festival, people would travel from all over Greece to visit the Temple of Zeus. The main event was the sacrifice of 100 oxen on an altar in honour of Zeus. The ashes of previously sacrificed oxen were collected over the years and formed the altar. By around AD 200, this was thought to be six metres high.

Ancient Olympic Events

Running

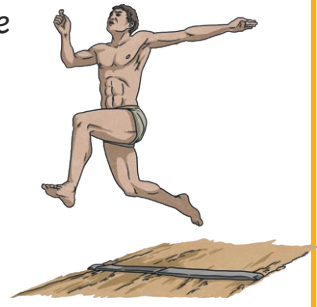
During the running events, competitors would run up and down a track that was 192 metres long. Despite being rebuilt several times, the track always stayed the same length. Some people believe that this is because 192 metres is how long the Greek hero, Hercules, could run on a single breath.

Wrestling and Boxing

The wrestling and boxing matches seen at the ancient Olympic Games were more violent than those seen today. Competitors were expected to show that they had surrendered by raising a finger into the air. One of the most aggressive matches was known as pankration. In this match, the only rule was that you couldn't bite your opponent or poke them in the eye.

Long Jump

In this event, competitors would hold large weights (called halteres) in their hands and swing their arms around. This would propel them forward. A man playing a flute often accompanied the athletes; the music is thought to have helped them to accurately time their jump.



The Fall of the Ancient Olympic Games

When ancient Greece was invaded by the Roman Empire in the 2nd century BC, the Games continued. However, it is thought that the quality of the Games began to go downhill. In AD 67, a Roman emperor named Nero took part as a competitor in the chariot race (a dangerous race around a circular track on chariots led by horses). Although he fell off during the race, he still announced himself as the winner.

By AD 393, an emperor named Theodosius I had called for a ban of Pagan festivals. This meant that the ancient Olympic Games were cancelled after nearly 1,200 years.



The Modern Olympic Games

Around 1,500 years after the ancient games were cancelled, a French baron named Pierre de Coubertin wanted to promote physical education. He suggested the idea of holding an international athletics competition every four years just like the ancient Games in Olympia. Two years later, this idea was accepted and he started the International Olympic Committee.

The first modern Olympic Games were held in 1896 in Athens, Greece. 14 different countries competed in a total of 43 events. Since then, the modern Olympic Games have been held every four years. Throughout their history, the modern Games have only been cancelled or postponed a total of four times. Once in 1916 due to the First World War, in 1940 and 1944 due to the Second World War and again in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Questions

1. Where did the first ancient Olympic games take place? Tick one.

- ☐ Athens
- ☐ Mount Olympus
- ☐ Olympia
- ☐ Rome

2. Draw **four** lines and match each event to the year that it is thought to have happened in.

Emperor Nero declared himself as the winner of the chariot race.

1200 BC

The ancient Olympic Games were cancelled.

776 BC

Zeus travelled to Olympia.

AD 67

The first ancient Olympic Games were held.

AD 393

3. Look at the section titled **The First Olympic Games**. Find and copy one word which means the same as **declared**.

4. In a pankration match, what was the only rule?

5. In which section would you find information about the ancient Olympic Games being cancelled?

6. Compare the ancient Olympic Games to the modern Olympic Games. How were they different?

7. Read the first paragraph beginning **Thought to have started...**
Explain why the author has chosen to include this paragraph.

8. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what you have learnt about the modern Olympic Games.

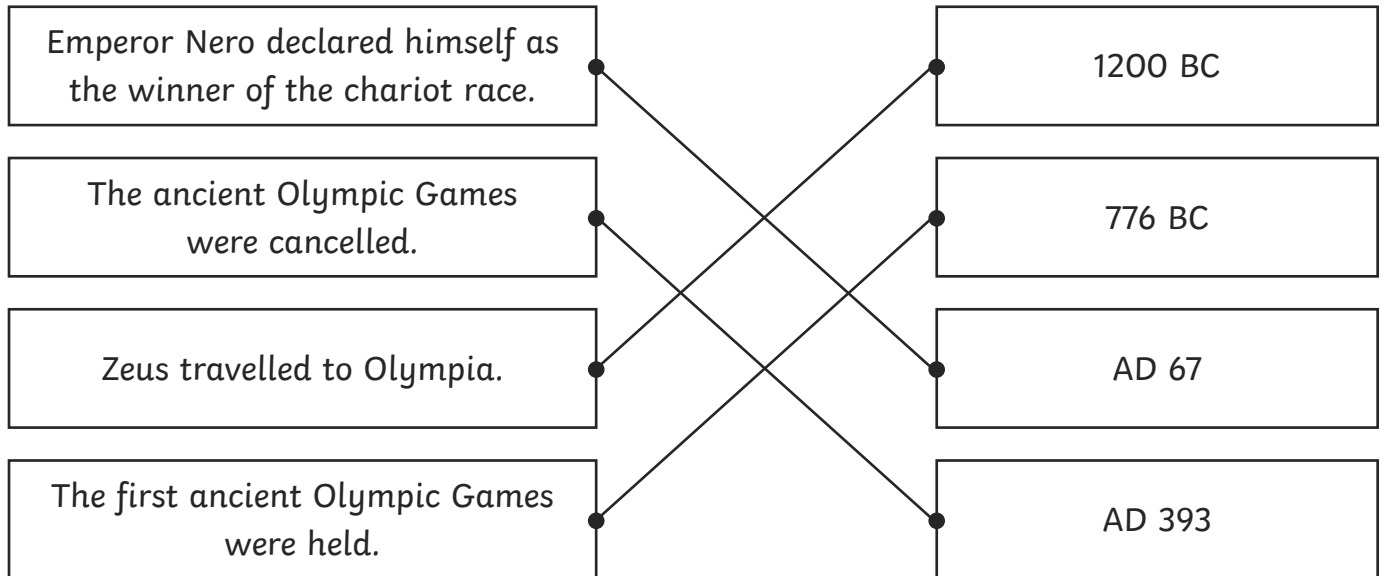
9. Would you have preferred to have been a spectator or a competitor at the ancient Olympic Games? Fully explain your answer

Answers

1. Where did the first ancient Olympic games take place? Tick one.

- ☐ Athens
☐ Mount Olympus
☒ **Olympia**
☐ Rome

2. Draw **four** lines and match each event to the year that it is thought to have happened in.



3. Look at the section titled **The First Olympic Games**.

Find and copy one word which means the same as **declared**.

announced

4. In a pankration match, what was the only rule?

The only rule was that you couldn't bite your opponent or poke them in the eye.

5. In which section would you find information about the ancient Olympic Games being cancelled?

You would find this information in the section 'The Fall of the Ancient Olympic Games'.

6. Compare the ancient Olympic Games to the modern Olympic Games. How were they different?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The ancient Olympic Games had more violent boxing and wrestling matches than the modern Olympic Games. The ancient Games were also a religious celebration for the Greek god, Zeus, which the modern Games are not.

7. Read the first paragraph beginning **Thought to have started...**

Explain why the author has chosen to include this paragraph.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author has chosen to include this paragraph to make the reader excited about reading the rest of the text. It also gives a hint about what the text is going to be about without giving everything away.

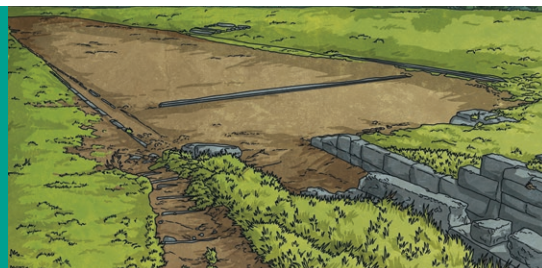
8. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what you have learnt about the modern Olympic Games.

Pupils' own responses, such as: They were first held in Athens in 1896 and were started by a French baron named Pierre de Coubertin.

9. Would you have preferred to have been a spectator or a competitor at the ancient Olympic Games? Fully explain your answer

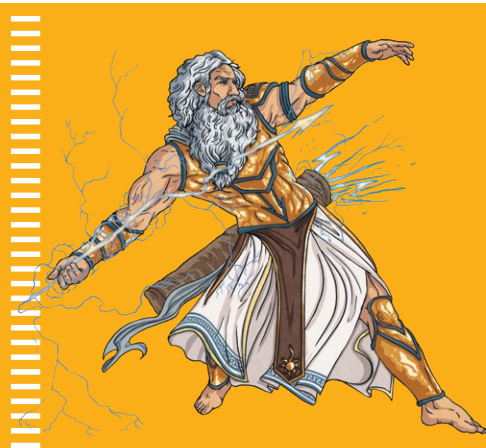
Pupils' own responses, such as: I would have preferred to be a spectator at the ancient Olympic Games because the sports sound too dangerous to take part in. I especially don't like the sound of taking part in pankration but I would enjoy watching it.

The History of the Olympic Games



Thought to have begun over 2,700 years ago in ancient Greece, the Olympic Games have a rich history but where did it all begin? Read on to find out about the first Games, the downfall and the resurrection of what we now know as the modern Olympic Games.

The First Olympic Games



Many historians believe that the first ancient Olympic Games were held in 776 BC. These Games took place in Olympia, a small town in Greece and, much like the modern Games, were held every four years. Interestingly, although sporting events played a large part in the ancient Games, the main focus of the Games was as a religious festival to honour Zeus: the king of the Greek gods.

It was believed that Zeus travelled to Olympia from his home in Mount Olympus in 1200 BC. He announced his visit by throwing his thunderbolt from Mount Olympus into the grove of Olympia. This grove was to become the setting for the first ancient Olympic Games.

As part of the festival, which lasted for five days, people would travel from all over Greece to visit the Temple of Zeus. The main event was the sacrifice of 100 oxen on an altar in honour of Zeus. This altar was not made of stone as you might expect but, instead, it was made from the ashes of previously sacrificed oxen. By around AD 200, the altar was thought to be six metres high.

Ancient Olympic Events

Running

During the running events, competitors would run lengths of a track that was 192 metres long. Despite the stadium being rebuilt several times throughout the years, the track always remained the same length. Some people believe that this is because 192 metres is how long the Greek hero, Hercules, could run on a single breath.

Wrestling and Boxing

The wrestling and boxing competitions seen at the ancient Olympic Games were far more violent than those seen in the modern Games. There were notoriously few rules and competitors were often expected to signal their surrender and defeat by raising a finger into the air.

One of the most aggressive forms of wrestling was known as pankration, which translates to mean 'all force'. In this match, the only rule was that you couldn't bite your opponent or poke them in the eye.

Long Jump

During this event, competitors would hold large weights (called halteres) in their hands and swing their arms around in order to propel themselves forward. A man playing a flute often accompanied the athletes; the rhythm of the music is thought to have helped them to accurately time their jump.



The Fall of the Ancient Olympic Games

When ancient Greece was invaded by the Roman Empire in the 2nd century BC, the Games continued. However, it is thought that the quality of the Games began to quickly decline. In AD 67, a Roman emperor named Nero took part as a competitor in the chariot race (a dangerous race around a circular track on chariots led by horses). Although he fell off during the race, he still declared himself as the winner.

By AD 393, Emperor Theodosius I had called for a ban of Pagan festivals. As a festival dedicated to the Greek god Zeus, this put an end to the ancient Olympic Games after nearly 1,200 years.



The Modern Olympic Games

Around 1,500 years after the cancellation of the ancient Games, a French baron named Pierre de Coubertin wanted to promote physical education. After a visit to the ancient Greek site of Olympia, he was determined to restart the Olympic Games. He proposed the idea of holding an international athletics competition every four years. Two years later, his proposal was accepted and he was given permission to start the International Olympic Committee.

The first modern Olympic Games were held in 1896 in Athens, Greece. 14 different countries competed in a total of 43 events between 6th and 15th April. Since this time, the modern Olympic Games have been held every four years in a variety of countries around the world. Throughout their history, the modern Games have only been cancelled or postponed a total of four times. Once in 1916 due to the First World War, in 1940 and 1944 due to the Second World War and again in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Questions

1. What were 'halteres'? Tick one.

- ☐ a type of sporting event
- ☐ the name of a competitor
- ☐ large weights
- ☐ a musical instrument

2. Draw **four** lines and match each section to its summary.

The First Olympic Games ●

● All about different competitions that took place during the Games.

Ancient Olympic Events ●

● A description of what happened to the Games following the invasion of Greece.

The Fall of the Ancient Olympic Games ●

● Information about the festival to honour Zeus.

The Modern Olympic Games ●

● Detailing what happened in order to revive the Olympic Games.

3. Look at the first paragraph.

Find and copy one word which means the same as **revival**.

4. How many countries competed in the first modern Olympic Games?

5. What was surprising about the altar in Olympia?

6. **Interestingly, although sporting events played a large part in the ancient Games...**

Explain why you think that the author has chosen to start this sentence with the word **interestingly**.

7. The ancient Olympic Games were held in Greece every year.

Explain why you think that Pierre de Coubertin wanted to make the modern Olympic Games an international event.

8. Compare the events found in the ancient Olympic Games to those found in the modern Olympic Games. How are they different?

9. Explain how the layout of the text helps you to understand the information.

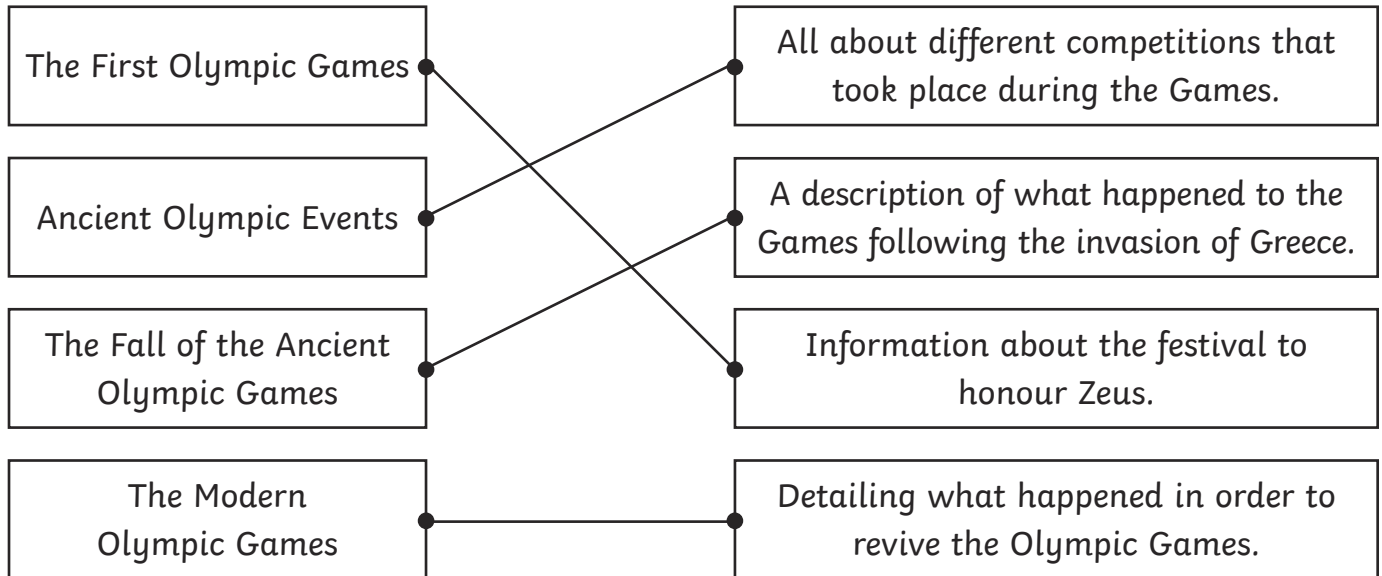
10. After reading this text, what area of the history of the Olympic Games would you like to research further? Fully explain your answer.

Answers

1. What were 'halteres'? Tick one.

- ☐ a type of sporting event
- ☐ the name of a competitor
- ☒ **large weights**
- ☐ a musical instrument

2. Draw **four** lines and match each section to its summary.



3. Look at the first paragraph.

Find and copy one word which means the same as **revival**.

resurrection

4. How many countries competed in the first modern Olympic Games?

14 different countries competed in the first modern Olympic Games.

5. What was surprising about the altar in Olympia?

It was not made out of stone. It was made from the ashes of previously sacrificed oxen.

6. **Interestingly, although sporting events played a large part in the ancient Games...**

Explain why you think that the author has chosen to start this sentence with the word **interestingly**.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author has chosen to start this sentence with the word 'interestingly' because it is interesting that the main focus of the ancient Games was as a religious festival. Today, people will think of the Olympic Games as a sporting event.

7. The ancient Olympic Games were held in Greece every year.

Explain why you think that Pierre de Coubertin wanted to make the modern Olympic Games an international event.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Pierre wanted to make the modern Olympic Games an international event because he wanted everyone to be able to take part. He was also from France but inspired by the ancient Greek games which would have made him think about how they could happen across the world.

8. Compare the events found in the ancient Olympic Games to those found in the modern Olympic Games. How are they different?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The wrestling and boxing at the ancient Olympic Games were more violent than those seen at the modern Olympic Games. Also, you wouldn't have a man playing a flute while someone jumped at the modern Games but they did during the ancient Games. You would also not find chariot racing in the modern Games.

9. Explain how the layout of the text helps you to understand the information.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The sub-headings help you to be able to find different information quickly and let you know a brief summary of what you are about to read. The illustrations help to make the text look more exciting and give you an idea of what the different things that you are reading about looked like.

10. After reading this text, what area of the history of the Olympic Games would you like to research further? Fully explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would like to know more about how the Games changed when Greece was invaded by the Roman Empire. In the text, it says that the quality began to quickly decline but I would like to know how it declined so quickly after being so popular.