

London 2012 International Education Programme

The History of the Olympic Games in the United Kingdom

In the summer of 2012, athletes from all over the world will come to London and the UK to take part in the Olympic Games.



2012 will be a very exciting year for London but this is not the first time that the Games have taken place in the United Kingdom. London held the Olympic Games in 1908 and 1948. Here are some facts about previous Games:

	1908	1948	2012
Number of competing teams	22	59	205
Number of athletes	2,008	4,104	10,400
Number of sports	22	17	26
Date of the Opening Ceremony	27 April 1908	29 July 1948	27 July 2012
Date of the Closing Ceremony	31 October 1908	14 August 1948	12 August 2012



Quote me!

'I can't think of a better place than London to hold an event that unites the world.'

**Nelson Mandela,
former President of South Africa**

In 1908, the Games were supposed to take place in Rome, Italy, but this was changed because the nearby volcano, Mount Vesuvius, erupted in 1906. The Games were moved to London.

London was supposed to host the Olympic Games in 1944 but the Games were cancelled because of the Second World War. The International Olympic Committee later chose London again for the 1948 Olympic Games.

Activity idea

How has your community changed?

How has your school or community changed between the years 1908, 1948 and 2012? How has life in your country changed since 1908? What were the fashions like then? What was the music like? Who was famous in 1908 and 1948? Are they still famous today?

Create timelines showing the history of your country. Use colour in your timelines and include as many facts as you can.

Glossary

OPENING CEREMONY – a large event in the Olympic Stadium to celebrate the start the Olympic Games

CLOSING CEREMONY – a large event in the Olympic Stadium to celebrate the end the Olympic Games

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC) – organisation that is responsible for all Olympic Games

Compare the Games of 1908, 1948 and 2012

Olympic Stadia



1908



1948



2012

Which events do you think took place in these venues? What do you think the Opening Ceremonies in 1908 and 1948 were like? What similarities do you think there will be with the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games? How will the London 2012 Opening Ceremony be different?

Olympic Medals



1908



1948



2012

What do you think of the London 2012 Olympic gold medal design?

Athletics – Marathon



1908



1948



2012

There are many stories about athletes running in Olympic Marathons. A marathon is 26.2 miles (42km and 195m) long. How do you think athletes feel:

- At the start of their marathon
- During their marathon
- At the end of their marathon?

You could write a poem or story about how you would feel.

Diving



1908



1948



2012

Do you know the different ways of diving? Look at the 1908, 1948 and 2012 events and venues. What are the similarities and differences?

Hockey



1908



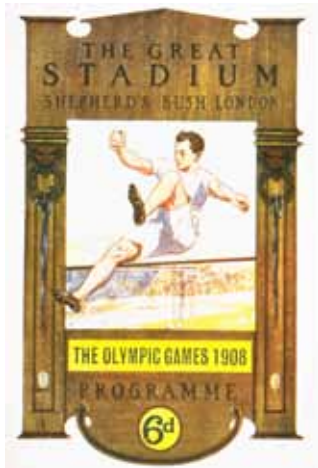
1948



2012

Do you play Hockey in your country? How do you think the equipment has changed since 1908?

Advertising posters



1908



1948



2012

Look at these posters. What differences can you see? Are posters still useful? How would you promote the London 2012 Games in your community?

Glossary

OPENING CEREMONY – a large event in the Olympic Stadium to celebrate the start of the Olympic Games

OLYMPIC STADIUM – the main venue for the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. The Opening Ceremony, the Closing Ceremony and the Athletics competitions take place here

1908 Games: Did you know?

- This was the first time that a new sports stadium was built especially for the Games.
- Hockey and Diving became Olympic sports for the first time.
- This was the first time that swimming did not take place in the open water. Instead an outdoor swimming pool was built in the middle of the Athletics track.
- The distance for the Marathon was fixed at 26 miles and 385 yards (42km and 195m). The route started at Windsor Castle in London and finished in the Stadium in front of the seats of the Royal Family.
- The Athletics events included the first Olympic Relay. One athlete ran 200m, one 400m and the other 800m in this relay.
- Athletes walked behind their country's flag in sportswear during the Opening Ceremony.
- Australia and New Zealand were one team, called Australasia.



Activity idea

Travelling to the 1908 Games

In 1908, travel plans for the athletes and spectators would have been quite different from today and the journeys would have been much longer. Did athletes from your country take part in the 1908 Games? How do you think they travelled to London? Did they fly in an aeroplane? Did they travel by ship? Find out the details and then act it out. Show your team's 1908 journey to other people.



Glossary

RELAY – this is a running (or swimming) event for a team

OPENING CEREMONY – a large event in the Olympic Stadium to celebrate the start of the Olympic Games

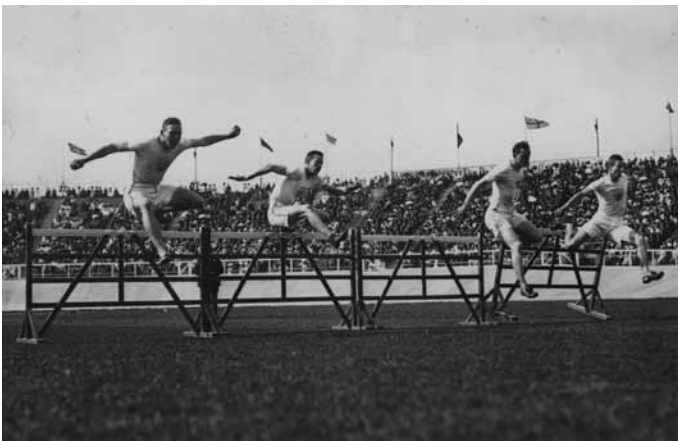
OLYMPIC STADIUM – the main venue for the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. The Opening Ceremony, the Closing Ceremony and the Athletics competitions take place here

London 1908: Image sheet

Many things have changed since the 1908 Games in London, both in the UK and around the world. These are pictures of the London 1908 Olympic Games. How will the London 2012 Games be similar? How will they be different?

Think about:

- The sports equipment
- Their clothing
- Who is taking part



1948 Games: Did you know?



The 1948 Games were the first Games to be shown on televisions in people's homes.

Starting blocks were used for the Athletics Sprint races for the first time.

Volunteers helped to run the Games for the first time.

The swimming pool was the first to have a roof. It could hold 8,000 spectators.

This was the first time that the Basketball competition was played indoors. In 1936, the matches were played outdoors, with the final in the rain.

There were several new events: Women's Canoeing, Road Cycling and Jumping.

Activity idea

Comparison of the Games

How much do you know about the Games of 1908 and 1948? Who were the heroes of the Games? Did your country have a team in 1948? If so, did they take part? Look at the IOC and London 2012 websites to learn fascinating facts about past teams and athletes. Share any information you find out with your friends.

Look and see who the past stars of the Games were. Make posters or draw pictures of these athletes. Who do you think the real Olympic hero of the Games was in 1908 or 1948.

Glossary

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (IOC) – organisation that is responsible for all Olympic Games

London 1948: Image Sheet

Here are some images from the London 1948 Games:



Activity idea

How has sport changed?

Look at the sports in the 1948 Games and the 2012 Games. How have they changed? What did people wear to play sport then? What equipment did they have? Ask your teachers or parents/grandparents how their favourite sports have changed during their lifetime?

