

You Can... Organise an Olympics

What do your children know about the Olympics? Between 8–24 August 2008, some of their favourite television programmes may be replaced by the Olympics and they will see footage and league tables on news programmes and in newspapers. The more children know and understand about the games, the more likely they are to take an interest. Do some brief research into the Olympics, then organise your own Olympics in school.

Thinking points

- One of the most important parts of organising an Olympic games is competing with the Olympic spirit. Ensure that all of the children understand that taking part and representing your class or team is as important as winning. The Olympic ideal is not that competitors cheat or winners boast too much or those who don't win burst into tears.
- Trying to teach the Olympic ideal to four- to seven-year-olds is tricky. You might want to model it in class, preferably with an adult accomplice with whom you can discuss losing a board game. Boost the spirits of the children who don't win by congratulating them on their Olympic spirit.

Recommended websites

These websites have information and ideas that you can use to help children to understand and engage with the Olympic Games.

- <http://en.beijing2008.cn> Official website of the Beijing Olympic Games.
- www.olympics.org.uk British Olympic Association.
- www.first-school.ws/activities/firststeps/olympics.htm
- www.npl.org/pages/KidsPlace/Sites/olympics.html
- www.atozkidsstuff.com/oly.html

Tips, ideas and activities

- Ask your children what they know or have heard about the Olympic Games. Summarise their understanding in a list.
- On an interactive whiteboard, use web pages such as: http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/sport/newsid_3911000/3911153.stm to give children some understanding of the history of the games.
- Show the children the official Olympic website <http://en.beijing2008.cn/en.shtml> to find out about the Olympic spirit and the symbolism of the five rings.
- Together, visit other sites such as www.visitolympics.co.uk to find lists of sports, together with dates and venues of the competition.
- Talk about what an Olympics might look like in school. *Which sports or activities would it involve? Where could it take place? Would it have to be all on one day, or could it be spread out over several days?*
- *What would the rewards be? Would you have both individual and team awards (as the Olympics – as individual and country awards)? What will the rewards look like? Real medals, certificates, applause?*
- Ask groups of children to consider these questions and to put together an 'Olympic bid'. This could be in any form of communication including drawing, cutting out pictures, writing or using the computer. The idea is for children to engage with the principle of organising an event and to use the class research as the basis for their work.
- Combine the best features of the children's Olympic bids and make an official bid to the leadership team. It may be that only one class is taking part, or you may open the bidding structure to more than one class, but ensure that all children and classes who are interested are included.
- Good luck with your Olympic games!