



TEACHER WORKSHEET

CYCLE 3 / 11-12 YR • HISTORY AND ART HISTORY



THE FIRST OLYMPIC GAMES

OVERVIEW

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES:

- Understand that the ancient Games were religious festivities that united sometimes rival Greek cities around their gods, during a truce.
- Understand that the athletes who competed were true champions.
- Familiarize oneself with ancient pentathlon events (javelin throwing, discus throwing, long jump, wrestling, and running) and their modern format.
- Know the Greek or Latin origin of certain words.
- Understand the values of Olympism.

ANNUAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES:

Topic 2: Founding stories, beliefs, and citizenship in the ancient Mediterranean during the first millennium B.C.

The world of Greek cities.

SPECIFIC SKILLS:

- **History:**
Determine one's place in time: develop historical points of reference.
Understand a document.
Practice using different language skills in history (writing, speaking, grasping and using history vocabulary).
- **Art history:**
Relate characteristics of a work of art to usage and to the historical and cultural context in which it was created.

INTERDISCIPLINARY SKILLS:

- **Language studies:**
Find word meaning through etymology (introduction to Latin and Greek roots).
Understand polysemy in words.
- **Geography:**
Determine one's place in space.

SCHEDULE FOR SESSIONS:

- Launch project.
- Gather initial student project feedback.
- Read documents aloud as a class.
- Do activities in pairs:
 - Reading comprehension (text and image).
 - Language studies.
- Share work as a class, develop a chronological timeline, and review.
- Extend activity.

DURATION:

- 2 sessions (2 × 45 minutes).

ORGANIZATION:

- Work in pairs, then share as a class.



OLYMPIC GAMES KEYWORDS:

OLYMPISM • ANCIENT GREECE •
SANCTUARY • ATHLETE • PENTATHLON •
PHYSICAL EXERCISE



CONCEPTS ADDRESSED

THE FIRST OLYMPIC GAMES

Starting in 776 B.C., every four years the Greeks would organize public festivities in the city of Olympia in honor of Zeus.

Athletes from all the Greek cities competed in sports events, which thousands of Greeks came to watch.

Other Panhellenic Games, which were shared across Greek cities, were held in Delphi, Nemea, and on the Isthmus of Corinth.

MILO OF CROTON: THE FIRST SPORTS LEGEND

Milo of Croton was a Greek athlete born in Croton, Greece, in the 6th century B.C. His extraordinary athletic achievements made him one of the earliest and most famous champions in the ancient Games, particularly in wrestling.

Famous marble sculptures, made by Pierre Puget at King Louis XIV's request, depict his tragic end—according to legend, he was devoured by wild beasts (sculptures on view at the Louvre Museum).

ANCIENT PENTATHLON

Originally, the pentathlon involved running, jumping, javelin throwing, discus throwing, and wrestling. In Olympia, the venue that hosted wrestling and boxing events was called a palaestra (from the Greek *palè*, which means “wrestling”).

MODERN PENTATHLON

The modern pentathlon was introduced at the 1912 Games in Stockholm, Sweden, and includes pistol shooting, fencing, swimming, equestrian show jumping, and running events, all of which take place in a single day.

WRESTLING: THE FIRST SPORT IN HISTORY

Wrestling is recognized as the oldest competitive sport.

When the Olympic Games returned to Athens in 1896, wrestling was a key event. For organizers, the sport was a historical symbol—as Greco-Roman wrestling is just like the style used in ancient times by the Greeks and Romans.

Wrestlers can only use their arms and upper body and grasp their opponent above the waist.

FUN FACT!

Since the 1920 Olympic Games in Antwerp, Belgium, there have been two wrestling events—freestyle wrestling and Greco-Roman wrestling.

FUN FACT!

Long considered to be chiefly a men's sport, wrestling is no longer reserved for men. Women's wrestling was featured for the first time at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. The rules were set to take women's morphology into account.



STUDENT WORKSHEET OVERVIEW

VOCABULARY:

Athlete, pentathlon, truce.

ACTIVITIES:

▶ ACTIVITY 1: MILO OF CROTON: THE FIRST SPORTS LEGEND

Reading comprehension (text and image) 9–10 yr | 10–11 yr | 11–12 yr

Materials: – Text

- Biographical note about Milo of Croton with statue photo
- “The ancient pentathlon” infographic worksheet for further study

▶ ACTIVITY 2: WRESTLING EVENTS

Reading comprehension (text and image) 9–10 yr | 10–11 yr | 11–12 yr

- Materials: – Depiction of a black amphora with red figures of wrestlers, on view at the Louvre Museum
- Image of two Greco-Roman wrestlers at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio

▶ ACTIVITY 3: WORD HISTORY

Language studies (vocabulary) 9–10 yr | 10–11 yr | 11–12 yr

Materials: Text



STUDENT WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY

▶ ACTIVITY 1: MILO OF CROTON: THE FIRST SPORTS LEGEND

Reading comprehension (text and image) 9–10 yr | 10–11 yr | 11–12 yr

Exercise 1

- 1) The religious festivities allowed truces between rival Greek cities.
- 2) He wanted to depict the ephemeral nature of human glory—a Milo of Croton still very physically fit, but whose pride has been lost.

▶ ACTIVITY 2: WRESTLING EVENTS

Reading comprehension (text and image) 9–10 yr | 10–11 yr | 11–12 yr

Exercise 2

- 1) The rules are the same as in ancient wrestling: hand-to-hand combat; athletes bend forwards and are only allowed to grab the opponent’s upper body.
- 2) Athletes now wear clothes!

▶ ACTIVITY 3: WORD HISTORY

Language studies (vocabulary) 9–10 yr | 10–11 yr | 11–12 yr

Exercise 3

- 1) – “Penta” means five.
 - Pentagon, a five-sided polygon.
- 2) The athletes were naked there.
- 3) Panhellenic, all people of Greek origin or ancestry; pandemic, a disease spread throughout a whole country or the world.



FIND OUT MORE

CNOSF EDUCATIONAL FILES

Cycle 3: "Vocabulary for sports and athletic achievement"

Cycle 3: "Sports stars and heroes"

9–10 yr: "Stadium history from ancient times to the present day"

Cycle 3: "Learn about a major city: Tokyo, host city of the 2020 Summer Olympic Games"

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Find out more about the Olympic Games in ancient Greece:

<https://stillmed.olympic.org/media/Document%20Library/Museum/Visit/TOM-Schools/Teaching-Resources/The-Olympic-Journey/The-Olympic-Journey-EN.pdf>

<http://cnosf.franceolympique.com/cnosf/actus/4917-les-racines-antiques.html>

http://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/Jeux_Olympiques_de_la_Gr%C3%A8ce_antique/185462

<http://www.cndp.fr/archive-musagora/jeux/default.htm>

Learn more about Greco-Roman wrestling:
<https://www.olympic.org/wrestling-greco-roman>

Learn more about Milo of Croton:
<https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/milo-croton-0>

Documentary set on key Olympic topics (available for download):

<https://www.olympic.org/documents/document-set-teachers-the-main-olympic-topics>

EXHIBITIONS FOR STUDENTS

The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland
<https://www.olympic.org/museum>
(virtual tour available online)

"Fair Play": A touring exhibition on Olympism, available on loan (12 panels, 1.60 m × 50 cm):
Contact: academieolympique@cnosf.org

The Musée National du Sport in Nice, France

FURTHER READING FOR STUDENTS

Sports and Olympism:
<http://www.lescleftsdelecole.com/Clefts-des-champs/Listes-de-lecture/Sport-et-olympisme>

Introduction to ancient times in Cycle 3:
<http://www.lescleftsdelecole.com/Clefts-des-champs/Listes-de-lecture/Decouvrir-l-antiquite-au-cycle-3>

FILMS FOR STUDENTS

Asterix at the Olympic Games, by Frédéric Forestier and Thomas Langmann (France, 2008)

INFOGRAPHIC WORKSHEET

End of unit: "The ancient pentathlon"





STUDENT WORKSHEET

CYCLE 3 / 11-12 YR • HISTORY AND ART HISTORY



THE FIRST OLYMPIC GAMES

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VOCABULARY



ATHLETE: A person who does a physical activity.

PENTATHLON: An athletic competition that includes five events.

TRUCE: An agreement to temporarily stop fighting.



ACTIVITIES

▶ ACTIVITY 1: MILO OF CROTON: THE FIRST OLYMPIC LEGEND

MATERIALS:

- Text: Ancient Games description.
- Image: *Milo of Croton*, sculpture by Pierre Puget.

Read the documents below and answer each question:

Document 1: The ancient Games.

Ancient Greek cities would hold religious festivities to honor the gods. During the festivities, the best athletes competed in sports events. The Games served as a truce between cities and were an opportunity for the thousands of Greeks in attendance to see spectacular performances.

The most famous Games were held in the city of Olympia and took place every four years, starting in 776 B.C. Other Panhellenic Games, which were shared across Greek cities, were held in Delphi, Nemea, and on the Isthmus of Corinth.

Athletes would compete in the pentathlon, which involved five different events: running, long jump, javelin throwing, discus throwing, and wrestling. An athlete had to win at least three events to be declared the winner.

1) What role did the Games play in ancient Greece?



TIPS & TRICKS

Despite the saying, **curiosity didn't kill the cat!**

Curiosity is a quality that will push you to understand how the world works.

The more curious you are, the more you learn, and the more comfortable you are with speaking and giving your opinion...

To spark your curiosity, you can go to the library, see an exhibition, or watch an athletic competition. You can also just walk around your home town, observe, and ask questions...

You can learn anytime, anywhere!

Document 2: *Milo of Croton*, sculpture by Pierre Puget.

Milo of Croton was a Greek athlete born in Croton, Greece, in the 6th century B.C.

He quickly found success in the various ancient Games, bringing incredible glory to his family and city. He achieved fame across all the Greek cities for his extraordinary athletic record, and became one of the earliest wrestling champions in the history of the Olympic Games.

A seven-time winner at the Games in Olympia, he was unfortunately beaten the eighth time by a younger wrestler.

A legend tells of the tragic circumstances surrounding his death—he was devoured by wild beasts with his hand trapped in an oak tree, after he had claimed he could split the tree with his bare hands! Famous marble sculptures, made by Pierre Puget at King Louis XIV's request, depict scenes from his death (on view at the Louvre Museum).



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2) In your opinion, what did the artist intend to symbolize with this sculpture of Milo of Croton?

► **ACTIVITY 2: WRESTLING EVENTS**

MATERIALS:

- Photo of a black amphora with red figures of wrestlers.
- Photo of two wrestlers during a Greco-Roman wrestling event at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

FUN FACT! Of the five different pentathlon events, wrestling was the final, decisive event. It took place in a reserved venue, called a palaestra (from the Greek *palè*, which means “wrestling”). Wrestling had existed for a long time (depictions can be found on cave walls dating back to 3,000 B.C.), and is recognized as the oldest competitive sport. The qualities of a good wrestler were strength and flexibility, but being cunning also helped one win.



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Document 1: Black amphora with red figures of wrestlers, on view at the Louvre Museum.

Wrestlers can be easily recognized on Greek vases: they are always depicted in pairs, in a curved stance, grasping each other by the arms.

Document 2: Two Greco-Roman wrestlers at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.



When the modern Olympic Games began in Athens in 1896, wrestling was a key event. For organizers, the sport was a historical symbol—as the rules were very similar to those used by the Greeks and Romans in ancient times.

Read and look at documents 1 and 2 and answer the following questions:

1) What can you infer from the rules of Greco-Roman wrestling?

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2) What is the main difference between the two pictures above?

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▶ ACTIVITY 3: WORD HISTORY

FUN FACT! Ancient Greek boxing was similar to today's boxing and was introduced to the ancient Olympic Games by the Greeks at the end of the 7th century B.C. Back then, boxers wrapped thin strips of leather around their fists and forearms as protection. Later, in Rome, that was replaced by a studded glove, the *cestus*. Ancient boxing was outlawed around 390 A.D. It was considered far too violent.

There are many words in English that come from Latin or Greek. Look for the etymology of a word to find the language it comes from and the root word. If you know the etymology of a word, it can help you to understand what the word means.

Answer the following questions:

1) Pentathlon involves five different events: javelin throwing, discus throwing, long jump, wrestling, and running.

What do you think the prefix "penta" means?

.....

Find another word with the prefix "penta" and explain what it means:

.....

2) In ancient Greece, a gymnasium was a venue used for training athletes (from the Greek *gymnos*, which means "naked").

Explain the origin of the word "gymnasium":

.....

.....

3) A palaestra (from the Greek *palè*, which means "wrestling") was the venue used for wrestling, boxing, and pankration (which combined both wrestling and boxing).

The word "pankration" includes the prefix *pan* ("all"). Find another word with that prefix and explain what it means:

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.....



REVIEW

- In ancient times, organizing athletic events in honor of the gods was a way for rivaling cities to agree to **temporary periods of peace**.
- In ancient times, trained athletes could make incredible athletic achievements and therefore became true legends in sports, such as Milo of Croton (6th century B.C.). **There are many relics from the past that prove it.**
- Pentathlon events have evolved from ancient times, but the goal in the modern pentathlon remains the same: to test the **physical and mental capabilities of well-rounded athletes**.



NOW, TAKE ACTION!

See how the past and present are connected. Societies have also evolved through major athletic events—they are a **part of our history**. Even if you aren't interested in some sports or in keeping up with major world events, **accept and respect the fact that they exist**.

▶ KICK OFF THE DISCUSSION...

In freestyle wrestling, wrestlers are allowed to use their arms and legs, and can grasp their opponent both above and below the waist, unlike in Greco-Roman wrestling.

In 1904, the Olympic authorities decided to include freestyle wrestling, which originated as catch wrestling, known as *catch-as-catch-can* (in modern English, "catch me if you can").

Although it lacked Greco-Roman wrestling's historical prestige, freestyle wrestling was highly popular at the time. Back then, in the United States and in Great Britain, professionals in this widely enjoyed form of entertainment performed at fairs and festivals.

What do you think?

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INFOGRAPHIC WORKSHEET

CYCLE 3 / 11-12 YR • HISTORY AND ART HISTORY



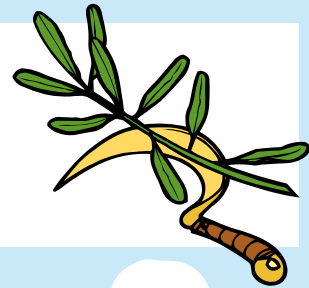
THE FIRST OLYMPIC GAMES

Ancient pentathlon

Starting in 776 B.C., every four years the Games were held in the city of Olympia. They lasted five days. During those five days, all wars would stop. The pentathlon was among the events.

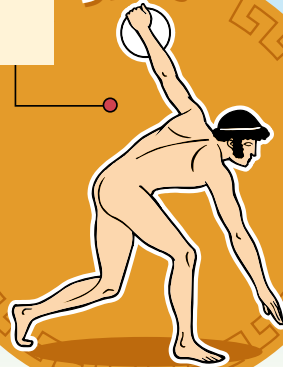
Rules:

- On the first day of the Olympic Games, athletes took an oath in front of 10 judges. They pledged to abide by the rules.
- If they cheated, they had to pay a big fine.
- Only men were allowed to compete in the Games.
- Candidates competed completely in the nude.
- Winners were crowned with a sacred olive wreath, cut with a golden sickle.



Athletes threw a bronze discus that weighed up to 4 kilos. The discus was covered in sand to keep it from slipping.

Discus



Running

The event generally took place along the length of the stadium (approx. 200 meters).

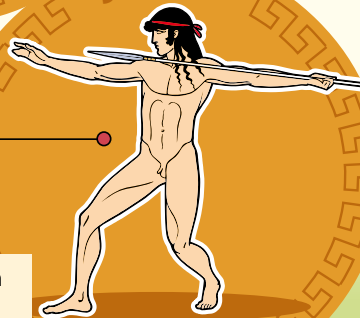


Long jump



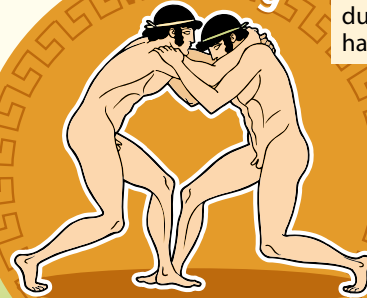
The event involved almost no running start. Athletes held a stone or bronze dumbbell in each hand.

Javelin



The javelin was thrown as far as possible, or sometimes at a target using a small strap.

Wrestling



At the time, the event was called "pankration". Athletes had to knock their opponent onto his back three times. They couldn't punch, but they could butt heads!

