

Grade 5 – Let the Games Begin

- 1- Answer the following questions orally with someone in your family:
 - Have you or your team ever competed for a medal or trophy?
 - What did you do to prepare yourself?
 - How did you feel when you won or lost?
- 2- Read the text *Let the Games Begin* on pages 2 to 4.
- 3- Fill out a comparison chart on page 5. Compare the Olympics when they first began to what they are today. Use the text to find information about the first Olympics and use your general knowledge for today's Olympics. Send me your work at melanie.custeau2@csmc.qc.ca .

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

warm up

Have you or your team ever competed for a medal or trophy? What did you do to prepare yourself? How did you feel when you won or lost?

THE OLYMPICS

Today, whenever the Olympic Games are held, people from all over the world stay glued to the television. For two weeks, the whole world shares one common focus — the Games!

Would you believe that this very special tradition began in ancient

Greece? It's true. The first Olympics (that we have written records of) took place in 776 BCE. Now that was a long time ago!

The games were different then. Athletes represented themselves, not a country as they do today.

CHECKPOINT

Do you think this was a good idea?
Should that still happen today?

And they did it in the nude! That's right — athletes in the very first Olympic Games did not wear special clothing to compete. Instead, they didn't wear any clothing at all.



Much like today, the ancient Olympics were a very special event. The Greeks actually started the Games to honour their gods. They believed that fighting would disappoint the gods, so for one month all war and fighting stopped. Many soldiers even became athletes during this time of peace. After the Games, soldiers could travel back to the battleground without concern that they might be attacked.

The Olympics were held every four years just as they are today. But in the beginning, only one competition was held. It was a foot race. Gradually, the Games included other events

such as chariot racing, boxing, and wrestling.

When athletes won events, their skills and hard work were rewarded. They were given crowns made from olive leaves. Statues were also made in their honour.

Today, wars may not stop and athletes may not be naked, but everyone still cheers when the Olympics roll around every four years.

FYI

- Only men, boys, and unmarried women were allowed to watch the games. If slaves, girls, or married women were caught attending, they
- would be severely punished by the law.

❖ CHARIOT RACING IN ROME ❖

In ancient Rome, chariot racing drew large crowds to the circus or arena. The largest arena, the Circus Maximus, could hold as many as 250 000 people. Today, the largest arena holds about 120 000 people.

The races were great occasions. People dressed in their finest clothes, often in team colours — red, white, blue, and green.

Chariots were pulled by two or four horses. They raced around the arena seven times at very fast speeds. Sometimes chariots tipped over and drivers were trampled. At other times chariots crashed into one another. Drivers had to have great skill to avoid accidents. Some of the best drivers even raced ten horses together when they wanted to show off.

wrap up

1. Imagine you and a friend are attending an Olympic event in ancient Greece or a chariot race in Rome. Write a diary entry about your experience.
2. Create a poster to announce the ancient Olympic Games (be sure to mention the time of truce) or an upcoming Roman chariot race.

This is a scene from the movie
Ben Hur, made in 1959.

Let the games begin

Compare the Olympics when they first began to what they are today. Use the comparison chart below.

Information	First Olympics	Modern Olympics
For what reason are there Olympics?		
Who do the athletes represent?		
How often are the Olympics held?		
What competitions are included?		(name a few)
What reward do the athletes get?		
Who can attend the games?		