



Upper KS1/Lower KS2 (SATS style) Reading Comprehension Booklet 7



Name.....

Useful words

ancient

Zeus

Hera

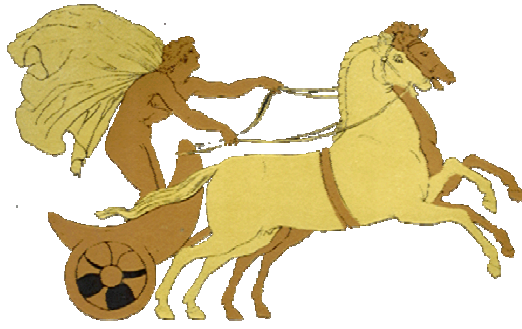
Heraia

pankration

Theodosius

banned

The Ancient Olympics



Every four years, the biggest sports festival in the world takes place - the Olympic Games! Crowds gather and competitions are held for nearly every sport you can imagine. Athletes from all over the world meet to compete for the gold, silver and bronze medals. But how did the Olympic Games begin? Read on to find out.

Questions

1 What is the name of the world's biggest sports festival?

2 What do Olympic athletes compete for?

Tick one.

trophies

prize money

medals

gold watches

The Olympic games were started by the people of Greece about 3,000 years ago. We call these people the **ancient Greeks** because they lived a very long time ago. The ancient Greeks loved sport and liked to enter competitions for many kinds of sports including running, boxing, wrestling, throwing the discus (a round stone) and javelin (like a spear).

3 When did the Olympic games start?

Tick **one**.

about 300 years ago

about 30,000 years ago

about 3,000 years ago

about 30 years ago

4 What is a discus?

The ancient Greeks held sports contests at feasts, festivals and even funerals! The first recorded sports event at Olympia took place in 776BC (BC means before the birth of Christ). Olympia was a beautiful river valley, surrounded by olive groves and low hills in southwest Greece. People came to Olympia to worship Zeus, king of the Greek gods, and Hera, his queen.

The games probably began as part of a big religious festival at Olympia in praise of Zeus but no one really knows for sure.

5 Who did people go to Olympia to worship?

At first there was just one event - a running race. All the runners were Greek men. Women who wanted to race had a separate festival called Heraia. The men did not wear any clothes because they wanted to show off their strong, athletic bodies.

6 Who took part in the first Olympic running races?

Tick **one**.

Greek women

Greek girls

Greek boys

Greek men

7 Why didn't the men wear any clothes?

Eventually, the Olympic Games became the most popular sports festival in Greece. More sports were included and thousands of spectators travelled hundreds of miles to see the sporting events. People even came from countries such as Italy, Syria and Egypt.

After about 100 years of the Games, there were 18 main events. Some of the most popular were the chariot race, the pentathlon (which included throwing the javelin, throwing the discus, running, wrestling and the long jump). The most brutal event was a fierce fighting contest called the pankration where men would punch, kick and break each other's bones.

8 How many main events were held at the Olympics after about 100 years?

100

81

18

88

9 What was the name of the fierce fighting contest?

Anyone who won a sporting event at the Games was considered to be a great hero. Winners were awarded a crown of olives and their names would be included in songs and poems throughout Greece. There were no awards for second or third place though - only the winners were rewarded.

After many years, the Romans conquered Greece and eventually, a Christian Roman Emperor called Theodosius banned them. Over the years, Olympia fell into ruin and finally, after an earthquake and flood, the Olympic site lay buried and remained hidden for over 1000 years.

10 How were winners of Olympic sporting events rewarded?

11 Who banned the ancient Olympics?

Useful words

behaviour

boastful

thundering

The Hare and the Tortoise

There was once a hare who was forever showing off in front of his friends.

"Look at me!" said the hare to the other animals. "Just look how fast I can run."

The hare ran across a field as fast as he could.



12

Which of the words below best describes the behaviour of the hare.

Tick **one**.

kind

boastful

funny

naughty

All the animals agreed that the hare was very fast. The hare ran back.

"See," he shouted. "I'm not even out of breath."

"Yes, that was very speedy," said a fox.

"So who wants a race?" said the hare. "Anybody think they could beat me?"

None of the animals spoke.

"See," said the hare. "You're all too scared to even try."

13 Why did the hare think that no one would race him?

Annoyed by such bragging, the tortoise said, "I'll have a go."

The hare laughed. "You? The slowest creature in the whole world? I'm not wasting my time racing a tortoise."

"What's the matter?" said the tortoise. "Scared I might beat you?"

Some of the animals laughed at that, so the hare said, "Alright then, tortoise. Let's have a race...right now...then we'll see who's laughing."

"Not today," said the tortoise. "We'll race next week. Got to do a bit of training first."

14 Why did the tortoise decide to race the hare?

15 What did tortoise want to do before racing the hare?

Next morning the animals watched the tortoise do his training. First he did some gentle stretching exercises to warm himself up and then he started to run.

"Has he started running yet?" asked the fox.

"I don't know. It's hard to tell with tortoises," said the badger. "He's definitely moving."

"Is he?" said the fox.

"Tortoise, are you sure about this?" said the crow. "I mean, the hare IS very fast and you...well..."

"Don't worry," said the tortoise, "this is just day one. I'll speed up. You'll see."

16 Why did the tortoise do some stretching exercises?

Tick **one**.

to cheer himself up

to cool himself down

to wake himself up

to warm himself up

17 Why couldn't the fox and the badger tell if the tortoise had started running?

On the day of the race, crowds of animals came to watch. The tortoise slowly made his way to the starting line and then suddenly... the hare arrived at top speed wearing a brand new track suit and four trainers.

"The race starts here," said the fox pointing to a line on the ground. "And ends at that tree on the other side of the field. First one to touch the tree is the winner."

"Right, let's get on with it." said the hare. "Are you ready Tortoise? Ready to see some real speed?"

"I'm ready." said the tortoise.

"Ready, steady...go!" said the fox and the race began.

The hare roared off then stopped and looked back. The tortoise was still crossing the starting line. The hare ran back to the tortoise.

"Didn't you hear him say go? You can start you know." teased the hare.

"I have started," said the tortoise.

"Look," said the hare. "you're going so slowly I'm going to have a rest. I might even have a little sleep. I'll finish the race when I wake up and still beat you by miles."

18 Where will the race end?

Tick one.

near the tree at the other side of the road

at that tree on the other side of the field

on the hill at the other side of the field

near the line on the ground

19 Why did the hare decide to have a rest?

The hare lay down in the sun and fell asleep. The tortoise kept going. Slowly, steadily he moved across the field and by evening time he was getting close to the finishing tree. Still the hare slept on and now the animals started to get excited.

'You know what? I think he might win,' said a rabbit.

'I can't believe it,' said the badger. 'The tortoise might actually win.'

The animals became even more excited and as the tortoise got close to the finishing tree they started to cheer.

'Come on tortoise!' they shouted. 'Nearly there. Keep going old friend. Keep going.'

But the noise of the cheering crowd woke up the hare. He looked across the field, saw the tortoise about to reach the tree and in a flash he was running.

20 When did the animals start to cheer?

21 What made the hare wake up?

The tortoise heard the hare thundering up behind him but he kept going...and going...and suddenly he was there. Just in time, the tortoise touched the tree with his nose. He'd done it. The tortoise had beaten the hare fair and square.

"There you go," said the badger. "Slow and steady is sometimes better than fast and flashy."

"Not fair," said the hare, "I was asleep. We have to run the race again. It's not fair."

But no-one was listening to the hare.

The end

22

What do you think the word "thundering" is supposed to mean in this sentence:

The tortoise heard the hare **thundering** up behind him.

23

Why do you think that no-one was listening to the hare?
