

The Winter Olympics in Sochi

Activity A In pairs, discuss the questions below.

- 1 Do you watch the Olympics? If so, do you prefer the Summer Olympics or the Winter Olympics? Why?
- 2 Which is your favourite Olympic sport, and who is your favourite athlete?
- 3 Are there any aspects of the Olympics you don't like, or any sports you think are a waste of time?

Activity B Order the words to make questions about the Olympics.

1 represent / do / What / rings / five / Olympic / the / ?

2 motto / Olympic / is / the / What / ?

3 Pierre de Coubertin / was / Who / ?

4 first / Winter Olympics / When / the / held / were / ?

5 Winter Olympics / held / were / the / Where / first / ?

6 country / most / Winter Olympic / medals / Which / has won / the / ?

Activity C Match the questions 1-6 in Activity B to answers a-f below.

- a) He was the founder of the modern Olympics.
- b) Norway
- c) Citius, Altius, Fortius (faster, higher, stronger)
- d) They were held in Chamonix in France.
- e) They were held in 1924.
- f) They represent the five continents.

Activity D Write the winter sports from the box under the photos.

figure skating	alpine (downhill) skiing	bobsleigh	curling
snowboarding	cross-country skiing	ice hockey	aerial skiing



1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____



5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____

Activity E Work in groups of four. Your teacher will give you a text about a Winter Olympics athlete. Complete the table for your athlete, then ask the other people in your group questions to complete the rest of the table.

Student	A	B	C	D
Athlete's name				
Age				
Nationality				
Sport				
Interesting fact				
Medal hopes				

Which athlete do you think is the most interesting? Why? Will you watch them in the Sochi Winter Olympics? Discuss in groups.

Activity F Debate – Hosting the Olympics. Your teacher will give you cards to prepare the debate.

Teacher's Notes - *The Winter Olympics in Sochi*

Language level: Intermediate to Upper Intermediate.

Language areas covered: question formation; Olympics vocabulary; discussion language in the debate.

Time necessary: approximately one hour, if all elements are incorporated into your lesson plan, including the Olympics host city debate at the end of class. If you would like the students to engage in a lengthier debate, you might consider using the end of one class to prepare for the debate, with all arguments and possible language in place, then hold the debate itself in the following class.

Lesson Plan

Generating interest: Introduce the concept of the Olympics. You might like to do this by drawing the five Olympic rings on the board or by taking in a photo of a very well-known athlete such as Usain Bolt. Then ask the students 'What do you think today's lesson's about?'. Ask a few general questions about the Olympics and then give out copies of worksheets to the students.

Activity A – Discussion: In pairs, students discuss the 3 questions. Encourage as much discussion as possible. You may want to check their understanding of *a waste of time* before the task.

Activity B – Question formation and Olympics trivia: Students order the words to form questions about the Olympics. Encourage students to try to work out the meaning of any unfamiliar words from the context (the context will also become clearer in Activity C when they match the questions to the answers). In whole class feedback, focus on checking correct question order, although some students may want to answer the questions already if they know them! This is fine, but don't tell them if their answers are correct or not.

Activity C – Matching Olympics trivia questions to answers: Students match the answers a – f in Activity C to the questions in Activity B. Again, encourage students to work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary (e.g. *motto, to be held, represent*) from the context of the questions and answers, and through a process of elimination of which questions match with which answers.

Activity D – winter sports vocabulary: Students write the sports from the box under the corresponding photos of the sports. Students may not know the sports or some of the vocabulary but encourage them to guess the meaning (e.g. they may not know *downhill skiing*, but they can work out the meaning from *down* and *hill*).

Activity E - Olympic athletes jigsaw reading

Before class, copy and cut out the role cards so there is one for each student. Check whether you need to pre-teach some of the words (e.g. *rink, slopes*). In class, give out the A,B,C and D role cards to the students in each group of 4 and allow them some time to read and digest the information. Give them the opportunity to ask any vocabulary questions if they need to. You might also want to check they are confident in asking the questions required to complete the table by drilling them with the class.

Students begin by reading their text and completing their column in the table, then asking the other students questions to get the information to complete the rest of the table. Encourage students to ask and answer questions orally (from memory if they want a challenge), and not by showing their texts. As the main language focus here is question-formation, take time to carefully check if questions are being asked correctly and note down any common problematic areas to cover in feedback on the board at the end.

NB There are some wonderful videos of these four athletes on YouTube, so do have a look! There is also one of Evgeni Plushenko performing in the Russian Eurovision song, which is well worth showing your students if you have access to this kind of technology in the classroom, or if they are connected at home.

To conclude this section of the class neatly, ask the final discussion questions **Which athlete do you think is the most interesting? Why? Will you watch them in the Sochi Winter Olympics? Discuss in groups.** This will encourage more interaction on the main theme.

Activity F – Debate: Hosting the Olympics: This is an extra activity if you have time. It could be a very informal whole-class discussion, or, if you would like, it could be a full-scale debate. If you decide on the latter, it's better to take a more formal approach and here are some tips on how to do that:

Put the students into 2 teams *for* and *against*. If you have a large class, break the two teams down into smaller groups for preparation. Copy and hand out the role cards (see *Materials* pages), and let groups work together to read the points, add their own, and decide who will present each point. You could also appoint a chairperson (if the level of English of the class is high enough), someone who is confident and whose English is good enough to control the stages of the debate, making sure no one dominates and that each side has time to put forward its points. If the level of English is lower, then it is best to take the role of the chairperson yourself.

You can have different stages to the debate:

- 1) time for the *for* team to present their arguments
- 2) time for the *against* team to present their arguments
- 3) a rebuttal stage in which anyone can speak to argue any point made (e.g. '*No, you're wrong because...*')

If you're lucky enough to have a chairperson you can sit them at the front then ask the students to arrange their chairs in two lines so they're facing each other. When they begin, remind them to put their points forward confidently and succinctly, and allow other students to do the same. Point out that it's not fair to interrupt or try to speak over other students. Sit outside the debate area yourself so students are less aware of you. Signal to the chairperson to begin and let the students start to speak. Depending on how things go, students should talk comfortably for around 15–20 minutes. After this time, when you feel the pace is starting to drop or students are running out of things to say, bring the debate to a close.

Finish off the debate with a vote, and by asking how they felt about taking part in a formal debate. Give students a little general language feedback on the board.

Optional extra activity – Memory game with winter sports vocabulary: Copy and cut out the picture and vocabulary cards (see *Materials* pages) so there are sets for pairs or small groups. These are the same sports as appear in Activity D, and can be used as revision or time-filler in subsequent lessons. Give the cards to the students, who spread them out on the desk face down. Students then take turns to turn over 2 cards; if they turn over a matching word and photo card then they keep the two cards and they have another go. This continues until all cards are claimed. NB Ensure that while students are playing they are saying the words so you can check pronunciation.

Answer key

Activity B

- 1 What do the five Olympic rings represent?
- 2 What is the Olympic motto?
- 3 Who was Pierre de Coubertin?
- 4 When were the first Winter Olympics held?
- 5 Where were the first Winter Olympics held?
- 6 Which country has won the most Winter Olympics medals?

Activity C

1 f 2 c 3 a 4 e 5 d 6 b

Activity D

(from left to right top row) aerial skiing, alpine (downhill) skiing, bobsleigh, cross-country skiing
 (from left to right bottom row) curling, figure skating, ice hockey, snowboarding

Activity E

Student	A	B	C	D
Athlete's name	Evgeni Plushenko	Kwame Nkrumah-Acheampong	Li Nina	Kaille Humphries
Age	31	39	31	28
Nationality	Russian	Ghanaian	Chinese	Canadian
Sport	Figure skating (Figure skater)	Alpine skiing (Alpine skier)	Aerial skiing (Aerial skier)	Bobsleigh (Bobsledder)
Interesting fact/s	He took part in the Russian winning song in the 2008 Eurovision Song Contest.	His nickname is 'The Snow Leopard'. He is the first Winter Olympian from Ghana.	Her nickname is 'The Snow Princess' and she trained as an acrobat when she was a child.	Her left leg is covered in tattoos and include the words 'because you love me' in Icelandic with two stars to represent her grandparents, who passed away in 2006.
Medal hopes	Very good, although he probably won't win a gold medal.	Not very good, though he hopes not to finish last.	Excellent, she has won silver medal in 2 previous Winter Olympics and would like to win gold this time.	She won gold in the last Winter Olympics so she hopes to win gold again.

Materials

Role cards for Activity E - Olympic athletes jigsaw reading

Student A - Evgeni Plushenko

Evgeni Plushenko is a Russian figure skater who was born on November 3, 1982. As a child, he often developed colds so his mother sent him to figure skating classes to make him stronger. He became so good at figure skating that he took it up professionally. All the hard work has paid off and he has enjoyed a great deal of success in his career and has won many gold medals. Although he has struggled with knee and spinal problems since 2010, he is part of the Russian team for Sochi 2014 and his chances of winning medals are good, although he is unlikely to get a gold.

Interesting fact: He has a great sense of fun and took part in the winning Russian song 'Believe' in the 2008 Eurovision Song Contest, skating on a tiny rink around the singer as he performed.

Student B - Kwame Nkrumah-Acheampong

Kwame is a Ghanaian alpine skier who was born on December 19, 1974, in Glasgow, Scotland. Soon after his birth his family decided to return to Ghana's snowless capital, Accra, where he grew up. He only started to learn to ski when he returned to Scotland in 2005, on the artificial ski slopes near Glasgow. He did so well he earned enough points to take part in the Winter Olympics in 2010, where he became the first ever Winter Olympian from Ghana. His hopes of a medal in Sochi are not very good - he has said he hopes to finish somewhere better than last! He says his main goal in life is to inspire a generation of youngsters to join the Ghana Ski Team.

Interesting fact: Over the years he has earned the nickname *The Snow Leopard* because of the leopard print suits he likes to wear.

Student C - Li Nina

Li Nina is a Chinese aerial skier, who was born on January 10, 1983. She began training as a child in the Chinese trampoline teams but developed an interest in snow sports and went on to take up aerial skiing. This is a particular ski sport which the Chinese have begun to excel at since they joined the Winter Olympics in 1992, and their male and female teams are now excellent. Li Nina won the silver medal in female aerial skiing in both the Turin Winter Olympics in 2006 and in Vancouver in 2010. She hopes to win gold in Sochi.

Interesting facts: Her nickname is *The Snow Princess* and when she was a child she trained as an acrobat.

Student D - Kailie Humphries

Kailie is a Canadian bobsledder born on September 4, 1985. She started bobsleigh at the age of 17 as a brakeman in a two-woman team. She continued for four years before becoming part of the 2006 Olympic team, and has since become one of the world's best bobsleigh pilots. She is also the first Canadian woman to win an Olympic gold medal for bobsleigh, with her team mate Heather Moyse in 2010. She hopes to win gold again in Sochi.

Interesting fact: Her left leg is covered in tattoos and include the words 'because you love me' in Icelandic with two stars to represent her grandparents, who passed away in 2006.

Role cards for Activity F – Debate: Hosting the Olympics**Role card A - for**

You would very much like your capital city to host the Olympics.

Here are arguments to support your opinion. Add more points below with your team mates:

- *hosting the Olympics in any country generally encourages sport and a healthy lifestyle*
- *more sports centres are built so that future generations can benefit from them*
- *hosting the Olympics makes your country more visible and boosts tourism*
- *the public transport system and general infrastructure is generally improved*
- *hosting the Olympics often brings important investment to poor parts of a city*
- *it improves employment as people get jobs in construction and tourism*

Role card B - against

You would not like your capital city to host the Olympics.

Here are arguments to support your opinion. Add more points below with your team mates:

- *hosting the Olympics costs huge amounts of money*
- *your taxes will increase as your country pays for the Olympics*
- *some people think spending the money on schools and hospitals is more important than sports stadiums*
- *not everyone is interested in sport - some people would prefer new cultural venues*
- *in some countries there are real problems of poverty that need to be addressed before hosting the Olympics*
- *transport and infrastructure need to be updated, which means that parts of the city become inaccessible to citizens*
- *people outside the capital city don't benefit from the Olympics, yet they have to pay for it through their taxes*

Optional extra activity – Memory game with winter sports vocabulary



figure skating	alpine (downhill) skiing	bobsleigh	curling
snowboarding	cross-country skiing	ice hockey	aerial skiing