

Student Handout: Timeline of Political Incidents at Past Olympic Games

Directions: Though originally conceived to focus on the spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play, the Modern Olympics have become a venue for a wide range of political expression. In this activity, your class will document various Olympics where politics took the center podium.

Steps:

1. In your group, research the circumstances around your assigned event and develop a timeline presentation that covers the following information:
 - a. State the date and name of Olympic host city.
 - b. Describe the actions taken during the political incident.
 - c. Identify the countries and/or organizations involved in the political incident.
 - d. What were the major world political events related to the political incident?
 - e. Provide images or pictures from the Olympic event and the political incident.
 - f. Document the effect of political incident on this Olympic event and, if evident, other Olympic events.
2. Remember, only a brief description accompanies your political event. Your research will expand on the incident and possibly find others worth mentioning.
3. Create your timeline entry on butcher paper or enter information on computer using timeline software, PowerPoint presentation, or an Excel spreadsheet.
4. Present each event to the class and display around the room or on class Web site.

Past Olympics with political events:

- 1936 Berlin Olympics became propaganda forum for Hitler's Third Reich
- 1948 London Olympics barred Japan, Germany, and Russia from event
- 1952 Helsinki Olympics Eastern bloc countries refuse to share Olympic Village
- 1956 Melbourne Olympics overshadowed by Soviet invasion of Hungary and crisis at Suez Canal
- 1960 Rome Olympics only incident was Communist China insisting that Nationalist China compete only as Formosa and not China
- 1964 Tokyo Olympics South Africa not invited
- 1968 Mexico Olympics American athletes use medal ceremony to make political statement.
- 1972 Munich Olympics Palestinian terrorists use Olympics to kill 11 Israeli athletes and a policeman
- 1976 Montreal Olympics 22 African nations boycott over apartheid policies of South Africa
- 1980 Moscow Olympics Major western powers boycott Moscow Olympics over Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
- 1984 Los Angeles Olympics several eastern bloc nations and the Soviet Union boycott Los Angeles games to protest previous U.S. boycott.