

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

2010 Winter Olympics Begin in Vancouver, Canada, 02/12/2010

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/jan-june10/olympics_02-12.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.]

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. **What are the Olympics? Can you name some events?**
2. **What is the difference between the Summer and Winter games?**
3. **How do the Olympics reflect international tensions and world events?**

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. **What are some worrying factors for the organizers of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games?**

ANSWER

Athletes from all over the world have arrived in Vancouver, Canada, for the 2010 Winter Olympics, but unusually warm weather, a lack of snow and a lagging interest in winter sports are worrying organizers.

2. **How many people will be representing the United States? Who are the most famous American athletes?**

ANSWER

The 216-member U.S. Olympic team has high hopes for its medal chances this year with short track speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno and skiing star Lindsay Vonn vying for gold.

3. **How much will the Vancouver spend on the Games? Is it a good investment?**

ANSWER

However, organizers are having to truck in snow, adding to the already expensive price tag which is expected to top \$2 billion.

Much like the Summer Olympics, the Winter Olympics can bring revenue and visibility to the host area. But because cities need to make a considerable investment in roads, sports facilities and hotels, economists say hosting the Olympics is usually a net economic loss.

4. **Name at least two cities that have been awarded the Summer Olympics.**

ANSWER

The 2008 Summer Olympics were held in Beijing, China, and Rio de Janeiro was awarded the 2016 Olympics.

5. Why might countries have a better chance at winning a medal in the Winter Games?

ANSWER

Countries that participate in the Winter Games have better chances of winning big as the training needs for snow and ice limit the participation of many countries. While more than 200 nations compete in the Summer Games, about 90 nations will participate in the Winter Games.

6. When did the modern Olympic games begin? Where were they held?

ANSWER

The modern incarnation of the Olympic Games began in 1894 when a French aristocrat formed the International Olympic Committee to promote cultural exchange through sports. He was inspired by athletic competitions in Olympia, Greece, until 393 A.D. Athens, Greece hosted the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

7. Why are the Winter and Summer Games held at different times?

ANSWER

Until 1994, the Winter and Summer Games occurred in the same year, but the organizing committee decided to separate the games and hold them every two years so that both summer and winter sports programs could more easily raise money from corporations.

8. Why did the United States boycott the 1980 Olympics?

ANSWER

In 1980, U.S. President Jimmy Carter led the charge for 65 nations to boycott the Summer Games in Moscow in protest of the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. Many communist nations, including the Soviet Union, East Germany and Cuba, retaliated for the U.S.-led boycott by staying away from the 1984 Games which were held in Los Angeles.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

- 1. Do you care about the Olympics? Why or why not? Why do you think they resonate with so many people?**
- 2. How else does the international community come together besides war and sports?**
- 3. Why are the Games often politicized?**
- 4. Do you think that the Olympics should continue or are they a relic of an old world order?**
- 5. Research other defining moments in Olympic history—why are they important?**

Check out our Olympic lesson plan [here](#).

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.