

**Compare the preparation and events of the Olympic games today with
the Ancient Olympics.**

In Ancient Greek times, the Olympics was a yearly event, which took the whole preceding year to prepare for. Today the Olympics take place every four years and we spend the 4 or 5 years leading up to it to prepare. The ancient Olympics lasted for 5 days but today the Olympics last 3 – 4 weeks.

We prepare today, by cleaning the whole country/ town it is going to take place in, by advertising the event and even building a new airport, as they have done in Athens for the Olympics, which will be happening in 2004. In the ancient Olympics the events were held in the same place each year so they didn't need to put in as much effort as we do in modern day. However, courses did have to be dug and sand pits prepared, as well as general tidying up having to be done around the buildings and monuments.

For the Ancient Olympics all the competitors took up residence one month before the games at Elis and were under supervision from the Hellanodikai. They were trained hard and harshly and the correct criteria of the athletes were checked. They had to be fit, from the correct parentage and they had to be fairly rich. The athletes were put on strict diets and under strict supervision from the judges (Hellanodikai). They had this constantly for one month before the games began. Nowadays, the competitors come from all over the world and train in their own hometowns until the events take place. They are usually on healthy diets and they have to train hard, but not usually as strict as it was in ancient

times. Nowadays, the checks done on athletes are usually drug tests to check they haven't been taking steroids.

During the actual events of the Olympics in Ancient times, the athletes were naked. Today athletes wear the latest state of the art aerodynamic clothing to make them streamlined to give them the best performance in competitions. Another difference between the athletes is that in Ancient Olympics, only men could take part but today both men and women can compete, and there are different competitions for male and female competitors.

The running events of the ancient Olympics were similar in a way to modern Olympics. They had all different length races – some long distance and some short distance, as we do today. But in the ancient Olympics they had a Race in Armour, which was a two-length race of which the athletes had to run in full war Armour. This was to keep the athletes fit for war.

Another small, but significant difference between the events of the Olympics, is the way the athletes started the race. In the ancient Olympics, a competitor would stand with his arms stretched forward, one foot in front of the other, and toes in the groove holes in the marble start point. In modern Olympics and races, an athlete would place their knee behind the start line, and have their second foot up; behind the start line and they would be in a crouched position, with their hands on the ground in front of their feet/ knee.

For the all-round athlete competing in ancient Olympics, there was a Pentathlon, which consisted of: Discus, Long Jump, Javelin, Running,

and Wrestling. Today the events of a pentathlon are slightly different. They are: Pistol shooting, Fencing, Horse riding, Swimming and running.

In wrestling, the rules were quite different to the rules of modern wrestling. There used to be two types of wrestling, which were upright (proper) wrestling, and ground wrestling. Today the only type of wrestling is similar to upright wrestling. Today the main objective of wrestling is to get the opponent on their back, or to gain the most points. Similarly, in ancient wrestling the main objective was to get the opponent to the ground. Today, wrestlers wear clothes, and sometimes wear clothes which advertise the character of their nickname. Ancient wrestlers wore nothing, but anointed themselves with olive oil and then dusted powder on to them. They had very short hair or wore tight leather caps.

In Greek boxing, there were also some similarities and some differences to modern boxing. The main aim, as it is today, was to punch the opponent to defeat. However, there were no rounds or points to fight for. They didn't wear gloves, as we do today. Instead they had thongs wound around their hands for extra protection for their knuckles. Most punching and attacking was allowed, but boxers couldn't gouge with the thumb. Unlike today, the boxing competitions didn't take place in a boxing ring.

There were some events in ancient Olympics, which we do not have today. These include Chariot Racing and Mule cart racing. However, in ancient Olympics they didn't have hurdles or pole vaults as we do today.

Overall, the Greek Olympics were more hard going and dangerous than today but today they aren't so much an event that everybody goes to or the highlight of the year.