

# Ancient Olympic Games



In ancient history, the Olympic Games were a series of competitions between different cities in Greece. There were athletic games as well as combat and chariot racing. According to **legend**, the Olympic Games were created by Zeus and his son, Heracles, both of whom were Greek gods. Heracles declared the Olympic Games would be held every four years and built a stadium to honor **his** father. At the earliest recorded Olympics in 776 B.C., racing was the only event. However, later Olympic Games held gradually longer races such as the marathon. In the year 393 A.D., Roman emperor Theodosius banned the Olympic Games. He was a Christian who believed that the games were a form of worshipping of a false religion. For almost 1500 years, the Olympics ceased to exist as an event.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, two things sparked the **restoration** of the Olympic Games. Writers and artists at the time were rebelling against scientific progress and politics of the 1800s. Many of them believed that humanity and nature were under threat as society became increasingly dominated by rules and **rational** scientific thought. To fight against these changes, these artists used their words and paintings to celebrate the beauty of nature and human emotion. Many of them were inspired by the similar themes found in ancient Greek art, such as operas and poetry. **They** identified heavily with the spirit of the ancient Games, which celebrated the human spirit through struggle and competition.

The independence of Greece in the 1830s also helped to bring back the Olympics. One proud Greek named Panagiotis Soutsos wrote an acclaimed poem calling for the return of the event. Soutsos' poem was very popular and it was printed in the nation's newspapers. A wealthy Greek investor named Evangelos Zappas was so **moved** by Soutsos' poetry that he sponsored a small-scale revival of the Olympic Games called the "Zappas Olympics" starting in 1859. Although these games were successful, they had only Greek athletes and participants. The first truly international athletic event that resembles today's Olympic Games was held in 1870.



1. According to the article, who were Zeus and Heracles?
  - a) Greek gods
  - b) Roman emperors
  - c) Olympic heroes
  - d) Chariot racers
  
2. The word “legend” in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to:
  - a) mythology
  - b) sociology
  - c) psychology
  - d) geography
  
3. The word “his” in paragraph 1 refers to:
  - a) Zeus
  - b) Heracles
  - c) Theodosius
  - d) Evangelos Zappas
  
4. It can be inferred from paragraph 1 that the Olympics
  - a) have been held consistently since 776 B.C.
  - b) were held every four years from 393 A.D
  - c) were not held for a prolonged period of time
  - d) were banned because they were too dangerous
  
5. The word “restoration” in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:
  - a) refunding
  - b) revival
  - c) abolition
  - d) satisfaction
  
6. The word “rational” in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:
  - a) logical
  - b) unwise
  - c) possible
  - d) probable

7. The word “they” in paragraph 2 refers to:

- a) artists
- b) operas
- c) themes
- d) Games

8. Paragraph 2 is about:

- a) the wonder and beauty of nature and human emotion
- b) the differences between Greek and 19th century art
- c) why the Olympics appealed to 19th century artists
- d) the incredible scientific progress of the 19th century

9. According to the article, why were the Zappas Olympics not considered a “real” Olympics?

- a) the events were disappointing
- b) the athletes did not compete
- c) only one nation participated
- d) the events were cancelled

10. According to the article, when did the Zappas Olympics begin?

- a) 1776
- b) 1830
- c) 1859
- d) 1870

11. The word “moved” in paragraph 3 could be replaced with:

- a) active
- b) affected
- c) advanced
- d) positioned

12. It can be inferred from paragraph 3 that the first real international Olympics were held

- a) in the 17th century
- b) in the 18th century
- c) in the 19th century
- d) in the 20th century

Answers: 1. (a) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (a) 7. (a) 8. (c) 9. (c) 10. (c) 11. (b) 12. (c)