



OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

The Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Facts for students

The 2024 summer Olympic games are due to be held from Friday 26 July to Sunday 11 August 2024 in Paris, France. This will be the third time that Paris has hosted a summer Olympic Games. This follows the years 1900 and 1924. There will be a 100-year celebration of the 1924 Games at the Paris 2024 Games.

A total of 28 of the usual Olympic sports will feature during that time.

Aquatics inc. water polo	Cycling inc. BMX and mountain biking	Handball	Table Tennis
Archery	Equestrian	Hockey	Taekwondo
Athletics	Fencing	Judo	Tennis
Badminton	Football (Soccer)	Modern Pentathlon	Triathlon
Basketball	Golf	Rowing	Volleyball (indoor and beach)
Boxing	Gymnastics inc. trampoline	Rugby	Weightlifting
Canoe		Sailing	Wrestling
		Shooting	

Four additional sports (breaking, sport climbing, skateboarding and surfing) will also be included in the Paris Games.

The Paris Paralympic Games will be held from Wednesday 28 August until Sunday 8 September 2024.

The program will feature 22 Paralympic sports during that time.

Archery	Equestrian	Shooting	Wheelchair Basketball
Athletics	Football 5-a-side	Sitting Volleyball	Wheelchair Fencing
Badminton	Goalball	Swimming	Wheelchair Rugby
Boccia	Judo	Table Tennis	Wheelchair Tennis
Canoe	Powerlifting	Taekwondo	
Cycling	Rowing	Triathlon	





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The Paris Games Mascots

The mascots for the Olympic and Paralympic Games are Phryges (pronounced fri – jee – uhs), modelled on the Phrygian cap which is a French symbol of freedom. To find out more about each mascot, and what the Phrygian cap means to the French people, visit

www.paris2024.org/en/mascots/

About Paris, France

Paris, the capital city of France, is in the north-central part of France along the Seine River. France is bordered by Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Monaco, Spain, Andorra, the Mediterranean and Atlantic Seas, and also shares the English channel with the United Kingdom.

Paris is an extremely old city, with people living on the site since about 7,600 BC. Today Paris is one of the world's most visited cities, attracting over 30 million visitors every year. It is known for food, entertainment, culture and landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame Cathedral and the Louvre Museum.

Here's a quick fact – Australia is 14 times larger than France, but our population is two thirds smaller!

Paris Fast Facts

- Paris is the most populated city in France. There are just over 2.1 million residents, living in an area of 105 km², making Paris the fourth most populated city in the European Union. This is around the same as the population of Perth, but Perth has an area of 6,418 km².
- Paris has a very mild climate with summer days rarely reaching beyond the high 20 degrees in summer and averaging between 3 and 8 degrees in winter.
- Paris is known as the 'City of Lights' because it was one of the first European cities to use gas street lighting along its boulevards and monuments.
- Paris is a major transport hub. It has the second busiest airport and subway systems in Europe. The Metro (*their subway*) serves over 5 million people every day! They also have the busiest train station outside of Japan!
- Paris is famous for its art and culture. Have you heard of Renoir, Monet, Picasso, van Gogh, or Matisse? These famous artists lived and worked in Paris especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



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- Paris, and France more generally, is known for its amazing food. Have you ever tried croissants, a baguette, macarons, soft cheese like Brie or Camembert or French onion soup? These are all French foods that are commonly found around the world, but what about escargot (*snails*) or cuisses de grenouilles (*frogs legs*)? These are common delicacies in Paris. Would you like to try them?
- France has a strong sporting culture, with football (*soccer*) and rugby being two popular sports. its most popular sports. The final stage of the world's best known cycling race, the Tour de France, always ends in Paris (*along the Champs-Élysées*).

The History of the Olympic and Paralympic Games

The Olympic Games

The idea of holding the Olympic Games was born in 776 BC, in Ancient Greece.

Many sporting contests occurred in Olympia during great festivals in honour of the gods. One of these was the Olympics. To participate in the ancient Olympic Games, the athlete had to be male, of Greek origin and freeborn (*not a slave*). Information about the participation of women in the Games is unclear and often debated.

The ancient Games only included individual sports: running, wrestling, boxing, pankration (*a form of martial art*), equestrian and pentathlon.

In 146 BC, Rome conquered Greece and the Games slowly declined. It was not until 1896 that the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens (*thanks to the hard work of Pierre de Coubertin*) where 241 athletes from 14 countries competed over 43 events.



Since 1896, the Olympic Games have been held every four years, except during World War I (1916) and World War II (1940 and 1944). There weren't any Games held in those years. The Games are always held in even numbered years, but the 2020 global Covid 19 pandemic led to the 2020 Tokyo Games being postponed until 2021.

The Paralympic Games

Although sport for people with an impairment already existed, the idea of the Paralympic Games came from Sir Ludwig Guttman, who decided that participating in sports would be good therapy for World War II veterans who had suffered spinal cord injuries.



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Guttman organised for 16 injured service men and women to take part in an archery competition on 29 July 1948, the day of the Opening Ceremony of the London 1948 Olympic Games. He named this event the 'Stoke Mandeville Games'. In 1952, Dutch ex-servicemen participated and the International Stoke Mandeville Games were founded.

So what began as a small gathering in 1948, turned into the official Paralympic Games in Rome in 1960, featuring 400 athletes from 23 countries. Since this time, the Paralympic Games have taken place every four years, just after the Olympic Games. The Paralympic Games are held in the same city and use the same venues as the Olympic Games.

Participation in the Paralympic Games is open to athletes with the following:

- Limb loss or deficiency
- Spinal cord or nerve damage
- Cerebral palsy, acquired brain injury or similar
- Short Stature
- Intellectual impairment
- Vision impairment
- Other physical impairments

To ensure that competition is fair and equal, athletes are classified into groups or classes with others of similar abilities.

Symbols, mottos and traditions

There are many traditions, mottos and symbols linked to the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Mottos

The Olympic motto is: 'Citius, Altius, Fortius'. It was introduced in 1924 and translates to 'Faster, Higher, Stronger'.

The current Paralympic motto is 'Spirit in Motion'. This was introduced at the 2004 Games in Athens. The previous motto, introduced in 1994, was 'Mind, Body, Spirit'.



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The Flags

The Olympic flag was developed in 1914 and made its first appearance at the 1920 Games in Antwerp. It has five different-coloured interlinked rings: blue, yellow, black, green and red. These colours represent the five continents of the world (*Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia and Europe*) that were joined together in the Olympic movement. The colours were chosen because they include at least one colour from the flag of every nation.



The Paralympic flag has a white background with the Paralympic symbol in the centre. The symbol is composed of three crescent shapes coloured red, blue and green. It is a symbol of movement in the shape of an asymmetrical crescent. As with the Olympic flag, the colours chosen are those represented most widely in national flags around the world.

Opening and closing ceremonies

The opening ceremony of an Olympic or Paralympic Games is always a huge occasion. Host countries often spend a lot of time and money creating a ceremony that celebrates their local culture, as well as the athletes and the Games.

During the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games, the procession of athletes is always led by the Greek team, followed by all other teams in alphabetical order (*in the language of the hosting country*), except for the last team which is always the team from the hosting country.

At the Paralympic Games the countries parade in alphabetical order (*in the language of the host country*) with the host nation last.

The closing ceremony is often a smaller occasion than the opening, but it is a great chance to celebrate the athletes and their achievements. Unlike the opening ceremony, the athletes all enter together, rather than as nation groups.



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Medal ceremonies

At an Olympic or Paralympic medal ceremony:

- The gold medallist presents in the centre of the podium, the silver medallist is on their right and the bronze medallist on their left.
- Medals are placed around the winners' necks and their countries' flags are raised.
- The national anthem of the gold medallist's country is played.



Flame and torch relays

The Olympic Games

The tradition of a relay to move the Olympic flame from Greece to the Olympic venue in the host country began at the Berlin Games in 1936.

The torch (*usually designed by the host country*) is lit by concentrating the rays of the sun with a parabolic reflector at the site of the ancient Games in Olympia. The torch is then carried all over the world by athletes, celebrities, world leaders and ordinary people, until it arrives at the opening ceremony where it is used to light a cauldron. This signifies the beginning of the Games.

The cauldron is usually lit when a torch bearer touches the torch to the cauldron, but there have been some more interesting ways, such as with a bow and flaming arrow in Barcelona (1992) and an airborne running man in Beijing (2008).

The Paralympic Games

Until the 2010 Winter Paralympic Games, the host country chose where and how the torch was lit. Since the 2012 Summer Games, the concept of the torch relay has changed. Now a Heritage Torch is lit in Stoke Mandeville (*in honour of the first Paralympic Games*) then travels to the host country where it travels around and then enters the stadium at the opening ceremony to light the main flame.



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Australia and the Olympic and Paralympic Games Fast Facts

Here are some facts about Australia's involvement in the Summer Olympic, and Paralympic Games:

- Amazingly, more than 3000 Australians have competed at a Summer Olympic Games since Athens in 1896.
- Since the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens and up to the 2024 Games in Paris, Australia has won a total of 554 Summer Olympic medals, including 168 gold, 174 silver and 212 bronze.
- Have you ever heard of Edwin Flack? He was the first ever Australian to compete at an Olympic Games. He won gold in the 800 metres and 1500 metres (*running*) races at the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens.
- Australian has hosted the Olympic Games twice: Melbourne in 1956 and Sydney in 2000. The 1956 Games were the first ones held outside of North America and Europe. Interestingly, the equestrian events had to be held in Stockholm (*Sweden*) as horses couldn't travel because of Australia's quarantine laws.
- Sydney 2000 was the most successful Olympic Games for Australia to date, with Australia winning a total of 58 medals including 16 gold. Our best haul of gold medals was 17 in 2004 (*Athens*) and 2021 (*Tokyo*).
- Australia has sent competitors to every Paralympic Games since they began in Rome in 1960 and has won a total of 1205 medals (*up to and including the 2021 Tokyo Games*): 389 gold, 422 silver and 394 bronze.
- Emma McKeon (*swimming*) is currently Australia's most successful Olympic Games athlete with 11 medals: 5 gold, 2 silver and 4 bronze.
- Ian Thorpe (*swimming*) is Australia's most successful male athlete with 9 medals: 5 gold, 3 silver and 1 bronze.
- Matthew Cowdrey (*swimming*) is Australia's most successful Paralympian with 23 medals (*13 gold, 7 silver and 3 bronze*) across three Paralympic Games
- Louise Sauvage (*wheelchair racing*), Priya Cooper and Ellie Cole (*swimming*) are Australia's most accomplished female Paralympians. Louise with nine gold medals and four silver medals across four Paralympic Games, Priya with nine gold medals and Ellie with six gold medals, five silver medals and six bronze. An amazing achievement!
- Amazingly Andrew Hoy (*equestrian*) was selected to represent Australia in eight Olympic Games (*1980, 1984, 1988, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2012*). That's dedication!



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General Olympic and Paralympic Games Fast Facts

- There are many similarities between the Paralympic and Olympic Games: both have opening and closing ceremonies, both are preceded by a torch relay, and both include competitors from all over the world.
- Would you believe that the first recorded Olympic Games only had one event? It was a running race called the 'stade', which was 192m long.
- At the 1976 Olympics (*Montreal*), the Czechoslovakian cycling team lost all its wheels and spares when they were mistaken for rubbish and thrown away. They had to organise replacements as quickly as they could, but this did not stop Anton Tkac from winning the 1000m sprint. Go Anton!
- Prior to 1976 only wheelchair sports were contested at the Paralympic Games. At the 1976 Paralympic Games, athletes with various physical impairments and intellectual disabilities were included for the first time.
- The 2020 Tokyo Olympics was the first Olympic and Paralympic Games to be postponed (*not cancelled*) and held in an odd numbered year.



References

The following links will direct you to the homepage of websites that were used as references for this topic.

- Australian Olympic Committee: <https://www.olympics.com.au/>
- Paris Tourist Office: <https://en.parisinfo.com/discovering-paris/olympic-paralympic-games-paris-2024>
- Paris 2024 Organising Committee: <https://www.paris2024.org/en/paris-2024/>
- International Olympic Committee: <https://olympics.com/en/>
- International Paralympic Committee: <https://www.paralympic.org/>
- Paralympics Australia: <https://www.paralympic.org.au/>