

Comparative essay Years 7 - 9: Compare the Ancient and Modern Olympics.

The Ancient and Modern Olympics are similar in that both games have sporting events but the reasons they're held are different. The Ancient Olympics were part of a religious festival to the Greek God, Zeus, whereas the Modern Olympics are a sports competition for athletes from all countries of the world.

The first recorded Olympics were held at Elis in the Greek city-state of Olympia in 776 BC. The competitors were freeborn Greek men and boys. Only male spectators were allowed to watch the naked runners race a distance of 192 metres. However, one woman, the Priestess of the Goddess Demetra was permitted to enter the stadium which held forty thousand spectators. These Ancient Olympics were held at Olympia every fourth summer. The Greeks called this period of time an Olympiad.

The Modern Olympics are also held every fourth year and they are numbered by Olympiads. The first Modern Olympic Games was held at Athens in Greece 1500 years after the last Ancient Olympics. The games were revived by a Frenchman, Baron De Coubertin, so that nations would come together in peace and friendship. Three hundred nations and eleven athletes from thirteen countries attended the first Modern Olympiad, in 1896. Summer and Winter Olympics are held in modern times.

In some ways the Ancient and Modern Olympics are alike. In the later games of ancient times, some sports were wrestling, boxing, long jump and a pentathlon. These events are in the games today. Athletes of the past and present all compete for fame but their rewards were different. Only the winners in ancient times were presented with a wreath from an olive branch, however in the Modern Olympics the first three place getters receive gold, silver and bronze medals. Winners today can make a lot of money by receiving contracts from sporting firms. In some sports in the 1988 Olympics, professionals were allowed to compete.

There are many other differences in the Modern Olympics, such as traditions, opening and closing ceremonies, symbols, the Olympic flag, flame and rings. More sports – tennis, swimming, judo, diving and gymnastics - are now included. Not long ago a women's marathon was included. In the last Olympics, twenty-three events were held.

Perhaps the ideas of the Olympics have changed through the ages, with the massacre of the Israeli athletes in Munich in 1976, and some athletes being banned for life for taking drugs. However, the Olympic Games will continue to be a sports spectacular that people look forward to every four years. Just as the ancient Greeks travelled from all over the country to compete and watch the ancient games, so people from all over the world will watch their country's athletes compete at a future Modern Olympic Games. Many will travel to the

Thesis / point of view (a comparative general statement)

Argument / supporting evidence description of Ancient Olympics including when they are held

Argument / supporting evidence description of Modern Olympics including when they are held

Use of language of comparison 'alike'

Argument / supporting evidence comparison of similarities including events and rewards

Argument / supporting evidence comparison of differences including ceremonies, symbols, sports

Concluding statement which restate thesis with additional supporting evidence

Olympics but billions will be spectators and watch on television.
(468 words)

Source: Hardy, J & Klarwein, D (1990) Written Genres in the Secondary School, Education Queensland, Peninsula Region. Page 95.