



TOPICAL TIDBITS

July/August 2012

Volume 1 Issue 4

SUMMER OLYMPICS

Learn about the Summer Olympics through some of the thousands of stamps issued to commemorate the event. From the story of the Greek gods and its early history to the site of this year's Games in London, an exciting philatelic adventure awaits you.

Try the Torch Run maze, match famous American Olympians to the stamps that honor them - these activities and so much more help to tell the story of the Summer Olympics through stamps and other postal items.

Have a little fun with the Animal Olympics activity on page 18 and then go to page 19 to find out how you can get a free philatelic prize package including Olympic-related items.

Start exploring the world of the Summer Olympics now!
Let the philatelic games begin!!



THE GODS OF MOUNT OLYMPUS



*As Eos first spread her yellow robe across the earth,
thunder-loving Zeus summoned an assembly of the gods
on the highest crest of many-ridged Olympus.*

-Homer The Iliad

The Greeks believed that their gods were human and exhibited human emotions, including jealousy, love and hatred. They thought that the gods and mankind were partners and that both existed to serve one another. The only difference was that the gods had supernatural powers while mankind did not. Greek children were taught to strive to be the best they could be so that they could be more like the gods.

Each Greek city-state selected a patron god as their protector. This god was worshiped so that his or her good favor would fall upon the people of that region. The chief god, Zeus, was worshipped by every Greek citizen.

The Greeks believed that the twelve most important and most powerful gods lived on a mountaintop in northern Greece known as Mount Olympus. From this mountain, the gods ruled and controlled the natural world, as well as the lives of individual people.



The site of Olympia has been inhabited since prehistoric times. In the 10th century B.C., Olympia became a center for the worship of Zeus. This stamp was issued by The United Nations (Vienna) in 2004. It shows Olympia, which is a World Heritage Site.

THE GODS OF MOUNT OLYMPUS



Zeus-
King of the gods and ruler of Mount Olympus; god of sky and thunder. Brother and husband of Hera.



Apollo-
God of light, knowledge, music, poetry, prophecy, and archery. Twin brother of Artemis.



Hera-
Queen of the gods and the goddess of marriage and family. Wife and sister of Zeus.



Artemis-
Goddess of the hunt, archery, and all animals. The daughter of Zeus and the twin sister of Apollo.



Poseidon-
Lord of the seas, earthquakes and horses. Brother of Zeus.



Ares-
God of war, violence, and bloodshed. Son of Zeus and Hera.



Demeter-
The goddess of fertility, agriculture, nature, and the seasons.



Aphrodite-
Goddess of love and beauty. The wife of Hephaestus.



Hermes-
Messenger of the gods; god of commerce and thieves. Son of Zeus.



Hephaestus-
God of the fire and forge. The master blacksmith and craftsman of the gods and husband of Aphrodite.



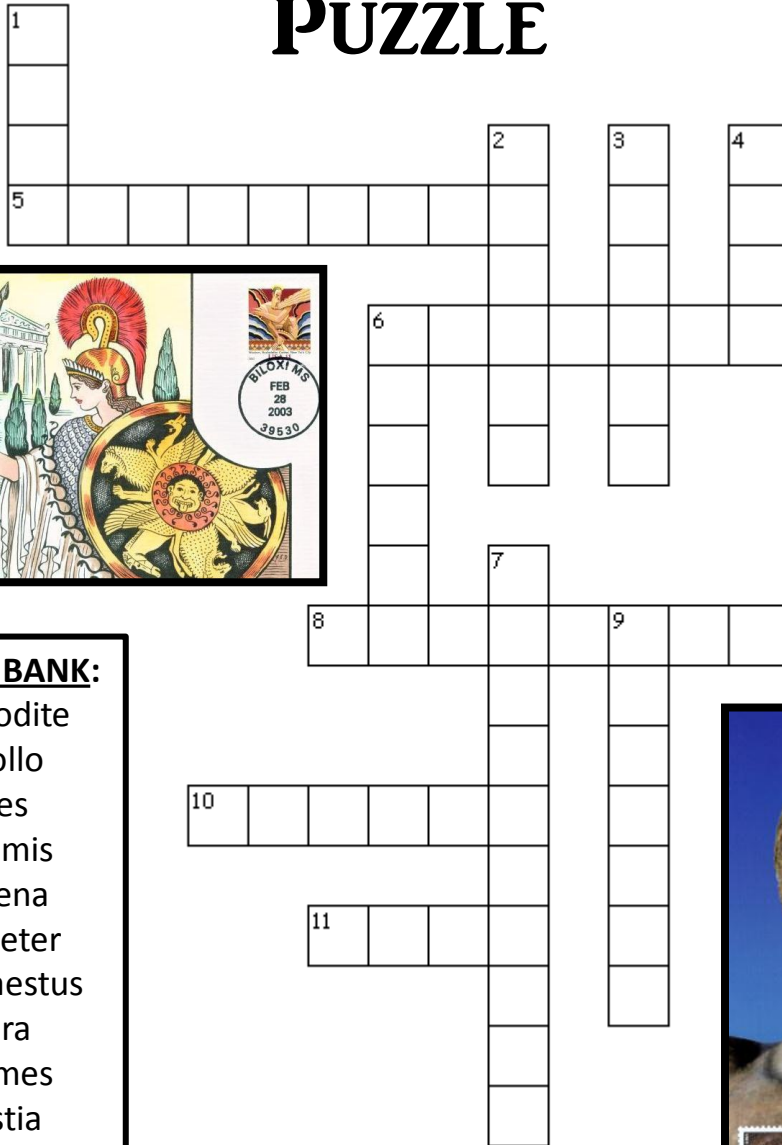
Athena-
Goddess of wisdom, handicrafts, defense and strategic warfare. The daughter of Zeus.



Hestia-
Sister of Zeus and Hera, goddess of home and hearth.

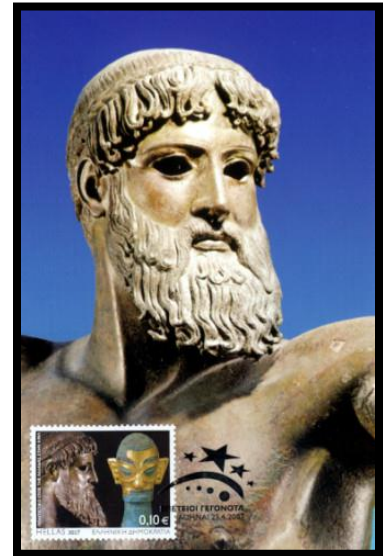
THE GODS OF MOUNT OLYMPUS

PUZZLE



WORD BANK:

Aphrodite
 Apollo
 Ares
 Artemis
 Athena
 Demeter
 Hephaestus
 Hera
 Hermes
 Hestia
 Poseidon
 Zeus



Across :

- 5. Goddess of love
- 6. Goddess of the hunt
- 8. God of the sea
- 10. Goddess of wisdom
- 11. God of war

Down:

- 1. Queen of the gods
- 2. Goddess of home and hearth
- 3. Messenger of the gods
- 4. King of the gods
- 6. God of knowledge
- 7. God of fire
- 9. Goddess of nature

Answers are on page 24.

THE FIRST OLYMPICS

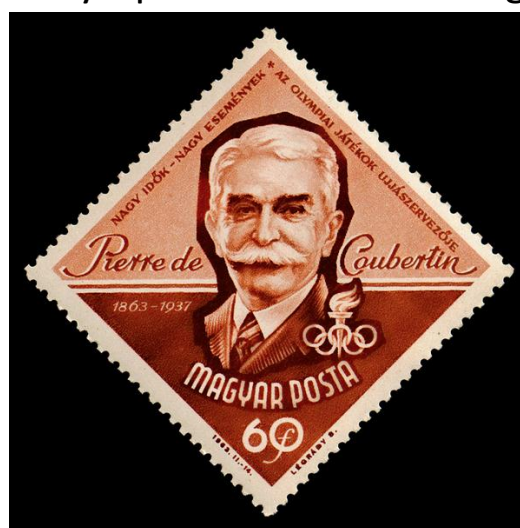
The first record of the Olympic Games dates from 776 B.C. They were probably established hundreds of years before that. They started out as a small event but soon became the most popular festival in Greece. They took place every four years and became so important that the Greeks recorded events according to the Olympiad in which they occurred.



This stamp is from a set issued by the Greek Post Office to help pay for the 1896 Olympic Games. The amphora (vase) shows Athena with shield, helmet and lance.

The games began to decline after Greece became part of the Roman empire. In 393 A.D., Theodosius I, declared that all pagan centers were to be closed. As a result, Olympia was eventually abandoned and was soon destroyed by invaders, fires, and earthquakes. Any buildings left were soon covered by several feet of mud from flooding. They were uncovered by archaeologists more than a thousand years later, in the early 18th century.

A young French nobleman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, read about excavations that the Germans were doing in the 1890s at Olympia. He started thinking about reviving the Olympic Games. He thought it would be a good way to promote physical fitness and a way for nations to compete against each other without going to war. Baron de Coubertin set up the International Olympic Committee in 1894 and the first modern Olympics were held two years later in Athens.



SUMMER OLYMPICS 2012



The Games of the XXX (30th) Olympiad, or 2012 Summer Olympics, will take place from July 27th until August 12th in London, England. London is the first city to host the Olympics three times. The other two dates were 1908 and 1948. Over 200 countries will send about 10,500 athletes to compete. Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh will officially open the games at the opening ceremony, which will be called "The Isles of Wonder."



These stamps and cancel are from the 1948 London Olympics.



A souvenir sheet commemorating the 2012 London Olympics.

TOURING LONDON

Use the map below to circle the correct answer. Answers are on page 24.



The Albert Memorial is **EAST** or **WEST** of Westminster Abbey.



The Tower of London is **EAST** or **WEST** of The Houses of Parliament.



Buckingham Palace is **NORTH** or **SOUTH** of Westminster Cathedral.

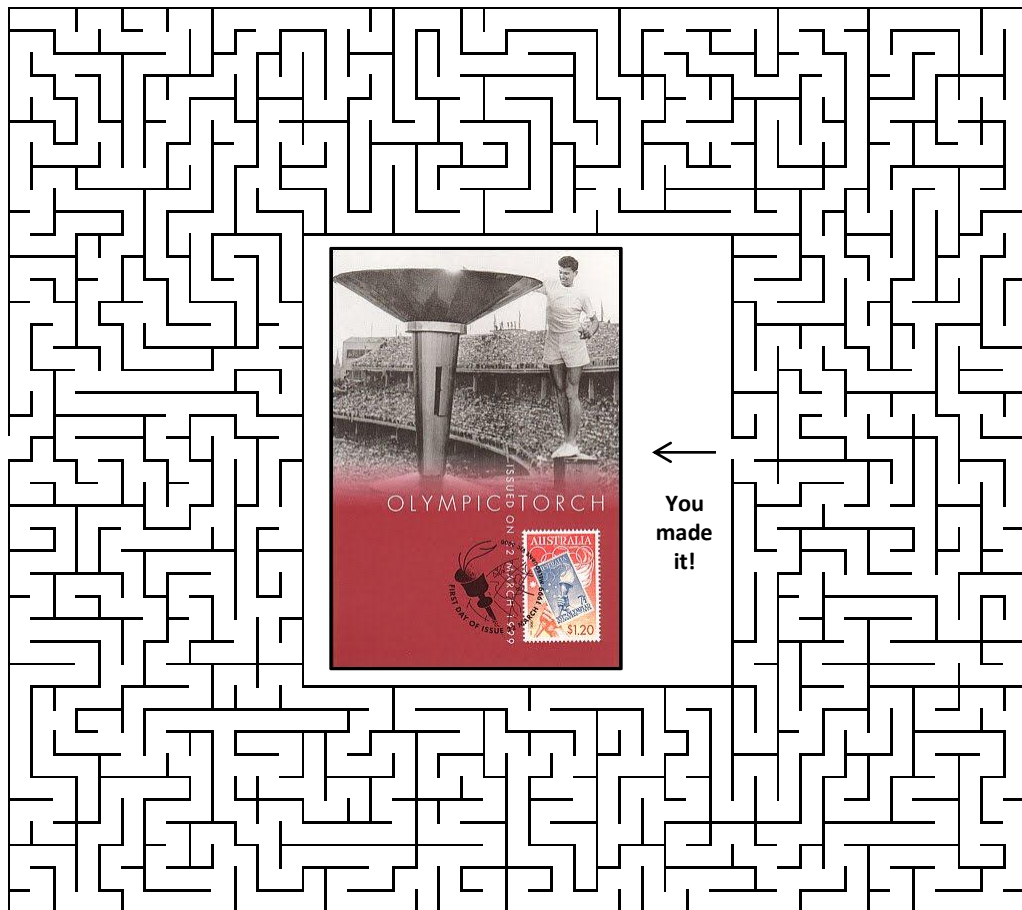
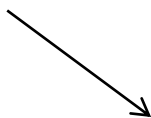


THE OPENING CEREMONY

The Opening Ceremony is a truly amazing and colorful event. Athletes from around the world march into the stadium carrying and waving the flags of their country. During the ceremony, the start of the Olympic Games is announced, the Olympic flag is raised, and hundreds of doves are released into the air as a symbol of peace. The Olympic oath is read with athletes promising to compete fairly and show good sportsmanship.

Entertainment is an elaborate and colorful example of the pageantry provided by the host country and culminates in the lighting of the Olympic flame, which will remain burning during the entire Olympic competition. Prior to the start of the games, thousands of runners carry a lit torch from Greece, site of the first Olympics, to the location of the current Olympic games.

**Can you help
the runner get
to the Olympic
torch?
Start here.**



THE OLYMPIC RINGS

The symbol for the Olympic Games consists of five interlocking rings to represent the five continents or major regions of the world: Africa, Asia, Australia (Oceania), Europe, and North and South America (Americas). The rings are colored blue, yellow, black, green, and red on a white background. At least one of these colors appeared on the national flags of all the world's countries at the time of the flag's creation.

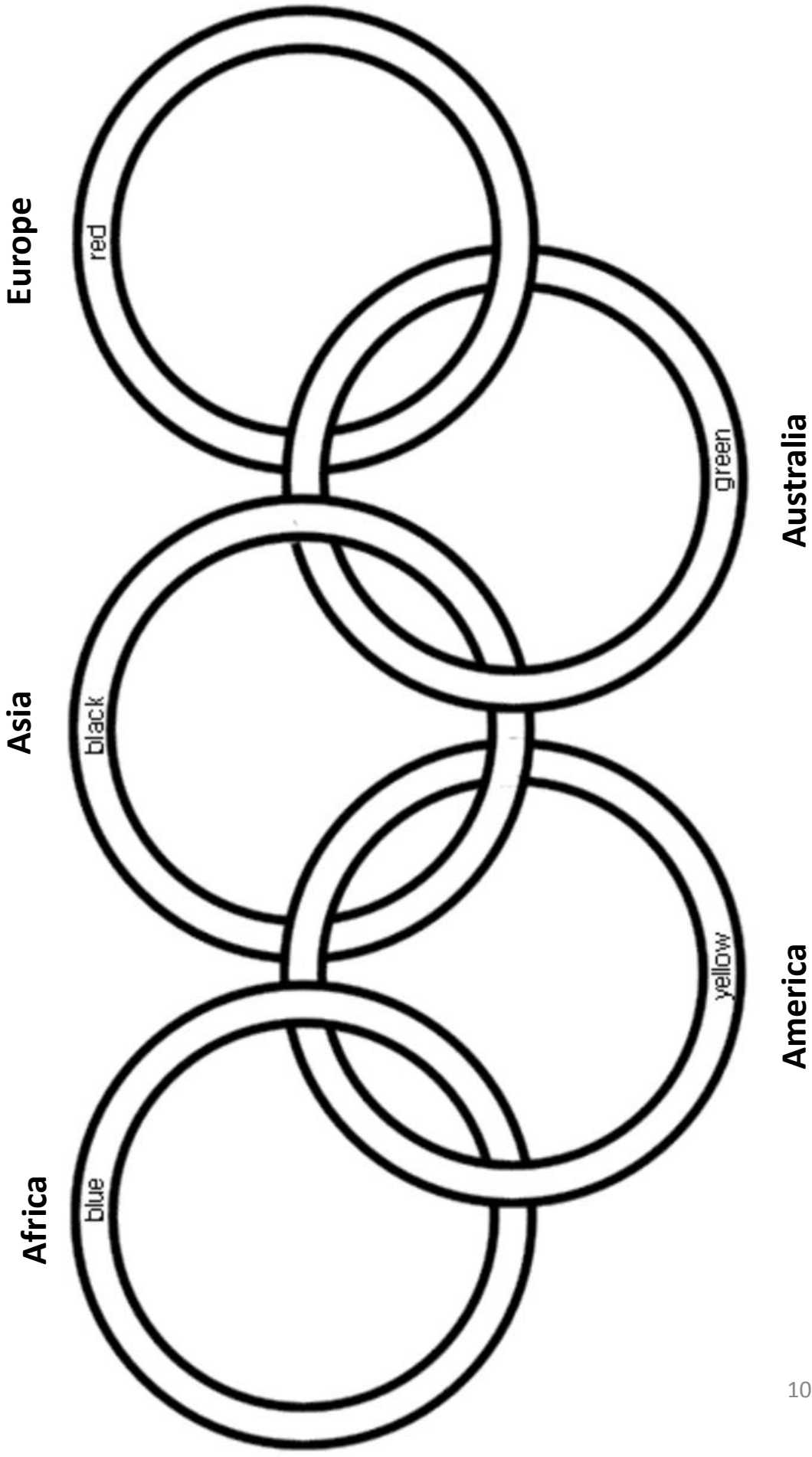


This is the front of a booklet and the stamps found inside.



This is a fun way to countdown to the opening of the Olympics. Look at a calendar to determine how many days there are until the games start on July 27, 2012. You need that many strips of blue, yellow, black, green and red paper. Loop them together using tape. Then tear off one strip each day.

First, color each ring . Then, see if you can find one stamp for each continent represented by the Olympic rings. You can place the stamp in the middle of the ring.



OLYMPIC MEDALS

At the ancient Olympics, the winner received a wreath made of olive branches from Olympia. The wreath was worn on the head. When the modern games started in 1896, medals were given to the winners. The first Olympic medal showed Zeus holding Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, on the front and on the back was the Acropolis. The custom of giving first-place winners a gold medal, second-place winners a silver medal, and third-place winners a bronze medal, began at the 1904 Summer Olympics in St. Louis, Missouri. Before 1932, all medals were awarded at the closing ceremony, with the athletes wearing evening dress. This changed, however, at the 1932 summer Olympics in Los Angeles. The competitors received their medals immediately after each event while standing on a podium.



Front of the 1896 medal



Back of the 1896 medal



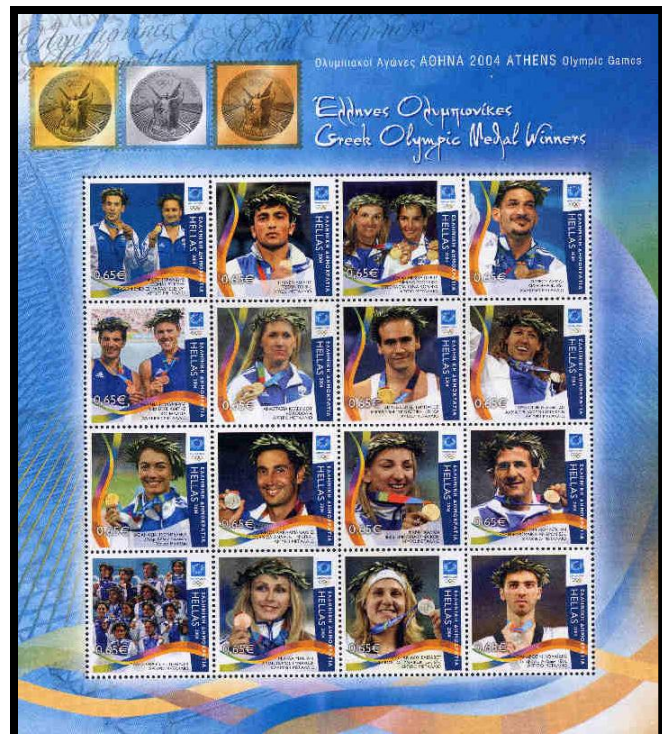
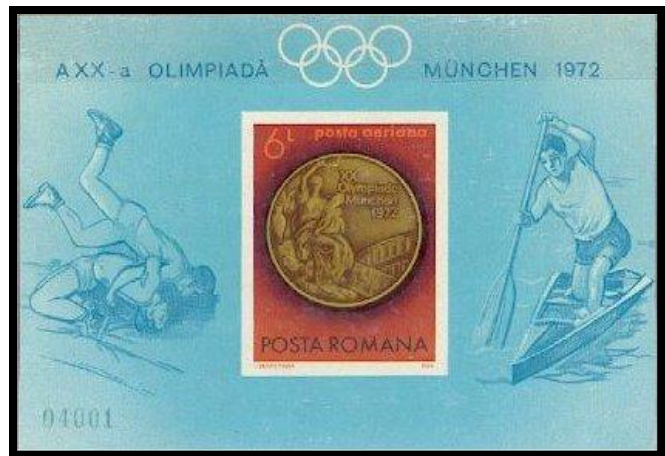
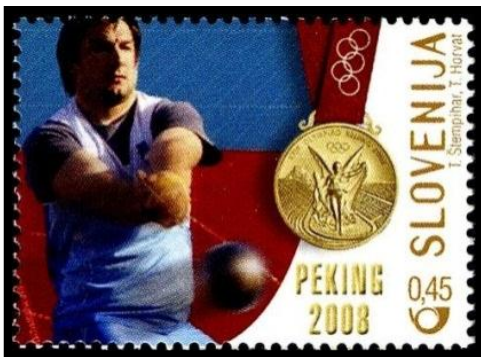
Front of the 2012 medal



Back of the 2012 medal



OLYMPIC MEDALS ON STAMPS



OLYMPIC MEDALS RECORD

The tally chart below will help you keep a record of the medals won by the United States. Results can be found online, on TV, or in the newspaper everyday. After the games have ended, you can use your results to make a bar graph. Which medal do you think will be won the most?

	Number of Medals Won by the United States	Total
Gold		
Silver		
Bronze		

110			
100			
90			
80			
70			
60			
50			
40			
30			
20			
10			
	Gold	Silver	Bronze



MASCOTS OF THE SUMMER OLYMPICS

A mascot is a term used to describe an object thought to bring good luck. They are also used to represent or give identity to a group. Mascots may be used for merchandising while costumed mascots serve as goodwill ambassadors.

The Olympics have used mascots since 1968. Olympic mascots are usually animal or human figures that represent some aspect of the cultural heritage of the place where the Olympics are held.

The first major mascot was Misha, a Russian bear, and mascot of the 1980 Summer Olympics. In 1984, when the Summer Olympics were held in Los Angeles, Sam the Olympic Eagle served as the mascot. A stylized tiger named Hodori was the official mascot for the 1988 games in South Korea. Five “good luck dolls” were the mascots for the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China.



A “Misha” souvenir sheet



The front of a postcard featuring “Sam the Olympic Eagle”



A first day cover with “Hodori”



The 5 Chinese “good luck dolls”

OLYMPIC EVENTS

Sports played at the Olympics have changed over time. For example, baseball and soft-ball were recently dropped after the 2008 Olympics. Golf and rugby will be added at the 2016 games. Only five sports have been played at every summer Olympic games since 1896: athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics and swimming.

Below are stamps featuring different Olympic sports along with the year they were added. See if you can put each row in order. Answers are on page 24.



1964

1972

1992

1896

1936



1988

1908

1900

2000

1904

You Be The Designer:

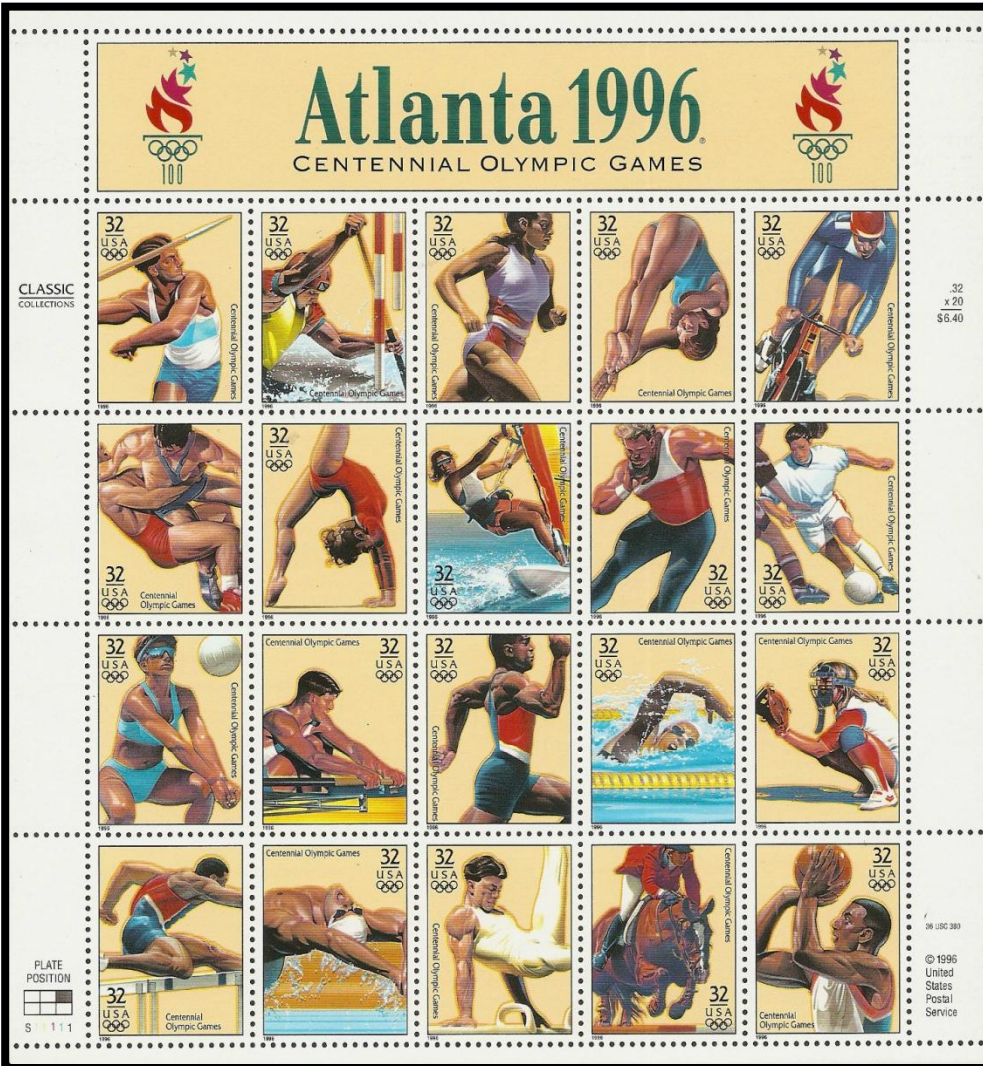
Think about your favorite sport or a sport you would like to see played at the summer Olympics. Design a stamp for this sport. Don't forget to put a country name and denomination (how much it's worth) on the stamp.



OLYMPIC ABC's

This set of stamps features sports played during the Summer Olympics. It is from the Atlanta, Georgia games held in 1996. Use the lines below to put the sports in alphabetical order.

Answers are on page 24.



- Decathlon
- Canoeing
- Running
- Diving
- Cycling
- Wrestling
- Gymnastics
- Sailing
- Shot Put
- Soccer
- Beach Volleyball
- Rowing
- Sprinting Events
- Swimming
- Softball
- Hurdles
- Equestrian
- Basketball

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____

FAMOUS AMERICAN OLYMPIANS

Match the stamp on the right with the correct box on the left.

Jesse Owen won four gold medals—in the 100 meters, 200 meters, broad jump and 400-meter relay.

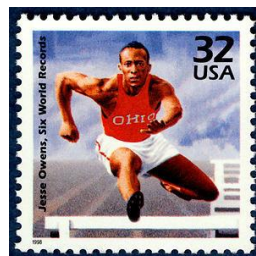
In 1912, Jim Thorpe won two gold medals for the decathlon and the pentathlon.

Ray Ewry won 10 gold medals in track and field in 1900, 1904, 1906, and in 1908.

At the 1920 Olympic Games held in Antwerp, Belgium, boxer Eddie Eagan won a gold medal.

Swimmer Helene Madison won three gold medals in freestyle at the 1932 games.

2 gold medals in women's doubles and mixed doubles were won by Hazel Wightman in 1924.



ANIMALYMPICS

Human athletes spend a lot of time training to be the very best for the Olympics. Some animals don't need to train, they are naturally good at certain skills. If there were Olympic games for animals, the ones pictured below would clearly be the winners.



Fastest Mammal on Land:

Cheetahs can run up to 70 miles per hour.



Fastest Fish:

Sailfish can swim up to 68 miles per hour.



Fastest Mammal in Water:

Dall porpoises can swim up to 35 miles per hour.



Strongest Animal:

The rhinoceros beetle can lift 850 times its own weight.



Fastest Bird on Land:

North African ostriches are both the fastest bird on land- running up to 45 miles per hour- and the biggest, weighing 345 pounds.



Largest Animal:

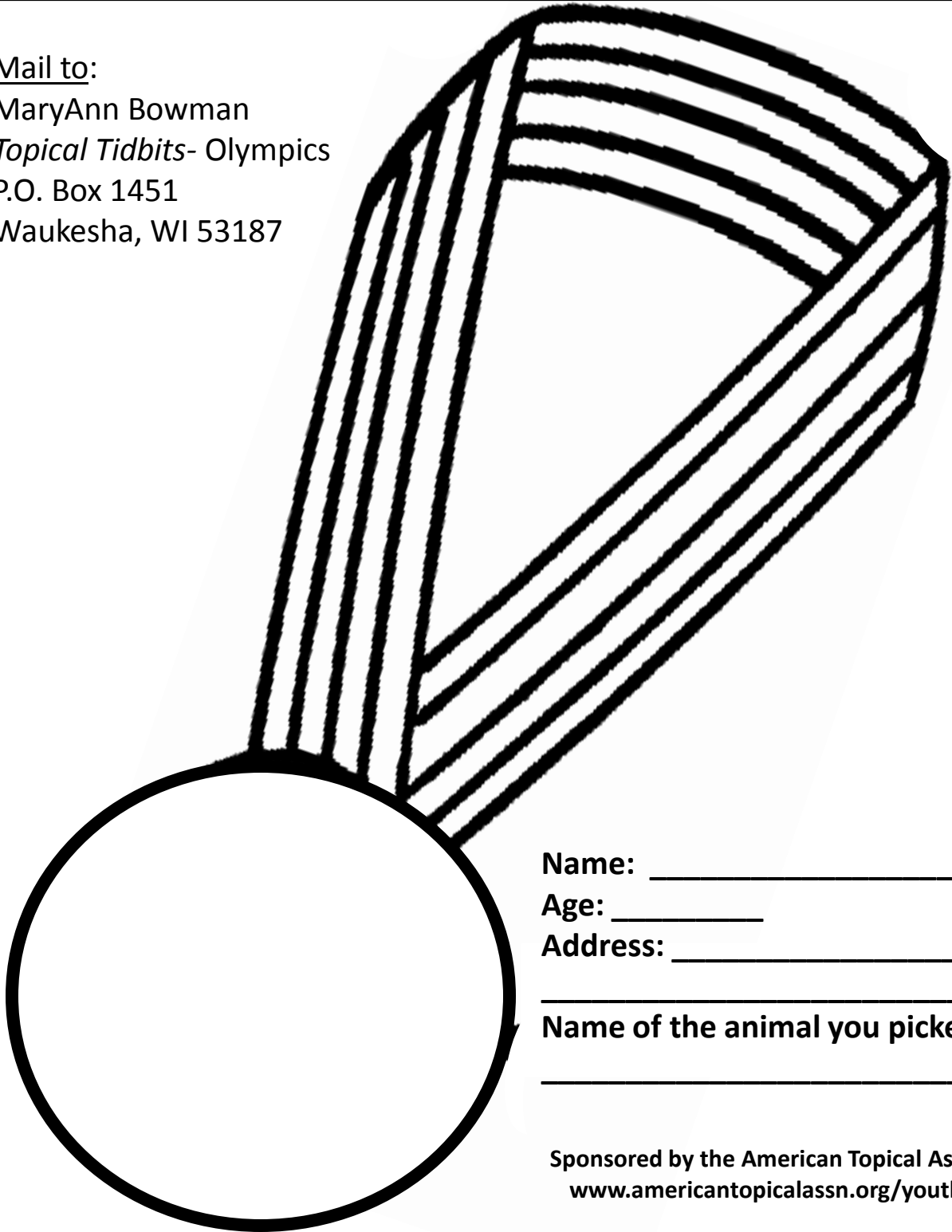
Blue whales are the largest animals that have ever lived.

----- GIVE-AWAY -----

Using the facts about animals on the previous page, design a first place medal for your favorite. Send in this page to the address below. All entries will win a nice philatelic prize package that will include some Olympic-related items. The deadline to enter is August 31, 2012.

Mail to:

MaryAnn Bowman
Topical Tidbits- Olympics
P.O. Box 1451
Waukesha, WI 53187



Name: _____

Age: _____

Address: _____

Name of the animal you picked:

Sponsored by the American Topical Association
www.americantopicalassn.org/youth.shtml

THE CLOSING CEREMONY

After all the games have finished, the closing ceremony takes place. The flag from each participating country is carried into the stadium by a specially chosen athlete. The Greek flag leads the march, with the host country bringing up the rear. The rest of the athletes follow as a group in no particular order. The athletes then stand at the center of the stadium.

Next, a flag ceremony takes place. First, the Greek flag (because Greece was the birthplace of the Olympics) is raised. Next comes the flag of the current host country and then the flag from the next host city. While each flag is being raised, the corresponding country's national anthems is played.

After this, the Olympic anthem is played as the Olympic flag is taken down. The mayor of the current host city hands the flag to the International Olympic Committee president who then hands it to the mayor of the next host city.

Then, the next Olympic host puts on a performance that usually includes music, dancing, and fireworks. This is the host country's chance to give the world a taste of what is to come in four years.

Once this is over, there are a couple of speeches. The games are declared closed, and the youth of the world are invited to come together for the next Olympics four years later.

The last part of the closing ceremony is undoubtedly the most moving: the Olympic flame is extinguished in the stadium. With this last element, this time it is certain: the Games are over. Until next time!



A post card from the Beijing (China) Olympics in 2008.

The red cancellation is from the closing ceremony.

The black cancel shows that London will be the host in 2012.

OLYMPIC JOKES

Q: What song do Australian gymnasts sing?

A: "Vaultsing Mathilda."



Q: Why is a tennis game so loud?

A: Because the players raise a racquet.



Q: Why are basketball players such messy eaters?

A: Because they always dribble!



Q. What do you call a boxer who gets beat up in a fight?

A. A sore loser.



Q: What is a three-hour opening sports ceremony?

A: Olympic torch-ure.

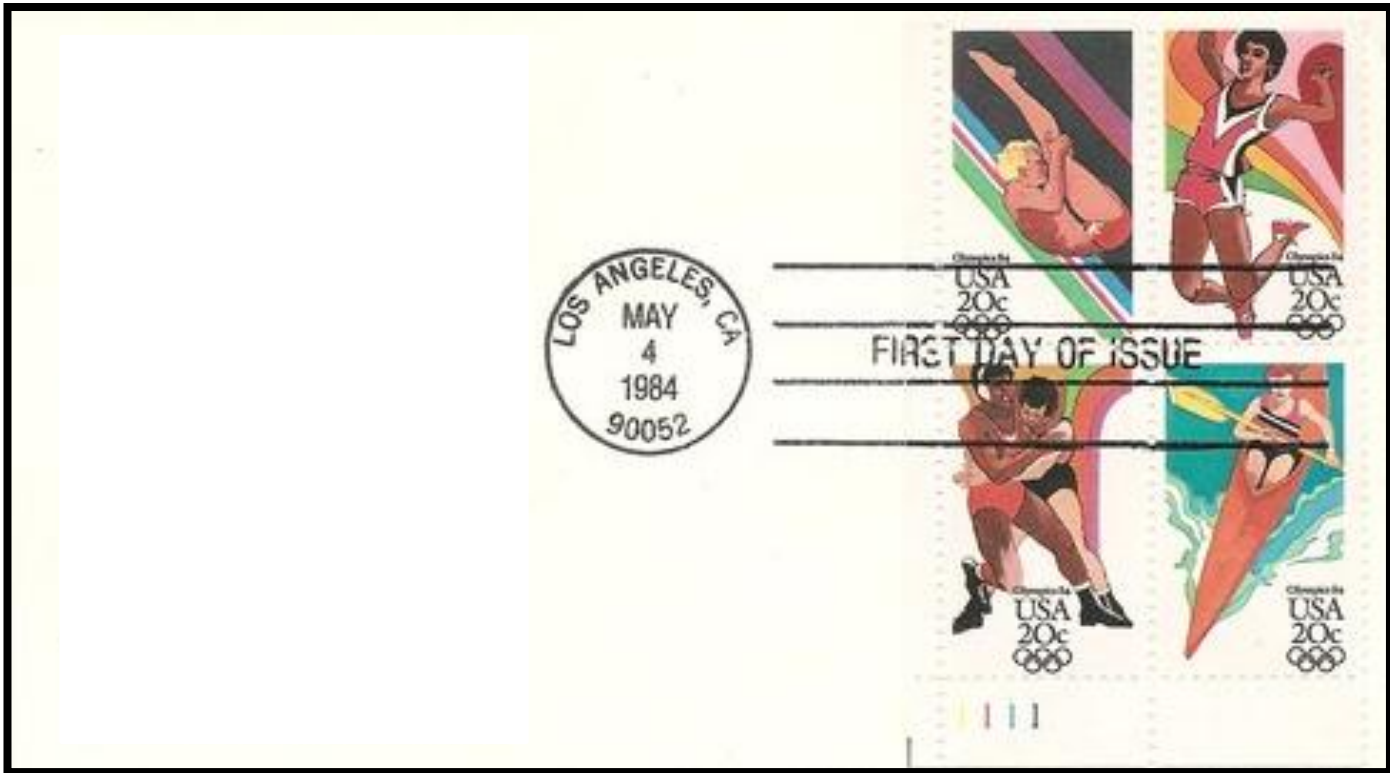


Q: What is a sheep's favorite game?

A: Baa-dminton!

Cachet Creator

Make your own design, or cachet, for these stamps from the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.



Totally Topical

This stamp from Australia commemorates the 1956 Olympics held in Melbourne. Featured on the stamp is the city of Melbourne's coat of arms. If you look closely on the shield, you will see a fleece (sheep skin) hanging in the upper left corner, a whale beside it, then a bull and a ship at the bottom. These represent wool, tallow and oil, chief exports of Australia, and show how they were transported. On the banner are the Latin words, "*VIRES ACQUIRIT EUNDO*," which mean, "We gather strength as we go." This stamp could fit under several topics: Olympics, knights (do you see the helmet under the kangaroo?), fish, mammals, and royalty (see the crown?). Can you think of any other topics this stamp could fit with?





Olympic Games

ANSWER KEY

The Gods of Mount Olympus Puzzle, Page 4:

Across:

- 5. Athena
- 6. Artemis
- 8. Poseidon
- 10. Athena
- 11. Ares

Down:

- 1. Hera
- 2. Hestia
- 3. Mercury
- 4. Zeus
- 6. Apollo
- 7. Hephaestus
- 9. Demeter

Touring London, Page 7:

The Albert Memorial is **WEST** of Westminster Abbey.
 Buckingham Palace is **NORTH** of Westminster Cathedral.
 The Tower of London is **EAST** of the Houses of Parliament.

Olympic Events, Page 15:

<u>1964</u> 3 rd	<u>1972</u> 4 th	<u>1992</u> 5 th	<u>1896</u> 1 st	<u>1936</u> 2 nd
<u>1988</u> 4 th	<u>1908</u> 3 rd	<u>1900</u> 1 st	<u>2000</u> 5 th	<u>1904</u> 2 nd



“The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part.”

Pierre De Coubertin, 1896

