The Origins of Sports

It is possible to search for the origins of sports in primitive matters of survival. Some sports and disciplines such as running and throwing can be associated with chasing and killing animals. Tools that were once used for killing have been transformed into symbolic instruments like bats, rackets and clubs.

The coming of farming brought about a revolutionary change in the human way of living – hunting skills were no longer needed. Instead, farmers had to develop the skills of domesticating and feeding animals, they had to be patient and responsible. Nevertheless, people still went hunting for pleasure and excitement.

Greek civilisation is probably the first culture to integrate sports and competition into civic life. Athletic excellence was a heroic, mythical success. The Greek ambition was to win and little attention was paid to such things as "fairness". Greeks were also very keen on physical perfection and part of the competition was to show the muscular bodies of men, but not women. One of the ideals of Greek games was *kalos kai agathos*.

The games were probably less important as a spectacle than they were as a point around which to organize training. Fitness and strength were important qualities of warriors as much as sports performers.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Complete the text:

The ancient Olympic Games were held in Olympia, Greece, every four year from at least 776 BC, until they were banned by Emperor Theodosius in 389 AD.

Originally, there was only one race, a sprint event, and the prize for the winner was an olive wreath. As time went on, other races and sports were added. A unique feature of the Games was that at the time of the staging, countries which were at war laid down their weapons, competed and returned to the war after the event.

The Modern Olympics as we know it was the brain-child of a Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin

He first proposed the idea of restaging the festivals of ancient Greece. In 1894 an Olympic Congress met in Paris and decided to stage its first Modern Games in Athens in 1896

The Games were not held in the years 1916, 1940, and 1944 due to the First and Second World Wars.