

Olympic – Symbols

Olive Branch

Throughout the time of the ancient Olympics the winner of each event was presented with an olive branch and also a silver medal.



Medals



Medals were not used in the ancient games but have been used since the modern Olympic Games began in 1896.

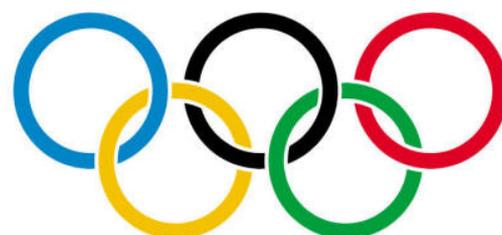
All winners in the 1896 and 1900 Olympics were presented with an olive branch and a silver medal.

In 1904 three medals were introduced to be given to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed athletes in each event. A gold medal was given for first place, a silver medal for second and a bronze medal for third place.

The design on the reverse of the medals is changed for each game.

Olympic Rings

In 1912 the founder of the International Olympic Committee, Pierre de Coubertin, designed a symbol of five interlocking rings to represent the modern Olympic movement.



Five rings are used to represent each of the inhabited continents - Africa, Americas (North and South) Asia, Australasia and Europe. The rings interlock with each ring passing under then over the next ring to signify equality. The five colours, blue, yellow, black, green and red are the five most used colours on national flags.

The symbol was officially adopted in 1914 and first used in 1920.

Olympic Flag



The five Olympic rings are depicted on a white background to form the Olympic Flag. The flag is carried in procession during the Opening Ceremony of the games and then flies throughout the duration of the games.

During the Closing Ceremony the flag is presented to a representative of the next host nation.

Doves

The 1920 Olympic Games were the first to be held after World War One. The games were originally scheduled to be held in Budapest but this was disallowed as the Austro-Hungarian Empire was allied to Germany during the war. Instead the games were awarded to Antwerp Belgium in recognition for the suffering endured by the people of Belgium during the war.



As part of the games' Opening Ceremony doves, a traditional symbol of peace, were released. This act has become a tradition and doves are always released at some point during the games' Opening Ceremony.

Olympic Flame



During the ancient Olympic Games a flame was lit in a cauldron and burned for the duration of those games. The lighting and extinguishing of the flame was thought to represent the death and re-birth of the Greek heroes.

In 1936 it was decided that the flame should be transferred to a torch and carried in relay from Olympia, Greece to Berlin where, as part of the Opening Ceremony the final relay runner ignited a new cauldron. The Olympic Torch relay has been a tradition ever since.

In recent times the torch has been carried around the host country in a relay timed to finish at the time of the Opening Ceremony.

The Olympic Oath

The idea that an Olympic oath should be taken by athletes was championed by Pierre de Coubertin and was first used at the Antwerp games in 1920.

An athlete from the host country holds a corner of the Olympic flag and recites the oath on behalf of all competitors. The original oath was:

'We swear. We will take part in the Olympic Games in a spirit of chivalry, for the honour of our country and for the glory of sport.'

In 1961 the oath was changed to:

'We promise. We will take part in the Olympic Games in a spirit of chivalry, for the honour of our team and for the glory of sport.'

In 2000 the oath was changed to:

'I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, committing ourselves to a sport without doping and without drugs, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams'

The first Judges' Oath was taken in 1972. The Judges Oath is:

'In the name of all the judges and officials, I promise that we shall officiate in these Olympic Games with complete impartiality, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them in the true spirit of sportsmanship.'

Olympic Motto

The Olympic motto is:

"Citius, Altius, Fortius," which means "Swifter, Higher, Stronger."