

THE GAMES

Athletic competitions were held in Ancient Greece as part of a religious ceremony for a god or goddess. They were enormously popular and everyone was encouraged to take part. Most of the competitions were local affairs, but some attracted athletes and spectators from all over the Greek world.



This athlete was painted on a Greek pot. None of the contestants wore any clothes.

THE MAIN EVENTS

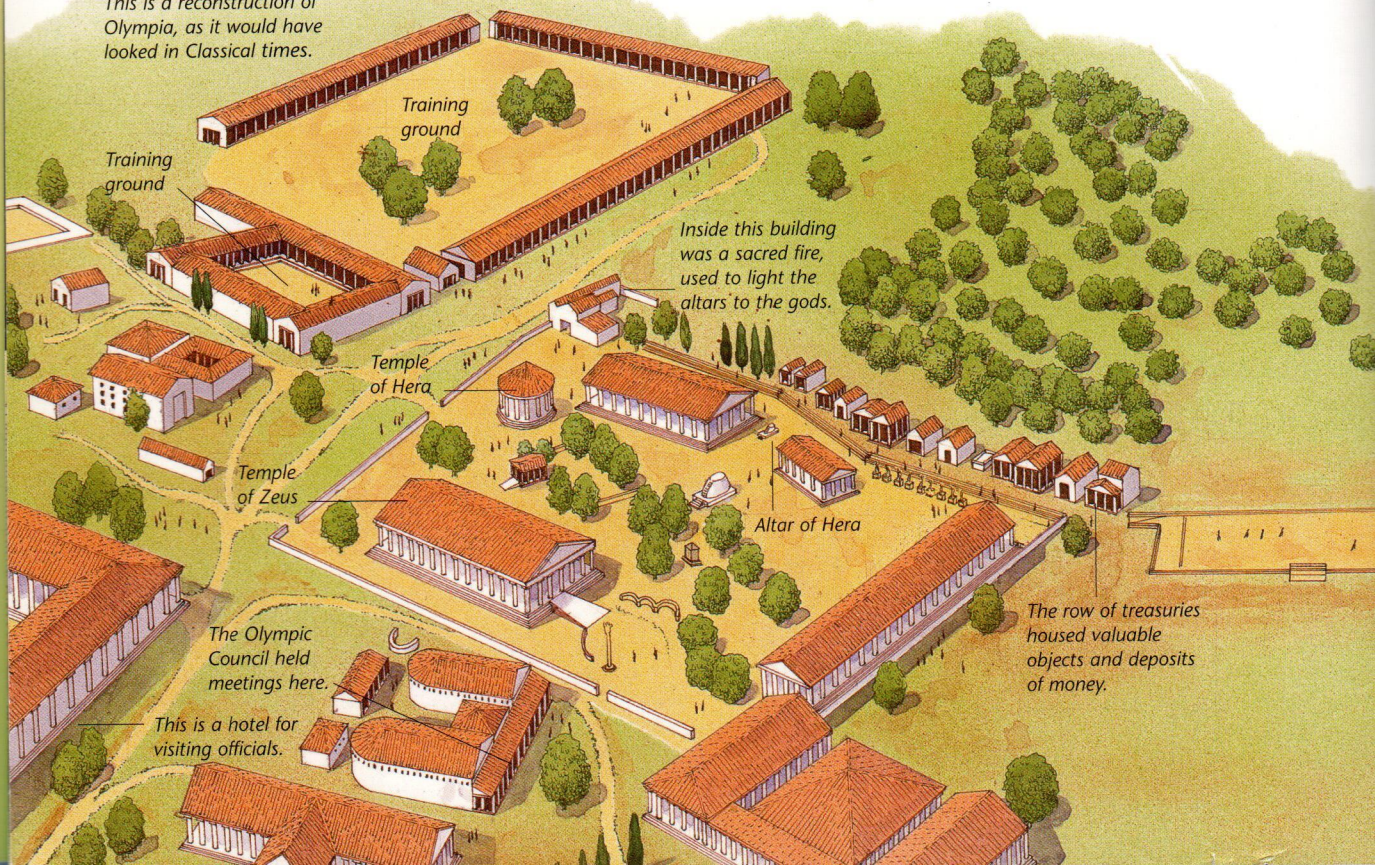
One of the most challenging events in the Games was designed to find the best all-round athlete. This was the *pentathlon*, from the Greek words *pente* (five) and *athlon* (contest). There were five events: discus and javelin-throwing, running, jumping and wrestling.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The Olympic Games - the ancestor of the modern Games - was the most famous of all the games. It lasted five days, and was held every four years at Olympia, as part of a festival for the god Zeus.

Wars were brought to a standstill, just so that people could travel to the Games in safety, and magnificent temples and stadiums were built for the occasion. Often, as many as 50,000 people came, some from as far away as Spain and Egypt.

This is a reconstruction of Olympia, as it would have looked in Classical times.



Training ground

Training ground

Inside this building was a sacred fire, used to light the altars to the gods.

Temple of Hera

Temple of Zeus

Altar of Hera

The Olympic Council held meetings here.

This is a hotel for visiting officials.

The row of treasuries housed valuable objects and deposits of money.