

Adapted unit: What do we know about the ancient Olympic games?

About the unit

This unit combines activities from unit 14 'Who were the ancient Greeks?' and unit 15 'How do we use ancient Greek ideas today?' from the history scheme of work and unit 6a 'People in action' from the art and design scheme of work.

In this unit children explore how to convey movement in their work. They investigate the ancient Greek Olympic games from a range of different sources including archaeology. They make comparisons with the modern Olympic games, using their own experience to find out about the influence that the ancient Greeks have on our lives. They explore dynamic activities such as sport, dance, drama and music as a starting point for making work in three dimensions. They look at how the idea of movement is shown in contemporary and Greek sculpture. They develop skills and techniques using wire and mod roc to make a sculpture of a figure in action.

Where the unit fits in

This unit builds on unit 4a 'Viewpoints', where children make a sequence of images using photography or video. Unit 4a 'Moving and growing' in the science scheme of work provides a useful basis for understanding movement. This unit links with work on movement patterns in dance, gymnastics and games activities in physical education.

This unit combines activities from unit 14 'Who were the ancient Greeks?' and unit 15 'How do we use ancient Greek ideas today?' It focuses on an ancient European civilisation.

Expectations

At the end of this unit

most pupils will: explore ideas about movement; collect visual and other information on how to communicate movement in three dimensions; investigate materials and processes and combine and organise form, shape in space to represent figures in movement; compare and comment on ideas, methods and approaches used in their own and others' work, relating these to the context of the work; adapt and improve their work to realise their intentions; place the ancient Greek civilisation accurately on a timeline and

demonstrate an understanding of BC and AD; know the ways the ancient Greeks influenced the present Olympic games; select and combine information from a range of sources to answer specific questions about the past; produce a summary of what they have found out, as a structured extended piece of writing.

some pupils will not have made so much progress and will: explore ideas about movement; collect visual and other information on how to communicate movement in three dimensions; investigate materials and processes and combine and organise form, shape in space to represent figures in movement; compare and comment on ideas, methods and approaches used in their own and others' work, relating these to the context of the work; adapt and improve their work to realise their intentions; know that the ancient Greek civilisation was a long time ago; know about the Greek Olympic games; select information from some sources to answer questions about the past; produce a structured summary of what they have learnt.

some pupils will have progressed further and will: select relevant visual and other information; manipulate materials and techniques, using visual and tactile qualities to communicate ideas about movement; analyse and comment on ideas, methods and approaches; refine their work to reflect their view of its purpose and meaning; compare and contrast the ancient and modern versions of the Olympic games; give reasons why we use ideas from ancient Greece today; understand strengths of and similarities between different sources of information; work independently to produce a structured account of the Greek legacy to the Olympic games.

Prior learning

It is helpful if the children have:

- learnt that humans have a skeletal structure for support, and muscles for movement
- practised body posture, gesture and movement through gymnastics and dance
- linked and repeated physical actions and explored feelings and moods
- developed basic sculpture techniques
- used a sketchbook to collect visual information
- used visual and tactile qualities to express ideas about sound, movement, structure and form
- used artefacts, buildings and pictures of Greece as sources of information.

Language for learning

Through the activities in this unit children will be able to understand, use and spell correctly:

- the ways in which movement is shown in visual form and sculpture
- movement, *eg action, repetition, sequence, drift, dynamic, flowing, motion, rhythm, shifting, forceful*
- human form, *eg pose, position, gesture, open/closed shape*
- change, *eg alter, convert, reorganise, transform, vary*
- sculpture, *eg construct, balance, space, movement, proportion, solid, hollow, viewpoint armature—a framework used to support mod roc, maquette—a small preliminary model*
- representation, *eg depict, portray, figurative, abstract*
- words associated with Greek architecture, *eg sculpture, column, frieze, capital, stadium, gymnasium, palaestra, hippodrome*
- *marathon, pentathlon, stade, pankration* (event combining boxing and wrestling).

Resources

Resources include:

For practical work

- drawing materials—2B and 4B pencils, sketchbooks
- materials suitable for making sculpture (maquette), *eg wire, wooden base, newspaper, masking tape, mod roc, bowls, water, scissors, pliers*
- painting materials, *eg double primary system, palettes, brushes, water pots*
- camera or digital camera

Suggested examples of art, craft and design

- videos, models or diagrams showing how human figures move
- art, craft and design work showing movement related to the theme of sport from any time or culture, *eg images of athletes from ancient Greece, the work of futurists such as 'Unique forms of continuity in space'; The wrestlers by Paul Manship (based on Greek sculptures); Greek sculptures Sculptures by Alberto Giacometti and Auguste Rodin*

Other resources

- information sources on the Olympic games, including pictures of Olympia and buildings, a timetable and description of events, reference books
- postcards or pictures of ancient Greek pottery
- a classroom display including a labelled plan of the excavated remains of ancient Olympia.

Section 1: Where and when was ancient Greece?

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Children should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the location, climate and terrain of Greece • to place the ancient Greek civilisation in time • that the ancient Greek civilisation occurred 'Before Christ' • that ancient Greece consisted of city states. 	<p>Give children postcards, maps, and holiday brochures of modern Greece and ask them what the pictures tell us about the climate of Greece, the landscapes and terrain, the buildings etc. Record their responses on the board or flip chart.</p> <p>Discuss with the children what 'ancient' means and place the period of the ancient Greek Empire on the class timeline. Discuss or recap on BC and AD and relate these to periods the children have already covered.</p> <p>Locate mainland Greece and its islands on a map. Discuss the physical features and highlight the difficulty of travel, eg <i>Would it be easier to travel by sea or land?</i> Relate this to the idea of 'city states', which were isolated from each other by the difficulties of communication.</p>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate Greece on a map and ancient Greece on a timeline • discuss the climate and physical features of the Greek mainland and Islands • recognise that ancient Greece is located in the period BC and that more recent periods in history are AD. 	<p>Children could be asked to bring in any postcards they have from resorts in Greece.</p> <p>Explaining the use of 'BC' provides an opportunity to reinforce understanding of negative numbers.</p>

Section 2: In what ways are the modern Olympic games like the ancient ones?

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Children should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to question and make thoughtful observations about starting points for their work the reasons why the modern Olympic games take place about the main features of the modern Olympic games to collect visual and other information to help develop their ideas including a sketchbook. 	<p>Discuss with the children what they know about the Olympic games. <i>Why are the games held? How often are they held? Who takes part? How do they prepare for the games? What are the different events? What prizes do the winners receive? Who watches the games?</i> List the questions on one large sheet of paper and the answers on another.</p> <p>Discuss with the children what evidence they might have of the last sports day and of the last modern Olympic games. Ask them to consider which of these things will survive a long time and which will be destroyed</p> <p>Tell the children they are going to find out about the Olympic games using a range of different sources.</p> <p>Organise a visit to the British Museum. Ask the children to select, examine and record information about the Olympic games from sculptures, artefacts and Greek vases, through annotated drawings in their sketchbooks. Alternatively, provide reproductions of sculptures, pictures of artefacts, buildings and vases.</p>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide information about the modern Olympic games identify appropriate sources for finding out about the ancient Greeks collect and record visual and other information about the Olympic games from sculptures, vases and artefacts in sketchbooks use a range of appropriate sources to find out about the ancient Olympic games. 	<p>These tasks could be adapted by giving children specific questions about the Olympic games.</p> <p>Images of Greek athletes can be found on www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk</p> <p>Talk to the children about the importance of selecting an artefact and collecting information quickly.</p>

Section 3: What do the sources tell us about the importance of the Olympic games to the ancient Greeks?

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Children should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that different sources can provide different information • reasons why the ancient Greek games took place • the main features of the ancient Olympic games • to appreciate the range of different sources of information that can be used to find out about the ancient Greeks • that different sources can provide different information • to select and record from first-hand observation and explore ideas for different purposes • to compare methods and approaches used by sculptors to show figures and forms in movement. 	<p>Give groups of children information packs on the Olympic games and a set of statements about the games. Ask them to look for information on the buildings, the events and purpose of the games and use this to select statements that describe the games, <i>eg it was time for the city states to come together</i>. It was a competition when the city states could show how strong they were. The Olympic games were a religious festival to worship Zeus. Women and slaves could not enter the games.</p> <p>In groups ask the children to share their findings with the rest of the class. Ask the children to recall the different sources they have used to find out about the ancient Greeks. List the sources on the board.</p> <p>Rehearse body gesture and movement. Ask the children to imagine in 'slow motion' various action sequences, <i>eg sprinting from a start line, throwing a discus</i>. Discuss ideas and feelings about this.</p> <p>Put the children in pairs. Ask one of each pair to make a pose that describe an action and ask the other to draw the figure from different viewpoints, <i>eg front, side and back view</i> (about 10 minutes for each pose). Make colour notes in their sketchbooks of figure. Then swap roles. Use a digital camera to record the poses.</p> <p>Look at Greek and other sculptures of athletes. Discuss how the sculpture shows movement, <i>eg position of feet, balance, twist of spine</i>.</p>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • select sources to show why the Olympic games were important to the ancient Greeks • feed back accurate information to the rest of the class and contribute to a class discussion on the ancient Olympic games • visualise and demonstrate a sequence of actions • make drawings to record figure shapes • compare and comment on the ideas, methods and approaches of others. 	<p>The information pack should include a timetable of the games and a range of texts.</p> <p>This activity can help to reinforce children's information retrieval skills, <i>eg scanning different texts to identify specific or relevant information, close reading to develop understanding of the topic</i>.</p> <p>The children could choose Greek sports, <i>eg throwing the javelin, wrestling or modern sports</i>.</p> <p>This work links with physical education. It builds on unit 4a 'Moving and growing' in the science scheme of work, where children study skeletal structure and using muscles for movement.</p> <p>A video or digital camera can be used to record different viewpoints of the action.</p> <p>Provide examples of Greek and contemporary sculptures depicting movement.</p>

Section 4: Investigating and making

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Children should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to investigate and combine visual and tactile qualities of materials and processes to show movement to use a variety of methods and techniques to show movement to apply their experience of materials and processes, developing their control of tools and techniques to match materials and processes to ideas and intentions. 	<p>Demonstrate how to use pliers in different ways, bend ends of wire for safety purposes.</p> <p>Ask the children to experiment using pliers to bend the wire.</p> <p>Demonstrate how to make a simple armature, twisting wire in the middle for the head shape, body and legs, add second piece for arms, double wire for strength.</p> <p>Ask the children to make an 'armature' for their sculpture by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> using wire to create the movement of the figure, consider joints, balancing the weight, working from original drawings stapling the wire to a wooden base for stability building form onto the armature using screwed up newspaper and masking tape cutting mod roc (plaster impregnated bandages), into thin strips, soaking in water, modelling form of figure using mod roc. <p>Ask the children to paint the figure when dry.</p>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> practise techniques for using wire explore the visual and tactile qualities of wire develop skills and techniques using mod roc to model form make a sculpture of a figure using construction and modelling techniques, from original drawings and photographs. 	<p>Explain how the armature will need to be correctly balanced in order to support the weight of the mod roc, staple feet apart, bend knees.</p> <p>Demonstrate mod roc techniques.</p> <p>Put plastic sheeting or newspaper under the tables to stop the plaster spreading.</p> <p><i>Risk assessment:</i> Be aware of children who suffer from asthma. Use a damp cloth on surfaces.</p> <p>Give individual support to children lacking technical skills or who experience coordination (fine motor skills) difficulties.</p>

Section 5: Evaluating and developing work

Learning objectives	Possible teaching activities	Learning outcomes	Points to note
<p>Children should learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to adapt their work according to their views and describe how they might develop it further to compare the ancient and modern Olympic games. 	<p>Ask the children to make considered changes to their work as needed.</p> <p>Discuss what is most and least effective about the work as it progresses.</p> <p>Review finished sculptures. Compare their work with other sculptor's work. <i>What materials and processes did the sculptors use? How has the sculptor shown movement? Did the use of visual qualities suit the purpose? Look at statues of Greek athletes and Greek gods? What does that tell you about their beliefs, thinking about why the games were held in the first place?</i></p> <p>Discuss how the ancient Olympic games differed from the modern version. Ask them to suggest the reasons for the differences. This information can be recorded on a grid, with the columns labelled 'ancient' and 'modern' and the rows labelled 'Location', 'Reason for games', 'Events' etc.</p>	<p>Children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adapt their work as needed answer key questions to review the effectiveness of their own work compare their work with other sculptor's work as part of the process of evaluation suggest similarities and/or differences between ancient and modern games. 	<p>Ask the children to explain how they developed their work.</p>