

Winter Games Comprehension Practice

Before you read: Preview this passage. Read the title and think about what you already know about the Olympics and the Winter Games. Look at the questions you will need to answer and keep them in mind as you read. Make a prediction: What do you think this passage will be about? **Write your prediction here.**

While you read: Stop after each paragraph and think about the paragraph's main idea. **Ask yourself: Does this make sense?** If you find a section confusing, reread it. If there is a word you don't know the meaning of, and you can't figure out by reading the rest of the sentence, circle it.

After you read: Was your prediction correct? (It's okay if it wasn't.) Are there any words or ideas you still find confusing? If so, ask your teacher for help.

The Winter Games: New to the Olympics

The Olympic Games have been held for thousands of years. You might know that they started long ago in Greece; in fact, the first Games took place in 776 B.C. But did you know that the Olympic Games did not originally include winter sports? The addition of the Winter Games to the Olympics was a slow process, and they were not fully included for more than two centuries.

The first change happened in 1908, when figure skating was included in the Summer Games in London. The organizers of the 1916 Summer Games in Berlin planned to include what they called a "Skiing Olympia," but the Games were cancelled when World War I broke out. Figure skating returned at the next games, held in 1920. Ice hockey was also included for the first time that year.

The International Olympic Committee made a big change when it organized an International Winter Sports Week in 1924. Competitions included Nordic skiing, speed skating, figure skating, ice hockey, and bobsledding. The event was a huge success, and is now considered the first Olympic Winter Games.

Seventy years after those first cold weather Games, another major change took place. In 1994, the 17th Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, introduced a new tradition. These Winter Games were the first to be held in a different year from the Summer Games. Now, we follow a schedule that alternates the Games every two years. Although they took thousands of years to develop, it's hard to imagine the Olympics now without the Winter Games.



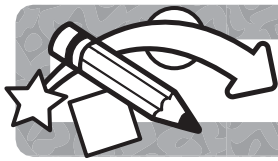
Test your understanding with these questions.

1. What is the main idea of this passage?

2. Why do you think the Summer and Winter Games now take place in different years?

3. Put an "X" next to a fact in this passage that you found most interesting.

4. Use the timeline graphic organizer on the next page to plot the significant events in the history of the Winter Games. In each box, write the year in which the event happened, and briefly describe it. You will use all six boxes.

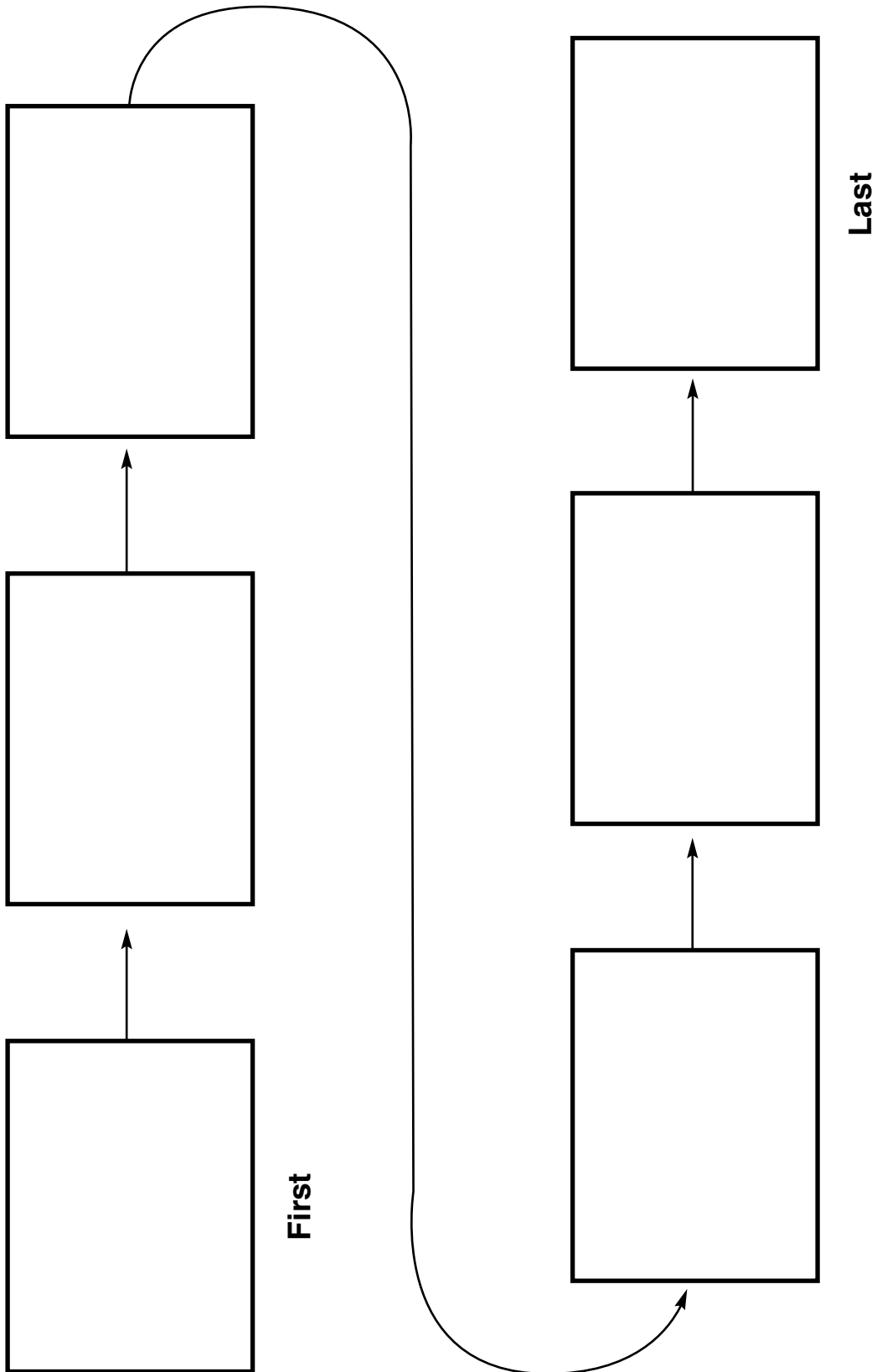


Picture the Order



Date: _____

Name: _____





Winter Games Comprehension Answers

1. The Winter Games were not a part of the original Olympics. They were only added recently.
2. Answers will vary. Responses could include:
 1. It is easier to plan these major events in different years
 2. People can enjoy the Olympics every two years, instead of having to wait four years in between Games
3. Answers will vary.
4. Events should be listed in the following sequence:
 1. **776 B.C.:** First Olympic Games
 2. **1908:** Figure Skating premieres in London Games
 3. **1916:** Skiing Olympia planned, but Games are cancelled
 4. **1920:** Figure Skating takes place again; ice hockey debuts
 5. **1924:** International Winter Sports Week/first Winter Games
 6. **1994:** Norwegian Winter Games are first to take place in a different year than Summer Games