

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



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Episode #160

Politics & The Olympic Games

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[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge and today we are going to be talking about The Olympic Games, and specifically, politics and the Olympic Games.

[00:00:32] The Olympic Games are, supposedly¹, a politics-free event.

[00:00:37] But history shows us that it is very difficult to separate the two.

[00:00:42] With the upcoming summer Olympic games in Tokyo, then the Winter Olympic Games happening in 2022 in Beijing, now is an excellent time to ask ourselves the question of whether politics can, and should, ever be kept separate from the games.

¹ according to what most people believe, not necessarily true



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Politics & The Olympic Games

[00:00:59] Before we get right into today's episode, I want to remind you that you can become a member of Leonardo English and follow along with the subtitles, the transcript and its key vocabulary over on the website, which is leonardoenglish.com.

[00:01:15] Membership of Leonardo English gives you access to all of our learning materials, all of our bonus episodes, so that's more than 160 different episodes now, as well as two new ones every week, plus access to our awesome private community where we do live events, challenges, and much, much more.

[00:01:36] Our community now has members from over 50 countries, and it's my mission to make it the most interesting place for curious people like you to improve their English.

[00:01:46] So, if that is of interest, - and I can't see a reason why it wouldn't be - then the place to go to is leonardoenglish.com.

[00:01:56] OK then, politics and The Olympics.

[00:02:00] Let's start with some history.

[00:02:02] Our story starts, as many great stories do, in Ancient Greece.

[00:02:08] Specifically, in the large [peninsula](#)² in southern Greece, the Peloponnese, and in the town of Olympia.

² a long piece of land sticking out into a body of water



[00:02:16] When the first Olympics actually took place is not completely clear, but the first written records [date back](#)³ to 776 B.C, almost 2,800 years ago.

[00:02:30] It started out, so historians believe, as a festival to [honour](#)⁴ the Greek God Zeus.

[00:02:38] Although it was obviously significantly smaller, the general idea was similar to today's Olympic Games - a series of athletic competitions - running, jumping, [wrestling](#)⁵, and so on.

[00:02:53] Ancient Greece at this time was a collection of different city-states, which were often at war with each other.

[00:03:00] These city-states would send their best athletes to Olympia to compete in the games.

[00:03:08] One can imagine that, as there is now, it would be [a matter of](#)⁶ great pride if an athlete from your city-state, your athlete, won a competition.

³ have existed since

⁴ pay respect to

⁵ a sport in which two people fight and try to throw each other to the ground

⁶ a situation or thing of



[00:03:19] So, even from the [outset](#)⁷, from the very first Olympic games, politics was an important part of it.

[00:03:28] There is a theory that these [warring](#)⁸ Greek city-states, these city-states that were fighting with each other, would call a temporary [truce](#)⁹, a temporary peace, in order for athletes to travel to Olympia and take part in the games, but that is now believed to be a bit of a modern-day myth.

[00:03:49] In any case, the games became very popular.

[00:03:53] They were held every 4 years between August 6 and September 19, and they were so important that ancient Greek historians actually used to use the four-year periods between the games as a reference point for historical events.

[00:04:11] The Ancient Olympics, as they are now called, continued for over a thousand years, and only stopped in the year AD 393.

[00:04:22] By this time, Ancient Greece had been conquered by Rome, and the Romans were in control of these games.

⁷ beginning

⁸ being at war with each other

⁹ a short period of peace



[00:04:30] In 380AD, Christianity had become the only accepted religion in the Roman empire, and all other religions or belief systems were considered [pagan](#)¹⁰.

[00:04:43] As they were thought to be a celebration of the ancient Greek gods, the Olympics games were considered [pagan](#), and were [banned](#)¹¹ [outright](#)¹², they were stopped, and there were no Olympics for one and a half thousand years.

[00:04:57] That was the end of the Ancient Olympics.

[00:05:01] Now, let's skip forward to the 19th century, and talk about the [rebirth](#)¹³ of The Olympics, and the modern Olympic Games

[00:05:11] To give you some additional context to this, Greek Independence from the Ottoman Empire had been achieved in 1830, and there was a [revival](#)¹⁴ of national pride in things regarded as [distinctively](#)¹⁵ Greek.

[00:05:28] Athletic competitions similar to The Ancient Olympics had taken place in 1859, 1870 and 1875, but they were all [relatively](#)¹⁶ small-scale.

¹⁰ non christian, belonging to older religions

¹¹ not allowed by law

¹² completely

¹³ a new period of growth of something

¹⁴ the process of becoming active again

¹⁵ in a way that is characteristic of someone

¹⁶ in comparison with what it was before



[00:05:41] It wasn't until the arrival of a French [aristocrat](#)¹⁷, a man named Baron Pierre de Coubertin that the Olympic Games as we know them today were developed.

[00:05:53] This young Frenchman was [obsessed](#)¹⁸ with the idea of physical exercise as a way of preventing illness and keeping healthy.

[00:06:02] He had travelled to Olympia, he knew about this ancient tradition, and proposed the idea of [reviving](#)¹⁹ the Olympic Games, partly with his mission of promoting physical exercise and also just as a great international competition.

[00:06:21] He was given the authority to restart the games, and in 1894, almost exactly 1,500 years after the last Olympic Games, The International Olympic Committee, the IOC, was formed.

[00:06:37] Now, back to the question of politics and the Olympic Games.

[00:06:42] The first Olympic Games in 1896 were held in Greece, in Athens, as one might expect.

[00:06:49] The first question the organisers had to ask themselves was “well, who is invited?”

¹⁷ belonging to the high society class

¹⁸ too interested in something

¹⁹ making something active again



[00:06:56] As you may know, this period of history saw a number of big military [clashes](#)²⁰ within Europe; in 1870 the Franco-Prussian war had seen France heavily defeated, and there were some question marks over whether Prussia would be invited.

[00:07:14] But, to Baron de Coubertin's credit, he did choose to include Germany in the first games.

[00:07:22] We will soon see though that participation in the games, both countries not being allowed to participate, and countries choosing not to participate for political reasons, will be a [feature](#)²¹ throughout the history of the modern games.

[00:07:39] And indeed let's jump to the Olympic Games in Berlin, in 1936, for our first modern example of a political Olympic Games.

[00:07:49] In the Olympic Games of 1920 and 1924, as a punishment for its actions in World War I, Germany had been [excluded](#)²², it had not been allowed to participate in the games.

[00:08:03] But, in 1936 it was the [host nation](#)²³, the games were to take place in Germany.

²⁰ fights

²¹ a typical characteristic

²² not allowed to participate

²³ the nation in which the olympic games are taking place



[00:08:10] By 1936, the Nazi [regime](#)²⁴ was in full control of the country, and it [sought](#)²⁵ to use the Olympic Games as a way of demonstrating both the fact that Nazi Germany was a functioning, successful country, and secondly that the [Aryan](#)²⁶ race, the white, northern European people were [superior](#)²⁷ in every way, particularly physically.

[00:08:37] I imagine you may have seen pictures or video clips from this Olympic Games, with people in the crowd doing the Nazi [salute](#)²⁸, with their right hands in the air, and people in their military uniforms.

[00:08:52] Now, at least when it comes to Hitler and the Nazis' theory of [Aryan superiority](#)²⁹, that was clearly proved wrong, when Jesse Owens, the American black athlete, won four gold medals and was the star of the competition.

[00:09:10] But the fact that the Olympics were held in the capital of Nazi Germany helped [legitimise](#)³⁰ the [regime](#), and show it to the world.

²⁴ a strict system of running a country

²⁵ tried, attempted

²⁶ belonging to the white, northern European race of people

²⁷ better than other people

²⁸ a formal movement or sign to show respect

²⁹ the fact that one person is better than others

³⁰ make something legal



[00:09:19] The Nazi [emblem](#)³¹, the Swastika, was on full display, and there was [implicit](#)³² [endorsement](#)³³, or support, given to the [regime](#) by the Olympic committee.

[00:09:32] Now, it is perhaps easy to say [with retrospect](#)³⁴, with the benefit of [hindsight](#)³⁵, that these games shouldn't have been held in Berlin, but it does raise the question of what types of countries should be allowed to hold the Olympics?

[00:09:48] Yes, probably not countries with [regimes](#)³⁶ that look like they might commit [genocide](#)³⁷, but where do you [draw the line](#)³⁸?

[00:09:56] One only needs to look at some of the countries that have been awarded the Olympics in the past 20 years or so to find examples of countries that have at least been accused of some pretty terrible crimes.

[00:10:11] Let's move on to Mexico City, in 1968.

³¹ a picture of an object used as a symbol to represent a particular group

³² not directly expressed, but suggested

³³ support or approval

³⁴ looking back in time

³⁵ the ability to understand an event after it has happened

³⁶ strict systems of running a country

³⁷ the murder of a large number of people belonging to a race or nation

³⁸ set a limit on what is accepted or not



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[00:10:15] These games actually have two important examples of politics and the games, one domestic and the other international.

[00:10:25] Firstly, 10 days before the opening of the games there was a protest by Mexican students against the amount of money that had been spent on the games.

[00:10:35] Instead, they believed that it should have been spent on domestic social programmes, that the money should have been spent helping Mexicans, not building expensive stadiums for an international event.

[00:10:49] **Eager**³⁹ to not have any disruption to the first Olympics in Mexico, and indeed the first Olympics in Latin America, the Mexican police attacked the plaza where the students were **gathering**⁴⁰, killing 200 people and injuring 1,000 more.

[00:11:06] But the most famous of the political events at these games was to come during the actual events, and on the field.

[00:11:16] In America, the civil rights movement had been going on for almost 20 years.

[00:11:22] African Americans had been fighting for equal rights and had been struggling against **systemic**⁴¹ racism in the U S.

³⁹ wanting very much

⁴⁰ coming together as a group

⁴¹ acting as a base of a society



[00:11:31] The [podium](#)⁴² for the 200m race was to become a centre of political demonstration, and the scene of probably the most [iconic](#)⁴³ photo in Olympic political history.

[00:11:44] An American, Tommie Smith, had won the race.

[00:11:48] An Australian, Peter Norman, came second.

[00:11:50] And another American, John Carlos, came third.

[00:11:54] Tommie Smith and John Carlos were both black, they were African Americans.

[00:12:00] As they received their medals, Tommie Smith and John Carlos [lowered](#)⁴⁴ their heads and [raised](#)⁴⁵ one hand, covered by a black glove and [clenched](#)⁴⁶ into a [fist](#)⁴⁷.

⁴² a raised area on which a person stands to receive a prize in a sports competition

⁴³ very famous or popular

⁴⁴ moved into a low position

⁴⁵ lifted to a higher position

⁴⁶ closed tightly

⁴⁷ a hand with the fingers held closely together



[00:12:13] You will no doubt have seen this picture, but what you might have missed is some of the finer, more [poignant](#)⁴⁸ details.

[00:12:22] Carlos and Smith had taken off their shoes and put on black socks to [symbolise](#)⁴⁹ the [poverty](#)⁵⁰ in which many black American people lived.

[00:12:32] If you look closer at Carlos's neck you will see a [bead](#)⁵¹ necklace worn to represent the [lynchings](#)⁵², the killings of black Americans, which were all too common at the time.

[00:12:45] The International Olympic Committee was [furious](#)⁵³.

[00:12:48] This was a political statement, and The Olympics were meant to be an [apolitical](#)⁵⁴ event, politics weren't meant to be involved in the games.

[00:12:59] The President of the IOC ordered for Carlos and Smith to be removed from the US Olympic team, but the team refused.

⁴⁸ deeply affecting the feelings, impressive

⁴⁹ represent, show

⁵⁰ the condition of being extremely poor

⁵¹ small, coloured, round piece, usually of glass

⁵² killed in public without a legal trial

⁵³ extremely angry

⁵⁴ not connected with politics



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[00:13:09] Interestingly, when the President of the IOC was questioned about why this, what's called, Black Power [salute](#), this [gesture](#)⁵⁵ that Carlos and Smith had done was unacceptable but why the Nazi [salute](#) was acceptable back in 1936, his response was that the Nazi salute was a national [salute](#), and therefore was acceptable.

[00:13:36] Legally, one might say he was correct, it was a national [salute](#), but morally it would be hard to make that argument.

[00:13:45] In any case, by this time, it was clear that it was going to be incredibly hard to actually make The Olympics a politics-free zone.

[00:13:55] Moving on to our next example, the political actions didn't come from the athletes, but against the athletes.

[00:14:05] You may be familiar with the events of 1972 in Munich.

[00:14:10] 11 members of the Israeli Olympic team were [taken hostage](#)⁵⁶ by the Palestinian [terror](#)⁵⁷ group Black September.

⁵⁵ a movement of parts of the body to express an idea

⁵⁶ taken as prisoners by an enemy in order to achieve their goals

⁵⁷ causing extreme fear



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[00:14:19] This led to the so-called “Munich [Massacre](#)⁵⁸” which resulted in the [terrorists](#)⁵⁹ first killing two of the Israeli athletes and then other nine being murdered later on as [special forces](#)⁶⁰ tried to rescue them.

[00:14:34] This was a different kind of political [gesture](#).

[00:14:37] The world was watching, and people who had not known much about the [ongoing](#)⁶¹ [conflict](#)⁶² in the Middle East became fully [aware](#)⁶³ as a result of these tragic circumstances.

[00:14:49] The Olympics became a live theatre for Middle-eastern Politics, and it was clear that it was an incredibly effective stage for [getting one’s message across](#)⁶⁴, or at least [highlighting](#)⁶⁵ an issue that most people around the world might not have been aware of.

⁵⁸ the act of killing a lot of people

⁵⁹ people who use fear and violence in order to achieve political aims

⁶⁰ military forces used for special and difficult operations

⁶¹ continuing to happen

⁶² intense disagreement, fighting

⁶³ knowing that something exists

⁶⁴ making someone understand something

⁶⁵ drawing special attention to something



[00:15:06] Just four years later, in Montréal in 1976, we encountered a different kind of example.

[00:15:15] There is still the [constant⁶⁶](#) of The Olympic Games being used as a way to force political actions, and promote or [discourage⁶⁷](#) political beliefs in countries thousands of miles away from where the games are taking place.

[00:15:29] This time though, we are talking about [apartheid⁶⁸](#), the racist policy of the South African government that forced [segregation⁶⁹](#) between the white and black population.

[00:15:41] This was a system of [institutionalised⁷⁰](#) racial [discrimination⁷¹](#), which [legislated⁷²](#) for [superior facilities⁷³](#) and opportunities for the minority white people

⁶⁶ something that happens all the time, continuously

⁶⁷ prevent something from happening

⁶⁸ a political system in which people of different race are separated

⁶⁹ keeping a group of people separate from another

⁷⁰ created and practiced as an accepted part of a culture

⁷¹ treating a group of people differently because of their race, colour etc.

⁷² made laws

⁷³ a place where particular activities happen



and condemned⁷⁴ the indigenous⁷⁵ black population to inferior⁷⁶ opportunities and therefore blatant⁷⁷, legalised and statutory⁷⁸ discrimination.

[00:16:04] But these games don't include the South African Olympic team.

[00:16:08] South Africa was already not allowed to participate in the Olympics games, and hadn't been since 1964, because of its policy of separating white and black athletes.

[00:16:21] Indeed, there was a worldwide sporting ban⁷⁹ on South Africa, meaning that other countries weren't allowed to play against the South African national team.

[00:16:31] But, the New Zealand rugby team had recently toured⁸⁰ South Africa, they had broken this international boycott⁸¹ of the country.

⁷⁴ forced to accept something unpleasant

⁷⁵ the native population of a place

⁷⁶ worse than someone else

⁷⁷ very obvious and intentional, used for something bad

⁷⁸ a formally approved and written down law

⁷⁹ an official exclusion of a group from an organisation

⁸⁰ visited

⁸¹ to refuse someone to participate in an organisation



[00:16:40] There was an [outcry](#)⁸² from multiple African nations, who said that New Zealand should be [banned](#) from the Olympics in Montreal for breaking the [boycott](#).

[00:16:51] But, the IOC (the International Olympic Committee) didn't [ban](#) New Zealand.

[00:16:57] And as a result, 29 countries, mostly African nations, [pulled out](#)⁸³ of the competition in disgust.

[00:17:06] Another [notable](#)⁸⁴, but unrelated political event during these games was Taiwan [pulling out](#)⁸⁵.

[00:17:13] It had previously [competed](#)⁸⁶ under the name The Republic of China, but was told by Canada that it couldn't use that name, because it was too similar to The People's Republic of China, which had been officially recognised by Canada in 1970.

[00:17:30] This is, of course, an [ongoing](#) issue in the Olympics today, and Taiwan, otherwise known as The Republic of China, normally competes under the name Chinese Taipei.

⁸² a strong expression of anger and disapproval

⁸³ left, withdrew from

⁸⁴ important, deserving attention

⁸⁵ leaving, withdrawing

⁸⁶ took part in the competition



[00:17:41] Now, Montreal in 1976 was an example of countries using The Olympics to take a political [stance](#)⁸⁷, or to make a political point, that is completely unrelated to the country in which the games are being hosted.

[00:17:57] But, what happens when the Olympics are hosted in a country that has not been behaving particularly well?

[00:18:05] We saw that it didn't do any harm to Nazi Germany, and in fact gave it some [credibility](#)⁸⁸, but half a century later, had the world learned anything from this?

[00:18:16] Well, the 1980 Olympics in Moscow suggest that things did change.

[00:18:22] One of the last attempts of the USSR to assert its military [might](#)⁸⁹ and political will as a superpower, even though it was a failing one at the time, was to invade Afghanistan, which it did on Christmas Eve of 1979.

[00:18:40] As a result of this, a large number of countries, including the USA, [boycotted](#)⁹⁰ the Moscow Olympics in 1980, they didn't take part in the games.

⁸⁷ a publicly expressed way of thinking

⁸⁸ the quality of being convincing and believable

⁸⁹ strength

⁹⁰ did not take part in



[00:18:50] Perhaps [unsurprisingly](#)⁹¹, the USSR and 14 other nations, all [Eastern Bloc satellite states](#)⁹² and [allies](#)⁹³ of the USSR, responded by [boycotting](#)⁹⁴ the Los Angeles Games 4 years later, in 1984.

[00:19:07] As the English saying goes, it was a case of [tit for tat](#)⁹⁵, one action taken because of another.

[00:19:15] This leaves us neatly on to the next [leg](#)⁹⁶ of this [saga](#)⁹⁷, which we will be our last one:

[00:19:23] For this one we will stay in Russia, and talk about [doping](#)⁹⁸ in the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

⁹¹ in a way that was not unexpected

⁹² a group of neighbouring countries under the control of the USSR

⁹³ countries that have agreed officially to support each other

⁹⁴ not taking part in

⁹⁵ an action taken as a response to another

⁹⁶ a stage or part of a process

⁹⁷ a long series of incidents

⁹⁸ giving an athlete drugs in order to make them perform better



[00:19:31] Vladimir Putin, [boosted](#)⁹⁹ by the popularity he was enjoying as head of a Russian state that was [prosperous](#)¹⁰⁰ with such strong global demand for oil and gas, had managed to persuade the IOC that Russia should host the Winter Olympics in 2014.

[00:19:50] Putin, himself a [black belt](#)¹⁰¹ in judo and a man whose own public image was heavily dependent on his own personal physical [prowess](#)¹⁰², whether riding a horse shirtless or showing his skill and strength in judo, aimed to use the Winter Olympics in order to [showcase](#)¹⁰³ Russia's strength in sporting terms.

[00:20:14] You can, with the benefit of [hindsight](#), see this as part of a [coherent](#)¹⁰⁴ and determined plan to [assert](#)¹⁰⁵ Russian power, alongside its continued military strength and increasing [willingness](#)¹⁰⁶ to [intervene](#)¹⁰⁷ internationally, a [tendency](#)¹⁰⁸ that

⁹⁹ encouraged

¹⁰⁰ successful, especially financially

¹⁰¹ the symbol of a very high level in the sport of judo

¹⁰² strength or ability

¹⁰³ show, display

¹⁰⁴ clear and carefully considered

¹⁰⁵ cause others to recognise it by displaying confident behaviour

¹⁰⁶ desire and readiness to do something

¹⁰⁷ to intentionally become involved

¹⁰⁸ something characteristic of one's behaviour



became evident with military [interventions](#)¹⁰⁹ in Syria, Ukraine and Crimea [subsequently](#)¹¹⁰.

[00:20:39] Much to the embarrassment of Russia, the Russian [Doping](#) Scandal resulted in an independent report, the McLaren Report, concluding in 2016 that the [collusion](#)¹¹¹ or secret [cooperation](#)¹¹² between different elements of the Russian state had been complete and thorough – in other words this was a large-scale, [top-down](#)¹¹³ effort to ensure that Russian athletes were able to use [performance-enhancing](#)¹¹⁴ drugs and therefore to cheat with the assistance of the state at the very highest level.

[00:21:15] This resulted in a total of 47 Olympic medals being taken away from Russian athletes who had won them in the London 2012 Olympics and a two year ban on Russia competing in international sporting events.

[00:21:31] So, this is, of course, on one level just simple cheating, but on another level shows us how far some countries are prepared to go to win a competition.

¹⁰⁹ involvements, interferences

¹¹⁰ after something

¹¹¹ secret agreement

¹¹² the action of working together

¹¹³ made by a few people in authority and affected a lot of people

¹¹⁴ that helped them perform better at sports



[00:21:43] For Putin, winning a gold medal wasn't just about the glory of being the best at a particular sport, it was about [showcasing¹¹⁵](#) the strength of Russia, and of how the country had [prospered¹¹⁶](#) under his leadership.

[00:21:59] And it was a little bit embarrassing when it completely [backfired¹¹⁷](#).

[00:22:04] So, I think that by now we have realised that politics and The Olympics go [hand in hand¹¹⁸](#), it is very difficult to separate the two.

[00:22:15] In fact, it is much harder now than it was even 20 years ago.

[00:22:20] Many Olympic athletes are celebrities [in their own right¹¹⁹](#).

[00:22:25] 20 or 30 years ago they might have needed to wait until they were on the [pitch¹²⁰](#), or receiving a medal, to make a [gesture](#) that symbolised their beliefs.

[00:22:36] Now, they can share it on their own social media channels and know that it can reach tens or hundreds of millions of people in minutes, there is no longer anything between the athletes and the people who follow them.

¹¹⁵ showing, displaying

¹¹⁶ succeeded, especially financially

¹¹⁷ had the opposite effect

¹¹⁸ closely connected

¹¹⁹ as a result of their own achievements

¹²⁰ an area painted with lines for playing sports



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[00:22:50] So, if we are in agreement that politics and the Olympics are [inseparable](#)¹²¹, where does this leave us?

[00:22:58] What [criteria](#) should countries have to meet if they want to hold the Olympics?

[00:23:04] Should Olympic athletes have to meet certain [criteria](#)¹²² in terms of their political beliefs in order to represent their country?

[00:23:13] How should athletes be required to behave?

[00:23:16] Is it different during The Olympics?

[00:23:19] Can they say one thing on their private social media accounts but have to say another thing when receiving a medal?

[00:23:26] Again, there are no easy answers to this, and I will leave you to make up your own mind.

[00:23:30] Let us give the last word on the subject to two [contrasting](#)¹²³ characters: Vladimir Putin and George Orwell.

¹²¹ unable to be separated, closely connected to each other

¹²² requirements or standards

¹²³ very different



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[00:23:36] At a news conference before the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, Putin said that the [banning¹²⁴](#) of Russian athletes would be a “dangerous [recurrence¹²⁵](#) of politics [interfering¹²⁶](#) in sport.”

[00:23:56] Or are you [inclined¹²⁷](#) to agree with one of my heroes, George Orwell, who described sport as “war minus the shooting”?

[00:24:08] OK then, that is it for today's episode on politics and the Olympic games I hope it's been an interesting one, that you've learnt something new, and when it comes to the upcoming games in Tokyo and Beijing, well, you'll have a bit of background to it.

[00:24:27] Who knows what other political [controversies¹²⁸](#) might happen at these two..

[00:24:32] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:24:36] For the members among you, you can head right into our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

¹²⁴ officially not allowing someone to take part in something

¹²⁵ the fact of something happening again and again

¹²⁶ getting involved

¹²⁷ in favor of doing something

¹²⁸ intense discussions and arguments



[00:24:47] And as a final reminder, if you enjoyed this episode, and you are wondering where to get all of our bonus episodes, plus the transcripts, the subtitles, and the key vocabulary, then the place to go to for all of that is leonardoenglish.com.

[00:25:04] I am on a mission to make Leonardo English the most interesting way of improving your English, and I would love for you to join me, and curious minds from 50 different countries, on that journey.

[00:25:16] The place you can go to for all of that is leonardoenglish.com.

[00:25:22] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:25:28] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]



Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Supposedly	according to what most people believe, not necessarily true
Peninsula	a long piece of land sticking out into a body of water
Date back	have existed since
Honour	pay respect to
Wrestling	a sport in which two people fight and try to throw each other to the ground
A matter of	a situation or thing of
Outset	beginning
Warring	being at war with each other
Truce	a short period of peace
Pagan	non christian, belonging to older religions
Banned	not allowed by law



Outright	completely
Rebirth	a new period of growth of something
Revival	the process of becoming active again
Distinctively	in a way that is characteristic of someone
Relatively	in comparison with what it was before
Aristocrat	belonging to the high class in society
Obsessed	too interested in something
Reviving	making something active again
Clashes	fight
Feature	a typical characteristic
Excluded	not allowed to participate
Host nation	the nation in which the olympic games are taking place
Regime	a strict system of running a country
Sought	tried, attempted
Aryan	belonging to the white, northern European race of



people

Superior

better than other people

Salute

a formal movement or sign to show respect

Superiority

the fact that one person is better than others

Legitimise

make something legal

Emblem

a picture of an object used as a symbol to represent a particular group

Implicit

not directly expressed, but suggested

Endorsement

support or approval

With retrospect

looking back in time

Hindsight

the ability to understand an event after it has happened

Regimes

strict systems of running a country

Genocide

the murder of a large number of people belonging to a race or nation

Draw the line

set a limit on what is accepted or not



Eager	wanting very much
Gathering	coming together as a group
Systemic	acting as a base of a society
Podium	a raised area on which a person stands to receive a prize in a sports competition
Iconic	very famous or popular
Lowered	moved into a low position
Raised	lifted to a higher position
Clenched	closed tightly
Fist	a hand with the fingers held closely together
Poignant	deeply affecting the feelings, impressive
Symbolise	represent, show
Poverty	the condition of being extremely poor
Bead	small, coloured, round piece, usually of glass
Lynchings	killed in public without a legal trial
Furious	extremely angry



Apolitical	not connected with politics
Gesture	a movement of parts of the body to express an idea
Taken hostage	taken as prisoners by an enemy in order to achieve their goals
Terror	causing extreme fear
Massacre	the act of killing a lot of people
Terrorists	people who use fear and violence in order to achieve political aims
Special forces	military forces used for special and difficult operations
Ongoing	continuing to happen
Conflict	intense disagreement, fighting
Aware	knowing that something exists
Getting one's message across	making someone understand something
Highlighting	drawing special attention to something
Constant	something that happens all the time, continuously



Discourage	prevent something from happening
Apartheid	a political system in which people of different race are separated
Segregation	keeping a group of people separate from another
Institutionalised	created and practiced as an accepted part of a culture
Discrimination	treating a group of people differently because of their race, colour etc.
Legislated	made laws
Facilities	a place where particular activities happen
Condemned	forced to accept something unpleasant
Indigenous	the native population of a place
Inferior	worse than someone else
Blatant	very obvious and intentional, used for something bad
Statutory	a formally approved and written down law
Ban	an official exclusion of a group from an organisation
Toured	visited



Boycott	to refuse someone to participate in an organisation
Outcry	a strong expression of anger and disapproval
Pulled out	left, withdrew from
Notable	important, deserving attention
Pulling out	leaving, withdrawing
Competed	took part in the competition
Stance	a publicly expressed way of thinking
Credibility	the quality of being convincing and believable
Might	strength
Boycotted	did not take part in
Unsurprisingly	in a way that was not unexpected
Eastern bloc satellite states	a group of neighbouring countries under the control of the USSR
Allies	countries that have agreed officially to support each other
Boycotting	not taking part in



Tit for tat	an action taken as a response to another
Leg	a stage or part of a process
Saga	a long series of incidents
Doping	giving an athlete drugs in order to make them perform better
Boosted	encouraged
Prosperous	successful, especially financially
Black belt	the symbol of a very high level in the sport of judo
Prowess	strength or ability
Showcase	show, display
Coherent	clear and carefully considered
Assert	cause others to recognise it by displaying confident behaviour
Willingness	desire and readiness to do something
Intervene	to intentionally become involved
Tendency	something characteristic of one's behaviour



Interventions	involvements, interferences
Subsequently	after something
Collusion	secret agreement
Cooperation	the action of working together
Top-down	made by a few people in authority and affected a lot of people
Performance-enhancing	that helped them perform better at sports
Showcasing	showing, displaying
Prospered	succeeded, especially financially
Backfired	had the opposite effect
Hand in hand	closely connected
In their own right	as a result of their own achievements
Pitch	an area painted with lines for playing sports
Inseparable	unable to be separated, closely connected to each other
Criteria	requirements or standards



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Politics & The Olympic Games

Contrasting	very different
Banning	officially not allowing someone to take part in something
Recurrence	the fact of something happening again and again
Interfering	getting involved
Inclined	in favor of doing something
Controversies	intense discussions and arguments

We'd love to get your feedback on this podcast.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum community.leonardoenglish.com

