**Physical Education Department**

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**ORAL TOPICS**

**OUR UNIVERSITY**

Brest State University was founded in 1945. It was called the Teachers’ Training Institute then. In 1995 it became a university. Its full name is Brest State University named after Alexander Pushkin.

The University occupies several academic buildings: an old building at the crossing of Savetskaya and Mickevich’s Streets, the Sports Complex with gymnasiums, a swimming pool, several lecture halls and tutorial rooms, and a seven-storeyed building in Kasmanautau Boulevard with a canteen, a library, reading halls, laboratories, lecture halls and subject rooms. At the disposal of students there are four hostels, a winter garden, a garden of successive blossoming, an agricultural and biological station. The University has three museums: of biology, of geology, and of physical culture and sport.

The University educates about 4,500 students at the day-time department and about 4,000 students acquire higher education at the correspondence department. There are 12 faculties at the University: Language and Literature, Foreign Languages, Psychology and Pedagogics, Social Pedagogics, Geography, Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Physical Education, History, Law, and Pre-University Preparation. Students are educated in 50 specialities.

Teaching is maintained at a high level. About 600 professors, associate professors and tutors at 55 chairs teach students at the University.

The course of study lasts four-five years. Each year consists of two terms (autumn and spring) with examination periods at the end of each term. The term is divided between theoretical and practical work: students have a few weeks of lectures followed by seminars. When students have seminars they spend a lot of time in the reading room revising the material, fortunately the Internet helps now a lot.

Students do not only study, they are also engaged in various forms of research work. They write course papers and diploma theses, participate in scientific conferences and publish their articles. This work helps them to better understand the subjects they study and the current requirements of the national economy, to see the results of their work put into practice.

**THE IMAGE OF BELARUS**

The Republic of Belarus lies in the centre of Europe. It occupies an area of 208 thousand square kilometers. Belarus shares its border with five states: the Russian federation, Lithuania, Poland, the Ukraine, and Latvia. The population of Belarus is about 10 mln.

Belarus has a cool continental climate moderated by maritime influences from the Atlantic Ocean.

The first written documents of the Belarusian statehood go as far back as 980 AD when Prince Rogvold began his reign on Polotsk lands, which are the historic and religious center of Belarusian nation and culture. From the 13-th till the 16-th century the territory of contemporary Belarus was the center of a medieval polyethnic state – the Grand Duchy of Litva. The lands of contemporary Belarus, Lithuania, the Ukraine and a part of Russia comprised this state. In 1569 the Grand Duchy of Litva and the Polish Kingdom established a political union according to which the Litva – Poland confederation – Rzecz Pospolita – emerged. As a result of three divisions of Rzecz Pospolita in 1772, 1793 and 1795 between three empires – Russia, Austria and Prussia – the Belarusian lands were incorporated into the Russian Empire.

On March 9, 1918 Belarus was declared a democratic Peoples' Republic. On January 1, 1919 the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was created. On December 30, 1922 the Communist governments of Belarus, Russia, the Ukraine and Caucasus created the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. In August 1991 Belarus declared its independence.

Now Belarus is a presidential republic. State power in the Republic of Belarus is formed and realized through three main branches – legislative, executive and judicial.

According to the Constitution of 1994 and its modifications of 1996, a two-chamber parliament is the supreme standing and exclusive legislative body of state power in the Republic of Belarus. The President of the Republic of Belarus is the chief of the state. The executive branch is represented by the Council of ministers headed by the Prime Minister, Courts perform the judicial power in the republic.

The present National Emblem and Flag of the Republic of Belarus symbolize historical adherence of the Belarusian people to constructive labor, their faith in the triumph of justice and attainment of a worthy place in the world community.

The sources of Belarusian culture come from the pre-Christian times and have a lot of common with traditions of the other Indo-European cultures, Traditional rites, music and art elements are widely used in contemporary cultural life, thus illustrating symbols of the old and young Belarusian culture.

Belarus is rather a highly developed industrial country. The main branches of Belarusian industry are machine building, instrument making, chemical, wood processing, light and food industries. Over 100 large enterprises are the basis of Belarusian economy.

Minsk, the capital of Belarus, is one of the most beautiful and significant cities. It is first mentioned in chronicles as a fortress in the Principality of Polotsk in connection with the battle on the river Nemiga in 1067.

People of Belarus are proud of their country. The proverb says, "what you give returns to the giver. Love for love, trust for trust". Belarus entrusted itself to the people and they in their turn enjoy its beauty and glory.

**POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PORTRAIT OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Great Britain has a parliamentary government based on the party system. Parliament has two parts: the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Members of the House of Commons are elected by the voters of 650 constituencies. The Prime Minister, or leader of the Government, is a Member of Parliament (MP), usually the leader of the political party with a majority in the House of Commons. The chief officer of the House of Commons is the Speaker. The House at the beginning of each Parliament elects him. His chief function is to preside over the House in its debate. When elected the Speaker must not belong to any party.

The House of Lords is composed of about 1,200 members. They are the Lords Spiritual, and the Lords temporal, consisting of all hereditary peers, all life peers and 21 law lords, to assist the House in its judicial duties, because for a long time the House of Lords was the highest court of law in the land, and it still is the supreme court of appeal.

A Cabinet of about twenty other ministers advises the Prime Minister. The Cabinet includes the ministers in charge of major government departments or ministries. Civil servants, who are permanent officials, run departments and ministries. Even if the Government changes after an election, the same civil servants are employed. In the performance of its functions the Cabinet makes considerable use of a system of committees. The Cabinet is the centre of the political power of the United Kingdom at the present time. Normally it meets for about two hours once or twice a week during parliamentary sitting.

The main political parties in the UK are the Conservative party (right wing), the Labour party (left wing) and the Liberal Democrats (centre).

The Conservative party believes in free enterprise and the importance of capitalist economy, with private ownership preferred to state control. The Labour party believes that private ownership and enterprise should be allowed to flourish, but not at the expense of their traditional support of the public services. The Liberal Democrats believe that the state should have some control over the economy, but that there should be individual ownership.

Great Britain is a constitutional monarchy, and the Crown is a permanent and continuous institution. The Queen is the official Head of State and, for many people, a symbol of the unity of the nation. According to the Constitution the powers of the Crown are very great. Every action of the government is carried in its name. But the Queen cannot act independently. She reigns but does not rule. Although the Queen is deprived of actual power, she has retained many important, though formal functions.

**SPORT IN BELARUS**

Every third resident in the Republic of Belarus goes in for sports. Schoolchildren have classes in physical training which is a compulsory subject on the curriculum here. There are sports societies for the adult population. Most of the factories and various institutions have sports clubs.

Some people, such as pensioners, housewives and the like have physical culture and health improvement centres in their districts which become very popular with people who call them health-building centres, or simply health centres.

Belarusian athletes have at their disposal 138 stadiums, about 3,000 gym halls, 85 indoor swimming pools, over 2,000 shooting galleries, more than 8,000 football fields and 30,000 outdoor sports grounds.

Such sports structures as the Sport Palace, the Track-and-Field Athletics Palace, the Shooting Complex and the Water Sports Palace in Minsk as well as the Republican Equestrian Sports School and the Olympic complexes Raubichi and Staiki near Minsk have won recognition of both Belarusian and foreign athletes.

In addition to nearly 12,000 full-time trainers and coaches here there are 550,000 physical training instructors who receive no salaries but work in their free time.

Various competitions are held in the republic practically every day. Nation-wide competitions arc held for youngsters, such as the Leather Ball competitions for footballers, the Golden Puck competitions for the ice-hockey enthusiasts, the Royal Castle competitions for chess-players and the Snow-Flake competitions for skiers and skaters.

More than a thousand foreign athletes come here to participate in competitions in Belarus.

At the same time, over a thousand Belarusian athletes participated annually in many international events outside the borders of the republic. In 1952 Belarusian sportsmen took part in the Olympic Games for the first time.

Among the wrestlers of the world Alexander Medved, for example, lying in Minsk, has the richest collection of medals.

Gymnast Olga Korbut created a furore. Many of her original complicated parts are named a la Korbut.

Belarusian fencers also constantly show high standards. Over the past twenty years they have never come back from the Olympic Games without medals. Tatiana Samusenko, Elena Belova, Victor Sidiak, Alexei Nikanchikov and Alexander Romankov have more than once been Olympic and world champions. Among the well-known champions and prize winners are weightlifters Valery Shary and Leonid Taranenko, cyclist Vladimir Kaminsky, rowers Vladimir Romanovsky and Vladimir Parfenovich.

There are all grounds to believe that Belarusian sportsmen will prove among the best ones at the forthcoming Olympics, too.

**THE OLYMPIC GAMES**

The Olympic Games, an international festival of sports, originated in Ancient Greece in 776 B. C. They were held at a four-year interval (called Olympiad) for nearly 12 centuries until 393 A. D. In 393 A. D. the Roman Emperor Theodosius banned the Games as a disturbance to Roman peace and they haven't been revived for nearly 1,500 years.

The ceremonies of the ancient Olympic Games included contests in oratory, poetry, music and art, as well as in athletic skills like wrestling, long jumping, running, discus and javelin throwing. Later, the programme was expanded to include boxing and chariot races.

To be a victor in the ancient Olympic Games was a great honour. The victors were traditionally crowned with olive leaves from a sacred tree.

The 1st Games of the modern cycle were held in 1896 in Athens owing, to the efforts of the French educator Baron Pierre de Coubertin. 311 athletes representing 13 countries competed 9 sports. The Olympic stadium where athletes had competed in antiquity was specially reconstructed for the Games. In 1920 (in Antwerp) the Olympic flag with five interlaced rings of blue, yellow, black, green and red colours on a white background - symbol of the unity of the five continents - was hoisted for the first time, and the first Olympic Oath-taking ceremony was also introduced.

The motto adopted by the International Olympic Committee - "Citius, Altius, Fortius" (Faster, Higher, Stronger) - made its appearance at the Antwerp Games too.

Helsinki was the host of the 15th Olympic Games with the 55-yearold Nurmi as torch-bearer at the opening ceremony. There was hardly anyone at that time who could even suspect that these Olympics were to become a turning point in the entire Olympic movement. But so it proved Soviet athletes appeared for the first time in the Olympic arena. The debutants amazed the world with their athletic ability. Competing with the best athletes from 69 countries, the Soviet athletes won 22 gold 30 silver and 19 bronze medals, scoring in the unofficial team standing as many medals as the USA team which had dominated at all the preceding Olympics.

Though very important, sports results are not the only thing that counts. As a result, the Olympic Games have become a true international festival of peace and friendship.

**SPORT IN GREAT BRITAIN**

The British are a sporting nation. Like everyone else they love football in fact, they invented it. Most British towns and cities have a football team. Every year, each team plays in the Football Association competition. The two best teams play in the Cup final at Wembley Stadium in London. Some fans pay up to £ 250 for a ticket for the Cup Final. It is one of the biggest sporting events of the year.

Tennis is another popular game in Britain. Every summer, in June, the biggest international tennis tournament takes place at Wimbledon, a suburb of London. There are strawberries and cream for sale, and everyone hopes the rain will stay away.

The British play many sports that are unknown in most other countries, for example: cricket, squash and netball.

Cricket is a typically British sport which foreigners have difficulty in understanding. The game looks slow, but it can be exciting if you understand what's going on. There are two teams of eleven players: one man (the "bowler") throws the ball, and the "batsman" hits it with his bat.

Cricket is a very long game. Matches last from one to five days. Squash is another British invention. It is a form of tennis. There are two players and they use rackets similar to tennis rackets and a small, black rubber ball. They play indoors. It is a very fast and tiring sport!

Netball is similar to basketball. There are seven players (usually girls or women) in each team and the object of the game is the same as in basketball: to throw the ball through a net at the top of a three-metre post.

Swimming is very popular in Britain and there are many public swimming baths.

Many British people who live near the sea, a lake or a river enjoy sailing. If you are really enthusiastic, and rich enough to buy your own boat, you can take part in one of the annual sailing races or "regattas" at Cowes, near Portsmouth, for example, or at Henley on the river Thames.

Golf is becoming increasingly popular. Athletics is growing all the time. Winter sports such as skiing are generally impossible in Britain (except in Scotland) owing to the unsuitable climate, but more and more people spend winter holidays on the Continent in order to take part in them.

Sport in British schools is compulsory and schoolchildren spend at least one afternoon a week playing sport. These are some of the sports played in most British secondary schools. In winter boys play football (or "soccer" as it is colloquially called) or rugby and go cross-country running, while girls play netball or hockey. Some boys' schools also teach rowing. In summer boys play cricket, do athletics or go swimming, while girls play rounders (a British version of baseball), do athletics or go swimming. Tennis is also played in summer in some schools by boys and girls.

**SPORT IN THE UNITED STATES**

Baseball is the most popular summer sport in America. The first American baseball match was in 1839 in New York, but some people think that baseball comes from a much older game called rounders, played in Europe for many years.

To play baseball, you need two teams of nine players. The “pitcher” throws the ball, and the “batter” hits it with a bat.

Americans start playing baseball young. There are “leagues” which children of eight can join. The top players become big stars and earn a lot of money every year.

Americans play tennis, hockey and most other international sports, but they do not play football in the same way as the rest of the world. American football is a very different game. The players can run with the ball, touch and push each other. The field looks different and even the ball is a different shape. Players wear special clothes for American football, with helmets on their heads, because the game can be dangerous. Like international football teams, American teams have eleven players.

Basketball is another popular game in America. Only five people play in each team. One American basketball team, the Harlem Globetrotters, are famous all over the world. These extraordinary sportsmen, all very tall, have shown the world that sport can be funny as well as exciting.

Americans love winter sports, and ice hockey is a great favourite. This game, the national sport of Canada, is very fast, and can be dangerous. So if you play hockey, remember to wear your helmet!

**PHYSICAL FITNESS**

Physical fitness is a combination of qualities that enable a person to perform well in vigorous physical activities. These qualities include agility, endurance, flexibility, and strength. Physical fitness and good health are not the same, though each influences the other. Healthy people may be physically unfit because they do not exercise regularly. Physically fit people perform their usual tasks easily without tiring and still have energy for other interests.

Better physical performance is only one benefit of physical fitness. Regular vigorous exercise also increases the efficiency and capacity of the heart and lungs and helps people to maintain their proper weight Individuals who are physically fit tend to be slimmer than those who are unfit. They have greater resistance to disease and recover faster if they do become ill. Physically fit people may be happier and more alert and relaxed. They also may be able to resist the effects of ageing better than those who are physically unfit.

Principles of physical fitness

Physical fitness is a personal responsibility. Few individuals other than athletes and military personnel are actually required to participate in organized fitness programs. Most people are physically unfit simply because they do not get enough exercise. Many do not take the time to exercise, and others try to stay fit with only light, infrequent activity.

A person's physical fitness is determined by such factors as age, heredity, and behavior. Although people cannot control their age or heredity, their behavior can help them to become physically fit and stay that way. Individuals vary greatly in their capacity for physical fitness, but almost anyone can improve by exercising regularly.

The years between adolescence and middle age are the peak period for physical fitness. However, people of all ages can stay fit with good health habits and regular exercise. Any person more than 35 years old, and anyone with a health problem, should consult a physician before beginning a fitness program.

Health habits that aid physical fitness include getting enough sleep, eating properly, receiving regular medical and dental care, and maintaining personal cleanliness. Health can be harmed by such practices as overeating and eating the wrong kinds of foods; smoking and drug abuse, including excessive use of alcohol. Harmful health habits can undo the results of regular exercise.

A person's level of physical fitness depends largely on how frequently and intensely he or she exercises. Most health experts agree that people should exercise at least three times a week to maintain desirable fitness. Improvement occurs faster with more frequent workouts.

**MY FAVOURITE KIND OF SPORT**

**Basketball**

James Naismith invented basketball in 1891. Naismith was a Canadian, but lived in the United States. He was a teacher at Springfield Training School in the state of Massachusetts. He taught sports and found there were no in­teresting games to play indoors in the winter months. So he thought of a game.

Naismith's students played the first game of basketball in the Springfield gym in 1891. There were nine men in each team. They used a soccer ball. They put peach baskets on the gym wall. The goal or purpose of the game was to throw the ball in the basket. That is why he called the game basketball. A man with a ladder went to the basket He climbed the ladder and took the ball out of the basket. Luckily, only one man got the ball into the basket in the first game.

Basketball is a very fast game. Players must run up and down the basket­ball court or gym floor the whole game. At the same time they must control the ball. Today, most players are tall. Many of them are over seven feet tall and weigh more than 200 pounds. But one of basketball's great players was Barney Sedran. He played from 1912 to 1926 and is in the Basketball Hall of Fame. He was only 5 feet 4 inches tall and 118 pounds!

Today, basketball is an international sport. In America, the National Basketball Association (NBA) has some of the best players in the world. Bas­ketball is also an Olympic sport today. In the Olympics, the best teams from many countries play to show they are the best.

**MY FUTURE PROFESSION**

We are students of Physical Culture Faculty of Brest State University. All the students of our University began to go in for different kinds of sport before entering the University. At the University they get different sporting specialities. They specialize in swimming, diving, rowing, sailing, skiing, ska­ting, figure skating, football, basketball, volleyball, handball, tennis, wrestling, boxing, cycling, fencing, gymnastics, weightlifting, track-and-field athletics and others. They dream of becoming first-class sportsmen and therefore they pay great attention to special training lessons in their favourite kinds of sport.

After graduating from the University they become coaches and teachers of physical culture.

Track-and-field athletics is the leading sport in our country.Some millions of young men and girls train in the athletics sec­tions and take part in competitions. It is hard to find a town or a village in our country where people do not go in for track-and field.

Track-and-field athletes practise on the stadiums, in sports halls, Palaces of Sports, etc. This kind of sport includes running, jumping, discuss throwing, hammer throwing, javelin throwing, shot putting, walking, pentathlon, decathlon, etc.. Our track-and-field athletes are in good form and compete in all big national and international contests.

Volleyball is my future speciality. People of all ages easi­ly master it. It is a simple but interesting game which does not require any special equipment or long practical drills. Volley­ball has a beneficial effect upon the health and trains all-ro­und muscular coordination.

Football is a mass sport in our country. It is my favourite kind of sport. The game is played by two teams. Each team con­sists of 11 players. Every team has its captain. Football play­ers are trained on stadiums all year round.

Basketball is rapidly gaining popularity with our youth. It is played on the court by two teams of five players each: two for wards, one centre, two guards. The purpose of each is to throw the ball into the basket of the opponent and to prevent the other team from securing the ball or scoring. Basketball develops many good qualities, such as rapid action, accuracy, agility and the like.

**FAMOUS SPORTSMEN**

**Usain Bolt**

Usain St. Leo Bolt, OJ, C.D. (nicknamed Lightning Bolt, pronounced /ˈjuːseɪn/; born 21 August 1986), is a Jamaican sprinter and a three-time World and Olympic gold medalist. He is the world record and Olympic record holder in the 100 metres, the 200 metres and (along with his teammates) the 4 x 100 metres relay. He is the reigning World and Olympic champion in these three events.

Bolt was born on 21 August 1986 in Sherwood Content, a small town in Trelawny, Jamaica, and grew up with his parents, Wellesley and Jennifer Bolt, his brother Sadeeki, and his sister Sherine. His parents ran the local grocery store in the rural area, and Bolt spent his time playing cricket and football in the street with his brother. As a child, he attended Waldensia Primary and All-age School, and it was here that he first began to show his sprinting potential, running in the annual national primary-schools' meeting for his parish. By the age of twelve, Bolt had become the school's fastest runner over the 100 metres distance. Upon his entry to William Knibb Memorial High School, Bolt continued to focus on other sports, but his cricket coach noticed Bolt's speed on the pitch and urged him to try track and field events. Bolt won his first annual high school championships medal in 2001, taking the silver medal in the 200 metres with a time of 22.04 seconds.

Then Bolt distinguished himself with a 200 m gold medal at the 2002 World Junior Championships, making him the competition's youngest-ever gold medalist. In 2004 he became the first junior sprinter to run the 200 m in under 20 seconds with a time of 19.93 s, breaking the previous world junior record.

His 2008 season began with his first world record performance—a 100 m world record of 9.72 s—and culminated in world and Olympic records in both the 100 m and 200 m events at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics. He ran 9.69 s for the 100 m and 19.30 s in the 200 m, and also set a 4×100 m relay record of 37.10 s with the Jamaican team. This made him the first man to win three sprinting events at a single Olympics since Carl Lewis in 1984, and the first man to set world records in all three at a single Olympics.

***HOME READING***

IMPORTANCE OF THE OLYMPICS

For centuries, the Olympic Games were considered the most important and prestigious celebration of all Panhellenic festivals. Combining the different mythological, historical and archaeological strings, it seems probable to assume that already by the late 8th century BC Olympia became a site that attracted a lot of visitors from different areas of Greece.

The emergence of city-states in the Greek world was paralleled by an ex­pansion of organized athletic activities. Greeks organized special festivals in order to hold athletic events: these ranged from small-scale contests to national-wide games. Among the lat­ter, the Olympic and Pythian festivals were in the top rank, attracting people from almost all Greek cities. Hostili­ties were suspended during the Olym­pic festival which added glory to the games and ensured its fame through­out the Greek world. Every city-state was ambitious to claim as many Olym­pic victors as it could and this resulted in issuing several laws to encourage athletism.

To gain victory became a major achievement that gave credits not only to the athlete but to his city as well.

The main con­cern of those competing, however, was not to develop one specific physical ability at the expense of others, but to succeed with a balanced development of all physical and moral values.

Then, it was the moral reward that made the victory worthy of all efforts and physical pain. Victory was the high­est honor for a mortal to attain; for his fame became immortal thanks to the gods who preferred him and helped him to win. The favor of the gods and the wide recognition the victor gained for his city was the highest prize that made the obsessive passion of Greeks for contest ("agon") worthy of all efforts.

Lastly, it was the challenge for the Greek world to promote cooperation and exhibit political unity.

**WHO COULD PARTICIPATE**

Any Greek could participate in the Panhellenic Olympics. The geographic range of par­ticipants stretched from Sicily to the Black Sea. According to Olympic rules, slaves and barbaroi, non-Greeks, could not compete at the games. In addi­tion, any man who had commit­ted a crime or stolen from a temple was barred from participation. Married women could not enter the Olympic stadium or attend the games, although young girls were welcomed. According to Pausanias, punishment for a woman attending the Olympic was to be thrown off mount Typaeum. One woman, Kallipateira, defied the rule by disguising herself as a trainer so she could watch her son compete. She had trained him following her husband's death. Kallipateira was so elated when her son won that she jumped over the barrier that enclosed the trainers' area and lost her clothing. Her identity revealed, Kallipateira faced certain death. Hap­pily, because her father, three brothers, nephew, and son were Olympic victors, the officials pardoned her in honor of her victorious family.

The athletes themselves were bound by more specific rule of participation and conduct. Every athlete participating in the game had to arrive in Elis at least one month prior to the start of the games and remain in Elis to train under the watchful eye of the Elean judges until the games began. Unlike in the modem games, in which Olympic trials determine who competes in Olympic competition, ancient games served as a weeding-out period in which the judges se­lected who would and would not participate, based on each aspirant's level of training. During this period, the judges also divided athletes into age groups.

**CHANGES IN THE ATHLETIC SPIRIT**

The spread of the Hellenis­tic culture and the new eco­nomic, political, and social conditions following the cam­paign of Alexander the Great, led to important changes of the athletic spirit and the ideolog­ical content of the games.

The number of athletic fes­tivals and institutions in­creased at the new Greek centers. New games were established in different city-states of the Hellenistic world. The number of professional athletes coming from Alexandria and the East increased and monetary prizes became a common rule.

Athletism became an important component in social life and education. The Greeks who lived in Asia and Egypt, in an effort to hold on to their culture, built athletic facilities and con­tinued their athletic traditions. The gymnasium was not only the physical place for training, but a place where Greeks could meet, thus preserving their language and customs throughout Asia.

The bond between religion and the athletic ideal ceased to exist and the games now turned into secular events. Victory was more linked to the athlete's personal effort and less to the assistance of gods.

In the Roman period, the athlet­ic ideal changed once more. For the Romans, the contests were specta­cles, performances and not com­petitions among all citizens. Usually the athletes were slaves or gladiators. The higher class Romans were unwilling to display themselves publicly which displayed a negative attitude towards athletism. Olympia ceased to be the center of the ancient world and the games were now instituted in honor of the Roman emperor.

1. What place became the site of the Olympic Games and when did it happen?
2. Who couldn’t compete in the games?
3. What rules of participating were established in ancient Greece?
4. How did the games change during the rule of Alexander the Great?
5. How did the games change in the Roman period?

**Olympic Games Then and Now**

**THE ORIGIN OF THE OLYMPICS**

The Achaeans in Homer's text were warriors by trade and athletes by accident of their physi­cal conditioning as combatants. But, as Greece became more settled and the warrior life declined, exercise for physical fitness was introduced, and gymnasiums, stadiums, and training facilities were built by Greek city-states. During the colo­nization period of 750 to 550 BC, the aristocrat­ic ideals of physical fitness and intellectual prowess were adopted by all classes. This relatively settled period ushered in the era of organized, all-inclusive athletic and musical competitions in which both mind and body were tested. These competitions were open to all that could afford training, and even to those who could not, since a city-state would sponsor an athlete so that he might bring glory to his hometown. Numerous local music and athletic festivals in honor of a patron god or goddess provided ample opportu­nities for athletes or musicians to prove their prowess and bring honor to their community.

Despite our knowledge of these competitions, not much is really known about the origins of the Olym­pic games or why they were the most prestigious. Pausanias said that the games trace their origins back before recorded history when Cronos wrestled Zeus at Olympia. Several myths tell of the founding of the games by ancient he­roes. And, of course, Strabo tells of an Eleans myth that says Zeus founded the games.

One difference between the ancient and mod­ern Olympic Games is that the ancient games were played within the context of a religious fes­tival. The Games were held in honor of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods, and a sacrifice of 100 oxen was made to the god on the middle day of the festival. Athletes prayed to the gods for victory, and made gifts of animals, produce, or small cakes, in thanks for their successes.

According to legend, the altar of Zeus stood on a spot struck by a thunderbolt, which had been hurled by the god from his throne high atop Mount Olympus, where the gods as­sembled. Some coins from Elis had a thunderbolt design on the reverse, in honor of this legend.

OLYMPICS REBIRTH

The idea of the Olympic Games absolutely captivated the modern 19th century nation-states. In symbolic terms, these Games were the celebration of modem societies, which faced the new era with optimism and faith for the future. It was also the reassurance of the heritage of the Greek classical culture. The atmosphere of these days proves the effort put in identifying the two cultures, classical and modem

"In order to purify the notion of ri­valry and to transform it into noble con­test, the representatives of all the nations chose one method: the creation of competitions at regular periodical intervals at which representatives of all countries and all sports would be invited under the aegis of the same au­thority, which would impact to them a halo of grandeur and glory, that is the patronage of classical antiquity. To do this was to revive the Olympic Games: the name imposed itself: it was not even possible to find another." - Baron Pierre de Coubertin, 1896

The text illustrates what the 19th century believed about the revival of the Olympic Games. Still, it says nothing about the first attempts of the Greeks to revive the Olympic Games, long before Baron De Coubertin was born. Many years later, in 1896, the First International Olympic Games took place in Athens, the first Olym­pic city. The choice of Athens was a symbolical act of recognition of the Hellenic contribution to Western cul­ture and civilization.

In the 19th century, the social for­mation of national states was ideally right for the acceptance of the Olym­pic Ideas in a new national context.

**INNOVATING SPIRIT**

Many people contributed to the realization of the Olympic Games.

**Baron Pierre de Coubertin** may be the famous person behind the ac­tual revival of the modern Olympic Games as we know them today; but if we read back in recent history we will discover that two attempts were made, primarily by a Greek named Evangelis Zappas and later on by an English doctor named William Pen­ny Brooks.

**Zappas** organized four venues un­der a different name that we know to­day as "the Olympic Games". He had named the venue as "Olympia" but they had been terminated by 1859. Research in Greece, Germany and the United Stales have found and record­ed the effort of Evangelis Zappas and recognized his input and efforts in the revival of the Games in 1896.

**William Brooks** wrote an article that was published in a Greek newspaper in 1881 that proposed the staging of the International Olympic Games in Athens. Brooks admired the Greeks, he was a known "philhellen" that organized "Olympic Games" in his area. Match Welock in England created an "Olympic Company" and an extracurricular educa­tional program under the name "Olympic Class".

The Baron Coubertin visited William Brooks in England where the latter expressed his ideas on the Olympic Games. The Baron forwarded the ideas at the "Sorbonne Convention" where he spoke on the "study of the principles of athleticism"

At this convention, Greece was represented by a world renowned novelist, Demetricos Vikellas who acted on his behalf and managed to alter the pre-agreed staging of the first Olympic Games in Paris 1900, to Athens, four years earlier.

Baron Coubertin recognized Demetrios Vikellas as the person who proposed that the first Games should be held in Athens. This decision as we will see is considered to be a milestone for the successful continuation of the Games.

1. Who helped poor athletes take part in the games?
2. What is the difference between ancient and mod­ern Olympic Games?
3. Where and when did the first mod­ern Olympic Games take place?
4. What was Baron Pierre de Coubertin’s contribution into the revival of the Games?
5. What decision is considered to be a milestone for the continuation of the Games?

**CAN VITAMINS HELP?**

For a long time, the only voices endorsing nutritional supplements belonged to the people who sold them. In the opposite camp stood the guardians of the nation's well-being, including the Surgeon General, the National Research Council, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Their position remains that a balanced diet provides all the nutrients needed for good health.

In recent years, however, some scientists have jumped ship. They point to mounting evidence that cer­tain vitamins and other nutrients may offer protection against cancer, cataracts, Parkinson's disease, and other disorders. They speculate that extra doses of those nutrients may slow the aging process. And, while few go so far as to make public recommendations, they freely admit that popping pills has become part of their own daily routine.

**The pills they take are antioxidants—for the most part, vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene, a sub­stance partially converted to vitamin A in the body. (Vitamin A itself does not have antioxidant activity.) Antioxidants are thought to be protective largely because they can inactivate free radicals, destructive molecules that can damage cells.**

**Those who take antioxidants to slow the aging process admit they're on somewhat shaky ground. "It1 s banking on an aging mechanism that hasn't been proven," says biologist David Harrison of The Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, Maine. Nonetheless, like several scientists we contacted, he takes a supplement regimen that includes vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, and a multiple-vitamin tablet "I'm not sure it does any good, but I'm certainly not sure that it doesn't"**

**The case for antioxidants as an anti-aging remedy is still speculative. Attempts to use them to extend lifespan in animals have been largely unsuccessful. But several converging lines of evidence suggest antioxidants may help stave off diseases of aging.**

Free-radical damage has been implicated by some studies in diseases such as cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, cataracts, and cardiovascular disease. High levels of antioxidants—measured both in the diet and in the blood—have been associated with lower rates of these illnesses. "Whether we look at animal or cell culture studies, at population comparisons or intervention trials, we see the same relationship between antioxidants and protection from disease," says Dr. Jeffrey Blumberg, associate director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University.

Moreover, he notes, it appears that the higher the antioxidant level, the lower the risk of disease, and vice-versa. In some studies of diet and cancer, for instance, people with the lowest intake of beta-carotene had up to seven times the lung-cancer risk of those with the highest intake. In other reports, people with the diets richest in vitamin C were at the lowest risk for cancer of the stomach, oral cavity, and esophagus. And in a large study of 16 European populations, there was a strong correlation between high blood levels of vitamin E and a lower risk of death from coronary disease.

The next step is to give volunteers antioxidants in experimental programs and see whether their rates of disease are lower than average. Many such trials, including a dozen sponsored by the National Cancer Institute, are now attempting to provide that link.

The Physicians Health Study, a major ongoing project administered by Harvard Medical School, recently turned up an unexpected, hopeful finding about beta-carotene and heart disease—a finding the researchers stumbled on while testing beta-carotene as a cancer preventive. The investigators gave beta-carotene to half of the 22,000 physicians in the study. After six years, the researchers found that in a subgroup of 333 men who had signs of coronary disease before entering the study, those receiving beta-carotene experienced half as many cardiovascular "events" such as heart attack and stroke. If s premature to conclude that beta-carotene protects the heart but the study offers a tantalizing lead for further testing.

In another promising intervention study, at Tufts University, healthy elderly individuals given vitamin E supplements showed significant improvements in immune function, which typically declines with age.

**How much is enough?**

Even at this early stage, the evidence raises important questions about how much of those nutrients we need and the best way to get them. Traditionally, vitamins have been recommended in amounts sufficient to prevent deficiency diseases such as scurvy and rickets.

Current work on antioxidants suggests to some researchers that doses higher than the RDAs (Recommended Dietary Allowances) may be best for disease prevention. Most clinicians advise that we get those extra nutrients from our diets, because most studies have examined antioxidants in foods rather than supplements. "We know that vegetables high in beta-carotene are protective, but we don't know if the benefit is from the beta-carotene or some other component," explains Dr. Judith Hallfrish, research leader of the carbohydrate nutrition lab at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Loading up on fruits and vegetables is certainly good advice. Yellow and green leafy vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, squash, cantaloupe, spinach, and broccoli, are rich in beta-carotene; green leafy ones are also high in vitamin E. Good sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits and juices, strawberries, broccoli, brussels sprouts, and sweet red peppers.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, a joint effort of the Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, recommends at least three daily servings of vegetables and two of fruit By one estimate, those intakes can provide as much as two to four times the U.S. RDAs for vitamins E and C, plus five or she milligrams of beta-carotene. However, some researchers believe even those levels are too low to afford optimal protection from disease.

Moreover, for most Americans, obtaining those nutrients from food alone would entail a profound dietary change. In one large national food-consumption survey, only 9 percent of participants met the fruit and vegetable guidelines cited above. Other surveys indicate a substantial gap between the typical daily intake of antioxidants and the levels Dr. Blumberg estimates may be optimal for disease prevention, based on the scientific literature. The average intake of beta-carotene is approximately two milligrams, well below the 25-mg level that he believes may be protective and that other researchers are using in clinical trials. The average intake of vitamin C, about 100 mg, is also well below the 500 mg Blumberg says may be optimal.

It’s virtually impossible to get what appears to be an optimal dose of vitamin E—between 100 I.U. and 400 I.U. daily—by diet alone. In some population studies, notes Dr. Blumberg, individuals with the lowest risk of disease had blood levels of vitamin E high enough to suggest they were taking supplements.

“It may be true you can get the RDAs if you improve your diet,” says Dr. William Pryor, a biochemist at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, and a prominent free-radical researcher. "But if you believe pharmacologic levels of vitamins can protect against disease, you're talking about supplements."

**What to do?**

A growing number of researchers now believe that, in addition to loading your diet with fruits and vegetables, taking antioxidant pills may be a reasonable move. Even the relatively high doses used by these scientists appear to be safe; the levels of vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene they consider optimal have not been associated with adverse effects. (In contrast, higher doses of vitamin C—more than 1000 milligrams a day—may cause diarrhea and other problems. And high doses of some other vitamins, notably vitamin A and vitamin D, have been shown to cause harm.)

As for price, an RDA-level multivitamin and mineral supplement, plus additional doses of vitamins E and C and beta-carotene, totals about a quarter a day.

Nevertheless, CU’s medical consultants are not yet ready to recommend supplements for general population. No one has yet proven the theory that antioxidants slow aging and fight disease by protecting the body from free radicals, although evidence is accumulating. Very few studies so far have examined the effects of supplement intake directly, and prospective clinical trials are still essential.

In addition, there's the nagging fact that the vitamin industry remains completely unregulated: No Government safeguard guarantees that the doses in pills match what's promised on the label. Researchers have found many vitamin supplements contain lower doses than the label claims.

1. What evidence in favour of vitamins do scientists prove?
2. Why are antioxidants considered to be protective?
3. How does the colour of fruit and vegetables influence the vitamins they contain?
4. Has it been proved that antioxidants slow aging?
5. What have researchers found about vitamin supplements?

***TEXTS FOR ANNOTATION***

**Colored Rings**

Baron Pierre de Coubertin conceived the main symbol of the International Olympic Committee, the colored rings. Ac­cording to Coubertin every one of the five rings symbolized the five continents. The conjunction of the five rings symbolized the conjunction of the continents during the athletic events and represents the ideal of peace and brotherhood of the whole planet.

The top three circles, from left to right, are blue, black and red. The bottom two circles, from left to right are yellow and green.

The five rings and their colors represent the 5 continents of the world:

Blue represents Europe, black represents Africa, red represents America, yellow represents Asia, green represents Oceania.

Another reason de Coubertin chose these colors was that every country in the world uses at least one of those colors on their official flag.

Many people’s favourite hobby is sport. They spend much of their spare time playing team games like football or baseball, games for two or four people, like tennis, or golf or practising an individual sport like running, parachuting or swimming. People practise a sport for a need to keep fit.

Today people continue leading sedentary life and many of them would like to change it. Since our life no longer provides enough exercise we should include it deliberately into our everyday routines. The man or woman who takes regular sport or exercise will stay physically fit, and perhaps, most important to many people, keep a youthful shape and stamina.

But fitness comes not just from some exercises done now and then but from the way you live all the time. Good eating habits, wise drinking habits, regular sleeping habits, and plenty of fresh air are all important parts of the way to keep fit. Start doing all this and you will feel and see the benefits.

**RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS**

Rhythmic gymnastics is the performance of systematic physical exercise with the aid of such hand apparatuses as ropes, hoops, balls, clubs, and ribbons. It is closely related to women's artistic gymnastics and, like synchronized swimming, is allied with dance. The sport dates from the 18th century; and, although some gymnasts participated at the Olympic Games from 1948 to 1956 in individual and group exercises, it was not until the 1984 Olympiad that individual competition became an official competitive event. The 1996 Olympics was the first to include group competition. World championships have been held biannually, in a succession of host cities, since 1963.

An individual routine is performed by one gymnast with one apparatus, whereas a group routine is performed by five gymnasts with either five pairs of clubs or with two hoops and three ribbons for 2 to 3 minutes. There are no compulsory elements at the elite and international levels in rhythmic gymnastics, although at least two superior moves (three at the Olympics) and six elements of difficulty are expected to be executed in any one exercise.

***ГРАММАТИЧЕСКИЙ МАТЕРИАЛ ДЛЯ САМОСТОЯТЕЛЬНОГО ИЗУЧЕНИЯ***

Существительное: множественное число существительных, притяжательный падеж.

Определенный, неопределенный, нулевой артикль.

Личные, притяжательные, указательные, относительные, вопросительные, неопределенные местоимения

Прилагательные, степени сравнения прилагательных

Наречие, степени сравнения наречий.

Формальные признаки сказуемого: позиция в предложении (повествовательном, вопросительном)

Временная система изъявительного наклонения.

Согласование времен изъявительного наклонения.

Условное наклонение.

Неличные формы глагола: причастия настоящего и прошедшего времени, отглагольное прилагательное, деепричастие.

Строевые слова – средства связи между элементами предложения

Долженствование / необходимость / желательность

Причинно-следственные отношения – придаточные предложения (причины, следствия).

Долженствование / необходимость / желательность / возможность действия – модальные глаголы

Структура сложноподчиненного предложения.

Побуждение к действию/просьба – глагол в повелительной форме

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