

Name _____

The Ancient Origins of the Olympic Games

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Possible Answer: The sacred truce, known as "Ekecheiria," was a crucial aspect of the ancient Olympic Games. It was a temporary ceasefire declared during the games, allowing safe travel to and from Olympia. This truce contributed to the success of the event by ensuring the participation of athletes and spectators from various Greek city-states without the fear of conflict. It promoted peaceful competition, unity, and the spirit of the games, emphasizing the importance of cultural and athletic exchange over war and disputes.
2. Possible Answer: The decline of the ancient Olympics began in the 4th century AD and was influenced by several factors, including the rise of Christianity, which led to a decrease in the popularity of pagan festivals. The ancient Olympics were associated with pagan traditions and religious ceremonies, which clashed with the growing influence of Christianity. As a result, the games lost their cultural significance and support. The official ban on the games by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, as part of his efforts to suppress pagan traditions, marked the end of the ancient Olympics.
3. Possible Answer: As an ancient Greek athlete, my training regimen would be intense and physically demanding. I would focus on endurance and strength, practicing the specific skills required for my chosen event, such as running, jumping, or wrestling. If I were to compete in the stadion race, I would train for the 192-meter footrace.

Victory in the ancient Olympics would be of great personal significance as it would bring honor and prestige to me as an athlete. Winning an olive wreath and being celebrated as a hero upon my return home would be a source of immense pride. Moreover, victory would also bring honor to my hometown, and my success would be celebrated by the entire community, boosting its reputation.

4. Possible Answer: The cultural legacy of the ancient Olympics is significant and has left a lasting impact on modern sporting events. Elements like the Olympic flame, which symbolizes purity and the continuity of the ancient games, have been incorporated into the modern Olympics. The emphasis on excellence, fair competition, and the celebration of athletes' achievements remains a core value of the Olympics today. The ancient games laid the foundation for the modern Olympics, which have grown into a global celebration of sport, unity, and peace, just as the ancient Olympics did in their time.

