

Monday. This week we will be reading about the history of the Olympics to link with our school PE Olympics.



Day 1 –Read the text and write down any words that you are unsure of.

## **How did the Olympic games begin?**

The Greeks loved sport and the Olympic Games were the **biggest** sporting event in the ancient calendar. The Olympic Games began over 2,700 years ago in Olympia, in south west Greece. Every **four years**, around 50,000 people came from all over the Greek world to watch and take part. The ancient games were also a religious festival, held in honour of **Zeus**, the king of the gods.

There were no gold, silver and bronze medals. Winners were given a **wreath of leaves** and a **hero's welcome** back home. Athletes competed for the glory of their city and winners were seen as being touched by the gods. The Greeks loved sport and the Olympic Games were the **biggest** sporting event in the ancient calendar.

Before the games began, **messengers** were sent out to announce a 'sacred truce' or a peace. This meant that any wars should be called off so that people could travel safely to Olympia. The entire games were dedicated to Zeus. Visitors flocked to see the Temple of Zeus. Inside stood a huge gold and ivory statue of the king of the gods himself.

The main event at the Olympics was not a sporting event, but a **sacrifice**. On the third day of the games, 100 oxen were sacrificed and burnt on the Altar of Zeus.

This altar was not made from stone. Instead it was made from the leftover ash of all the sacrificed oxen. By around 200AD, the mound of ash stood six meters high!