

This set of 6 guided reading play scripts, written by Sue Russell, follows the history of the Olympic Games through from ancient to modern times.

Find out about the amazing stars of the Olympics. Read about triumph and tragedy, elation and despair – it’s all there in stories that range from totally unbelievable to just plain bizarre!

This collection, however, not only covers the stories of the stars but also the stories of nations – and their struggle on the world scene. In the perfect world, sport would be totally separate from world events and divisions – but not so in real life. So we find many ‘stars’ caught up in issues totally beyond their control – and in some cases, with tragic circumstances. But against all the odds, man proves himself again and again incredibly resilient, proudly living up to the motto of the Olympic Games : “Citius, Altius, Fortius” – Faster, Higher, Stronger.

This motto is the title of the Olympic Ode (up to 30 speaking parts, divided up into 3 parts: Faster, Higher and Stronger) which is available off Sue Russell’s website www.plays-r-ussell.com along with her Class Play version of these Guided Reading scripts.

Sample Texts:

1 The Olympics – Ancient and Modern

Speakers:

<u>‘Ancient’</u>	<u>‘Modern’</u>
Sostratos (wrestler/boxer)	Rower
Leonidas (runner)	Swimmer
Kallipateira (boxer’s mother)	Gymnast

Leonidas: First there was a one length of the stadium sprint. Then two, and then the long-distance race of 20 to 24 lengths. I was champion of all *three* races at 4 different Games, so I was something of a hero in my home city of Rhodes!

Gymnast: I wonder what your people would have thought about a race of *26 miles* and run by *women*!

Leonidas: (in disbelief) *Never! 26 miles? Run by women? You’ll be telling me next the whole world can compete!*

Rower: It *can* and *does*! Absolutely *nobody* barred!

Leonidas: And what about the winners? No, don’t tell me. You’re going to tell me there was *more* than one winner to each race?!

Swimmer: Well, in a way I suppose you’re *right*! We *do* award first, second and third places!

Kallipateira: What? With small, medium and large wreaths?

Gymnast: No! With gold, silver and bronze medals!

2. Modern Olympics 1896-1912

Speakers:

Narrator

France America Great Britain

Greece Sweden

Greece: We'll let history be the judge of events in 1908. So to continue, as the Italian runner, Porando Pietri, stumbled towards the finishing line ...

Great Britain: Who should rush to his rescue but us thoughtful Brits! The poor man, nearly dead from exhaustion!

France: I guess those British officials, at the trackside, didn't want a repeat of that run by Pheidippides in 490 B.C.!

Sweden: What? When that Athenian warrior ran all 25 miles from the Battle of Marathon, to give the good news of victory to the people of Athens

Great Britain: Only to keel over, dead from exhaustion, minutes later!

America: Well, that is taking it a *bit* far!

Great Britain: And we certainly didn't want that to happen in London!

France: So those kindly officials just 'helped him across the finishing line'.

Greece: And then what happens? The gold medal was given to the guy who came in *after* him!

3. Modern Olympics 1920 – 1936 (Impact of 2 world wars)

Speakers:

Narrator

Belgium France Netherlands USA Germany

Narrator: What sportsmanship! I like the way we're all talking now! And let's not forget perhaps the greatest all round sportswoman of our time – the amazing Mildred Didrikson!

USA: What a "babe"! All the way from Texas!

Netherlands: Though, as you can tell from her name, with Norwegian blood coursing through her veins!

- France: Just 5 feet 5 inches. But what she lacked in height she certainly made up for in energy!
- USA: People at our Olympics, in 1932, could barely believe what they were seeing – gold in javelin, gold in the 80 meters hurdles, and then almost gold in high jump!
- Germany: How can you have ‘almost gold’? Either you win or you lose!
- Narrator: Well, in Babe’s case she lost, even though she won!
- Germany: You’re losing me!
- Narrator: Well, Babe’s jump was the same as Jean Shiley, but Jean got the gold medal because Babe’s jump wasn’t allowed because she went at it head first!

4. Modern Olympics 1948 – 1964 (End of World Wars – The Soviet Union joins the Games)

Speakers:

Narrator

Great Britain Finland Australia Italy Japan

- Narrator: It truly was amazing how some of these athletes found themselves competing, almost by chance! That great Emil Zatopek only decided at the last moment that he’d take part in the marathon – the first one he’d ever run – and he went on to win it!
- Australia: I heard that the only time he slowed down in the race was to allow another runner to catch up with him, so he could ask him
- Narrator: Let’s hear his exact words ..
- Australia: Which were “Excuse me, I haven’t run a marathon before, but don’t you think we ought to go a bit faster?”!
- Italy: It was said that “he ran like a man with a noose around his neck”!
- Japan: Like he was being tortured!
- Great Britain: He sure lived up to his nickname “the Czech Locomotive” with all his wheezing and panting!

5. Modern Olympics 1968 – 1984 (Tragedy & Triumph)

Speakers:

Narrator

Mexico West Germany Canada U.S.S.R U.S.A.

- Narrator: But perhaps the prize of *the* most outstanding star at that Montreal Olympics has to go to one 14 year old girl, from Romania. A gymnast like Olga Korbut, who again wowed her audiences with her breathtaking performances.
- Canada: Nadia Comaneci! 7 perfect 10's! She sure rattled our scoreboards!
- Narrator: And herself! When she looked up at the end of her performance and saw a 1.0 on the scoreboard, I don't suppose she felt *then* she had *anything* to celebrate!
- Canada: Until the crowd started cheering and she realized she'd scored a perfect 10! Our technology just couldn't keep up with her!
- Narrator: Never before had a gymnast scaled such dizzying heights of success! That poor old scoring board was only designed to go up to 9.9! So when Nadia scored 10, all *it* could do was award her 1.0!

6. Modern Olympics 1988 – 2004 (To the Future)

Speakers:

Narrator

S. Korea

Spain

U.S.A.

Australia

Greece

- Spain: There surely was a real party atmosphere at our Olympics! So many happy world changes to celebrate!
- USA: And our 'Dream Team' in basketball lived up to all expectations – winning all its 8 games. It *really* went for gold - and succeeded!
- Spain: But it wasn't all just about winning. Those world changes we mentioned went way beyond anything that could be accomplished on the race track. And what better way to show this than what happened at our 10,000 meter race.
- Greece: When the winner from Ethiopia, Derartu Tulu, ran her victory lap along with the silver medallist Elana Meyer.
- S. Korea: And why was that significant on the world stage?
- Spain: Because Tulu was a black African whereas Meyer was a white South African. So it was a great symbolic moment, showing a true coming together of folk, previously divided by skin colour.

