**The Olympic Games**

 The Olympic Games are an international sports festival that began in ancient Greece. The original Greek games took place every fourth year for several hundred years until they were brought to an end in the early Christian era.

 Perhaps the main difference between the ancient and modern Olympics is that for the ancient Greeks the games were a way of saluting their gods, when the modern games are a manner of saluting the athletic talents of people of all nations. The original Olympics included competitions in music, oratory and theatre performances. The modern Games haven’t got them, but there are a lot more sports than before. For two weeks and a half any international conflicts must be stopped and replaced with friendly competitions.

 The earliest record of The Olympic Games goes back to 776 BC. Only one athletic event was held in the ancient Olympics – a footrace of about 183 metres. Later the Spartans added pentathlon, wrestling, chariot races and other sports. Only men were allowed to compete or watch the games. In 394 AD the Games were officially ended by the Roman emperor Theodosius, who thought they had pagan meaning.

 Pierre de Coubertin, the young French nobleman, had an idea to bring The Olympic Games

back to life. He managed to organize the first modern Olympic Games in 1896 in Greece. These Games were a success. Athletes from 13 countries competed in 9 sports. The countries agreed that every four years the Olympics would move to other great cities of the world.

 Beginning in 1926 Winter Olympics were included. Now the Winter Games are held two years after the Summer Games. The Olympics are governed by the International Olympic Committee, situated in Lausanne, Switzerland.