



**MAKING  
TRACKS**  
A Youth Engagement Program

An Introduction to the  
**WORLD ATHLETICS  
CHAMPIONSHIPS  
OREGON22**

Grade 3–5



# What is Athletics?

In the United States the word **athletics** means a physical sport or game of any kind. The rest of the world uses the word **athletics** to describe the sport of competing in track and field events, including running races and various competitions in jumping and throwing to see who can run the fastest, jump the longest, or throw the furthest. If you can jump, throw, run, or walk, you have experienced athletics!

People who compete in athletics are called **athletes**. Can you think of your favorite athlete? Are they a track and field athlete, or a different kind of athlete?

There are many different athletics events including short and long distance running events, hurdles, long jump, high jump, pole vault, javelin throw, discuss throw, shotput, and more. What athletics event would you like to try?



The word athlete comes from the Greek word meaning "contest" or "competition".



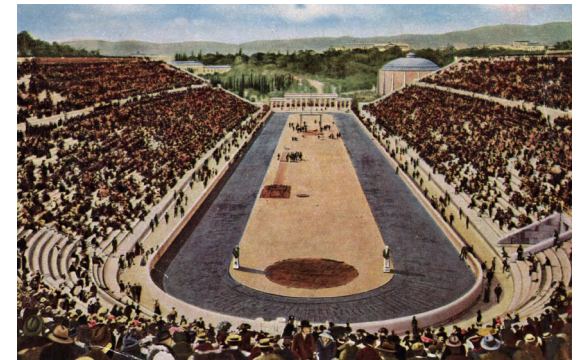
# When and Why did Athletics begin?

Athletics is the oldest sport in history! The Athletic events started in 776 B.C. in Greece. The first athletics competition was the Olympics. These games were created to motivate the men in Ancient Greece to get fit and ready for war. Do you run faster when you run by yourself or when you race someone else?

In the ancient Olympics the best athletes would win olive wreaths, created from the branches of the wild olive trees that grew in Greece. When the modern Olympics began in 1896, athletes began to win **medals, or awards for the top 3 finishers in each event**, just like they still do today! Gold for 1st place, Silver for 2nd place, and Bronze for 3rd place. When the men won an olive wreath in the ancient Olympics they brought honor to their city and family. Today when athletes win a medal, they also bring honor to their country, to their family, and to themselves because it takes much practice and perseverance to become better and better at a sport.

Today, the Olympics is not the only place where athletes compete. Another huge competition for the world's best track and field athletes is the **World Athletics Championships**.

The World Athletics Championships is the 3rd largest sporting event in the world! It is led by an organization called World Athletics. World Athletics chooses which city has the honor to host each World Athletics Championship, the rules of the sport, and makes world records official.



According to the World's Sports Encyclopedia, there are over 8000 sports!



# WHERE is the next World Athletics Championships?

The World is coming to Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon in the summer of 2022 for the World Athletics Championships. This is the first time the World Athletics Championship will be held in the United States!

Eugene, Oregon is located in North America, in the USA, in Oregon, in Lane County. The University of Oregon is where Hayward Field is located.

Eugene is full of history and **culture, or the “way of life” of different groups of people**. Eugene has the nickname “Tracktown, U.S.A” because of its special tradition of Track and Field (or athletics). Two people who helped the sport become so popular in Eugene are Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight. Bill Bowerman was an Olympian in track and field, and a track coach at University of Oregon. He coached Phil Knight. Together they founded Nike. Bill Bowerman also helped create many free track and field meets for the community in Eugene. One of the most famous track and field athletes from Oregon is Steve Prefontaine. He ran long distance races. He was also an Olympian. He is a local hero. The energy that fans create in Hayward Field is known to be “Hayward Magic” How do you think fans can create “magic” in a stadium?



Hayward Field has been around since 1919! It has been home to so many important events. American and world-record holders have trained and competed at Hayward Field.

Since then, Hayward Field has been updated. The stadium now has 12,650 seats. The first major event to be hosted in the updated stadium was the 2020 Olympic Team Trials!



## fun fact:

The University of Oregon's duck mascot was inspired by Walt Disney's Donald Duck! In 1947, the University's athletic director made a handshake deal with Walt Disney that Donald Duck's likeness could be used for the mascot.





# WHO is competing?

The best athletes from all over the world are coming July 15–24, 2022. Who do you think is the fastest runner in your class? Or the highest jumper? Imagine they are the best in the country and they get to represent their hometown and their family! How do you think they might feel? Excited? Nervous? Confident?

Each country has a different way to decide who is the best athlete to send to the World Athletics Championships. Sometimes it is based on time, world ranking, or a championship within their own country.

Athletes from 214 different countries will be competing in the World Athletics Championships. These athletes might come from a country that is a lot different than yours and bring with them a different culture than yours. Can you think of ways to show kindness to someone who might be different than you? One simple way is to share a smile, it's the same in every language!

Those of us who live in Oregon have the unique opportunity to share our own culture with the rest of the world!



**Get ready, get set, go!**

 **fun fact:**

Over 2,000 athletes will come to Oregon for the World Athletics Championships.



# Discussion Questions

1. What do you know about athletics? What do you want to know more about? Have you ever competed in an event similar to an athletics competition? Have you ever watched athletics on TV?
2. Where did the first athletics events start? Why did athletics start in Ancient Greece? How are our athletics events today different from those in Ancient Greece? Are there any similarities?
3. What do you know about Eugene? Where is Eugene, Oregon and what is it known as? What makes Eugene and Hayward Field important or special? What athletics events have taken place here?
4. With what you know about Oregon or the United States, what places would you recommend to an athlete while they're visiting? How would you describe Oregon or the United States to someone who has never been here before?



## Activity Ideas

Explore what the different athletics events are by clicking through these explanations: <https://www.worldathletics.org/our-sport>.

Create an “athletics event” for students to participate in. An easy one is measuring how far you can jump. Lay out a measuring tape or other distance measure, and let each student see how far they can jump. Other “events” could be farthest throw with a tennis ball or softball, fastest lap, highest jump, etc. Compare your measurements to some of the world records and top performances in the world for perspective.

Go on a virtual tour of the Museum of World Athletics!

<https://www.worldathletics.org/heritage>

Explore world geography with this World Athletics Geography Worksheet.

<https://www.worldathletics.org/news/series/athletics-geography-activity>

Explore Oregon geography and history with Travel Oregon’s kids activities.

<https://traveloregon.com/things-to-do/trip-ideas/parents-guide-oregon-activities-home/>