



# REPRESENTATION MATTERS

GRADE  
4-5



## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

A key Olympic value is that of fair play. The equal representation of women in the Olympic movement has been an uphill battle starting in Ancient Greece and carrying on into the Modern Olympics. All of that will change at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games where there will be the same number of men and women competing. This resource explores the impact that equal representation will have on female athletes and those they inspire to be active and play sports.

### 1 CONNECTING BUILDING A FOUNDATION FOR NEW LEARNING

#### JOURNALING

**Write about a time when you felt excluded or left out of an activity.** What happened? How did it make you feel? Did you think it was fair?

#### CLASS DISCUSSION

If the students feel comfortable sharing, discuss the times that they felt excluded. As a class, **brainstorm some of the emotions** that exclusion creates. **Discuss whether or when exclusion is fair?**

Discrimination is when people are either excluded or treated differently because of their gender, age, ethnicity, or disability. Can your students think of instances of discrimination?

### 2 PROCESSING USING STRATEGIES TO ACQUIRE AND USE KNOWLEDGE

#### READ THE STORY

Ask the students to **read the article** on their own. Then read the article as a whole class.

#### LETTER OF SUPPORT

There are still sports or events not included in the Olympic Games or that are only included for either men or women. **Write a letter** to the International Olympic Committee to convince them to include a new sport that should be available to both men and women. Explain why it should be included and why male and female athletes should be able to participate.



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### 3 TRANSFORMING SHOWING UNDERSTANDING IN A NEW WAY

It is not just sport that has excluded people or treated them differently because of gender. This is called discrimination, and it can happen due to gender, age, disability, or ethnicity. Brainstorm examples of discrimination, making a list on the whiteboard.

#### ★ ANYONE CAN PLAY

Sometimes students are not included in playground games. They are excluded by their peers from participating in activities or games. **Discuss this problem** as a class, emphasizing how this often starts when children are very young.

As a class, **brainstorm how they could promote inclusion** to students in the younger grades. **List different activities or ways that they can model inclusive play** to the younger grades.

As a class, **develop a poster campaign** to encourage K-3 students to change their play practices to avoid excluding some of their classmates.

#### ⚡ EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Help your class organize recess activities for the younger grades. The easiest way to start is to teach them some new games during physical education class. Tag games are great for this because everyone is involved at once. Try to avoid elimination games. Work with them to adapt the activities for students with diverse abilities. Remember, the goal is to help them model and teach inclusion to the younger students.



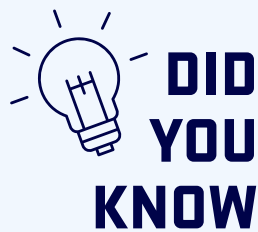
# ARTICLE

No one likes playing a game or sport that isn't fair. It's no fun when the rules aren't applied evenly and when some people don't have a chance to win. The only thing worse than an unfair game, is not even being allowed to play.

This was the case for most of Olympic history. Women were not allowed to compete. Fortunately, things have been changing for the better. At the Paris 2024 Olympics there will be the same number of female and male Olympians competing. This will be the first time. It is called gender parity.

The Olympics began in ancient Greece in 776 BC. Every four years, athletes from the different cities would gather for competitions. It was a time of feasting, the arts, and sports. Any male who was not a slave could take part. Married women could not even watch.

The Modern Olympic Games started in the 1890s. At the time, the Olympic Games were set up to help boys become strong and brave, like knights. That's one of the reasons why girls didn't take part.



## A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

Women don't have the same chances to play professional sports as men. There are professional women's leagues for basketball, soccer, hockey, and some other sports. However, the games are often not televised or promoted. There are fewer teams, and the players are not paid as much as the men. Women often must create their own chances to play like the new Women's Premier Soccer League Canada. Sports like athletics or swimming have the same prize money for men and women. This gives all athletes the same chances to make a living from their sport.

Women could not compete in the first Olympic Games. Paris hosted the second Olympics in 1900. But only 22 women competed, and they could only do five sports.

More sports were added for women at each new Olympics. Fencing, swimming, track and field, and gymnastics were the next to be included. Now women do every Olympic event that men do.

Up until the last Olympics, women couldn't compete in canoeing. Athletes like Katie Vincent pushed hard to have it included. After years of fighting for the right to compete, Katie and her teammate won a bronze medal.

*"As a female athlete," she explains, "it is important to me that Paris will be the first Olympic Games with the same number of women as men. I have fought for my entire career so that females can compete."*

Katie understands the impact that equality has on the Olympics and sport. *"It means that sport is finally a place for everyone. Hopefully, nations will encourage more young girls to do sport."*

Girls drop out of sports much earlier than boys. Some people believe that one of the reasons might be that there are not as many role models for girls in sports. Girls don't see a future in sport.





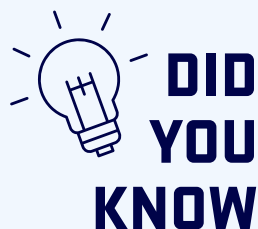
# ARTICLE

Christine Sinclair is one of Canada's most well-known athletes. She is an Olympic gold medalist and was the long-time captain of the Canadian women's soccer team. She is excited about seeing more women at the Olympics.

*"Until the age of 13 or 14," she recalls, "I really didn't have any female athletes to look up to. Women's sport wasn't promoted back then. I never thought a career in sport was a real option."*

For Christine, the power of sport goes beyond winning and losing. It's more than organized sports.

*"When it comes to the young athletes, I encourage them to have fun," says Christine. "Fun is what has allowed me to play professionally for over 20 years. It always puts a smile on my face if I see kids playing football at recess."*



## BEING SEEN

The more people watch women play professional sports, the more opportunities women will have. The media and sponsors track the size of the audience at sports events. The more a sporting event is watched, the more they want to support it in the future.

You and your family can help. Go to a women's game or watch women's sport on TV. By being part of the audience, you show the media and sponsors that people care about women's sports.

It is inspiring to watch athletes compete at the Olympics. We are challenged to be the best we can be, to stay healthy, and to be active. More girls drop out of sport and activity than boys. Could part of the reason that girls drop out of sport more than boys be because they don't see as many women playing sport on TV?

*"Almost three quarters of all sports on TV feature men," notes Ophélie Etienne, bronze medal swimmer. "If we want to inspire young girls to do sports, we have to show as much women's sports as men's."*

When girls see women athletes competing at the Olympics, they believe that sport has a future for them. This inspires more girls to be active. It encourages more people to play sports.

*"It's a great victory for equality, to know that as many women as men will take part in the next Olympic Games."*

— **Ophélie Etienne**

Olympic Bronze Medalist, natation France





BRING THE EXCITEMENT OF THE  
OLYMPIC MOVEMENT TO THE CLASSROOM

