



REPRESENTATION MATTERS

GRADE
6-7



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.

THE ROAD TO OLYMPIC INCLUSION

Since the modern Olympic Games began, women have been arguing for greater inclusion. They have fought hard for more female representation at the Games.

Place the students in small groups of two to four. Give the students fifteen minutes of internet time to find what they can about when women were allowed to compete in the different sports. What were the reasons used to keep women from participating in some of the Olympic sports? Also, research sports that are only for men or only for women. Are there reasons why these sports are only done by one gender?

After this research blitz, **discuss their findings as a class.** Were there sports that were more difficult to have added for women? Why are some sports different for men and women?





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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.

★ THE BIG CAMPAIGN

Often discrimination is addressed when groups of people make others aware of an injustice. They campaign or fight for changes to rules, the way we think, or the practices that are common in how things are done.

Working in groups of three to four, students identify one example of discrimination that they feel is particularly unjust. **The project is to develop a campaign to raise awareness for this discrimination, and to suggest ways that it could be changed.**

Campaign activities could include posters, speeches, videos, songs, or a class debate. Some groups might be adequately challenged with posters, while others might be ready to video a message or public service announcement. Select activities that best fit the maturity and skills of your students.

⚡ EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Invite another class to see and hear the student campaigns. Share the passion for justice that emerges from this activity with another group of their peers.





ARTICLE

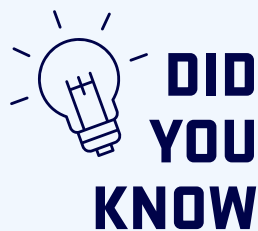
No one likes playing a game or sport that isn't fair. It's no fun when the rules aren't applied evenly and when some people don't have a chance to win. The only thing worse than an unfair game, is not even being allowed to play.

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.

Pierre de Coubertin was the father of the Modern Olympic Games. In the beginning, Coubertin's Olympic project aimed to mold young boys into true knights, strong and brave. Initially, girls and workers were not part of the plan. The first Modern Olympic Games in 1896 had no women competing.

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN



Equal opportunities for play remain a problem in professional sport. Women often don't have the same opportunities to play professional sports as men. Women have professional leagues for basketball, soccer, or other sports. But these are not as big or well publicized as the men's leagues. Their games are often not televised or promoted. There are fewer teams, and the players get paid much less than men playing the same sport. Women have been working hard to create opportunities like the new Women's Premier Soccer League Canada. Sports like athletics or swimming have equal prize money for men and women. This gives all athletes the same chances to make a living from their sport.

Paris hosted the second Olympics in 1900. Only 22 women competed in 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.

Katie Vincent knows what it is like to have her sport not represented. Canoeing wasn't an Olympic sport for women until the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. The athletes pushed hard to have it included in the Olympics. After years of fighting for the right to compete, Katie won a bronze medal with her teammate, Laurence Vincent Lapointe.

"As a female athlete," she explains, "it is really important to me that the Paris Olympics will be the first Olympic Games with the same number of women as men. I have fought for my entire career so that females are equally represented in sports."

Katie understands the impact that equality has on the Olympics and sport as a whole. *"It means that sport is finally a place for everyone. Hopefully it affects how nations empower young girls in sport."*





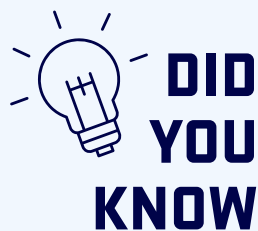
ARTICLE

Often, girls drop out of sports much earlier than boys. There are not as many sports role models for girls, and this makes it difficult for girls to see a future in sport. Christine Sinclair is an Olympic gold medalist and 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 as much back then. I never really 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.”

Representation at the Olympics matters. The Olympics is the most famous sports event in the world, and this will inspire more girls and women to be active and do 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

