



HOW TO COMPETE AT THE ANCIENT OLYMPICS

You have landed on a running track in a huge stadium, which is packed with noisy spectators on all sides. It's day one of the Ancient Olympiad, the biggest festival in Ancient Greece, celebrated in honour of Zeus, King of the Greek Gods.

Just like the Olympics in modern times, the Olympiad is held every four years, but always here in the city of Olympia. The festival is considered so important that wars between cities are stopped so that the athletes can travel safely to the games.

FIGHTING FIT

Nervously, you line up with a group of boys who are about your age and size. They're all warming up for a 192-metre sprint from one end of the stadium to the other.

The Ancient Greeks think being fit and healthy is very important. All boys in Ancient Greece do a lot of athletic training, and these are the cream of the crop. They've been training hard for months in a place called the *palaistra*, the wrestling school. They have been eating healthily and working hard – which means you're up against some tough competition.

As you are waiting for the starter's orders follow these top tips:

- Try not to let the butterflies in your stomach bother you. They'll go as soon as you start running. It's caused by your

body producing a chemical called 'adrenaline'. This is completely natural and will give you a burst of speed across the stadium.

- Don't worry about not having your running shoes with you. Take a look around. No one else is wearing any – in fact they aren't wearing anything at all! Ancient Greek men and boys trained and competed completely naked. So strip off and get ready to run.
- Try to block out the roaring crowd and go through the race in your head. Imagine yourself being super-speedy and think how good you'll feel when you cross that finishing line first.

