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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

## **London to host 2012 Olympics**

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**7 July, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **London to host 2012 Olympics**

**BNE:** London has been awarded the right to host the 2012 Olympic Games after the most closely contested fight to stage the event in its history. Up to the last minutes of the final decision it looked like Paris, the longtime frontrunner, would get the victory it had expected. However, with the final round of voting down to two cities, London managed to edge its rival by 54 to 50 votes and pip Paris to the finishing post. Following the announcement, crowds in London erupted into euphoria and were showered with confetti. Meanwhile, expectant Parisians that had gathered to celebrate a Paris win went home in subdued and stunned silence. The fizz from their planned celebrations had gone flat.

It is the first time the Games will be held in London since 1948. Bid organizers managed to string together an impressive array of high profile sporting and political figures to win over the International Olympic Committee members. A huge boost came via an endorsement from Nelson Mandela. Other big names in the London camp included Australian Olympic champion Kathy Freeman, England's soccer captain David Beckham and Britain's own two-time Olympic gold medalist Sebastian Coe. Prime Minister Tony Blair took time off from the G8 summit to make an eleventh-hour dash to Singapore to add further weight to tip the balance in London's favor. His whistle-stop visit paid big dividends.

## WARM-UPS

**1. OLYMPIC CHAMPION:** Imagine you are an Olympic champion. Decide for what sport you won your gold medal. Talk to the other Olympic champions in your class about being champion and how you won your medal. How has your life changed since becoming champion?

**2. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*London / the Olympic Games / Paris / euphoria / silence / fizz / Nelson Mandela / David Beckham / gold medals / whistle-stop visits*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**3. OLYMPICS:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the Olympics. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**4. OLYMPIC OPINIONS:** In pairs / groups, talk about how far you agree with these opinions about the Olympics.

- a. London deserved to get the Olympics.
- b. London won because France's Jacques Chirac criticized British and Finnish food.
- c. It's time for the Olympics to be held in Africa.
- d. I really want to go to London in 2012.
- e. The Olympics are not important – It's just sport.
- f. The World Cup is much bigger and more important than the Olympics.
- g. London is the world's greatest city.
- h. The Olympic Games is more about politics than sport.
- i. Paris should get the 2016 Olympic Games.
- j. The Olympics is a true celebration of human togetherness.

**5. LOSING CITIES:** In pairs / groups, talk about whether London is the best city to host the 2012 Olympic Games. Compare London to the other cities that were in the final round of voting.

- London
- Paris
- Madrid
- New York
- Moscow

Do you think your city should one day host the Olympics?

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| a. London easily won the right to stage the 2012 Olympic Games.      | T / F |
| b. The final round of voting was between London, Paris and New York. | T / F |
| c. People in London threw confetti in the air.                       | T / F |
| d. People in Paris had to drink sodas that had gone flat.            | T / F |
| e. London last held the Olympics 29 years ago.                       | T / F |
| f. Nelson Mandela backed London's bid.                               | T / F |
| g. Tony Blair dashed to Singapore to help London win.                | T / F |
| h. British companies are paying their shareholders big dividends.    | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| a. host            | last minute |
| b. contested       | crestfallen |
| c. pip             | beat        |
| d. euphoria        | lineup      |
| e. subdued         | stage       |
| f. string together | campaigning |
| g. array           | amass       |
| h. endorsement     | ecstasy     |
| i. eleventh hour   | backing     |
| j. whistle-stop    | fought      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. awarded                | its rival                    |
| b. the longtime           | dash                         |
| c. London managed to edge | the right to...              |
| d. pip Paris              | and stunned silence          |
| e. went home in subdued   | from Nelson Mandela          |
| f. string                 | paid big dividends           |
| g. an endorsement         | to the finishing post        |
| h. make an eleventh-hour  | in London's favor            |
| i. tip the balance        | together an impressive array |
| j. His whistle-stop visit | frontrunner                  |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**GAP FILL:** Put the words in the column on the right into the correct spaces.

### London to host 2012 Olympics

**BNE:** London has been awarded the \_\_\_\_\_ to host the 2012 Olympic Games after the most closely contested fight to \_\_\_\_\_ the event in its history. Up to the last minutes of the final decision it looked like Paris, the longtime \_\_\_\_\_, would get the victory it had expected. However, with the final round of voting down to two cities, London managed to \_\_\_\_\_ its rival by 54 to 50 votes and pip Paris to the finishing \_\_\_\_\_. Following the announcement, crowds in London \_\_\_\_\_ into euphoria and were showered with confetti. Meanwhile, \_\_\_\_\_ Parisians that had gathered to celebrate a Paris win went home in subdued and stunned silence. The fizz from their planned celebrations had gone \_\_\_\_\_.

*frontrunner*  
*expectant*  
*post*  
*right*  
*edge*  
*flat*  
*stage*  
*erupted*

It is the first time the Games will be held in London since 1948. Bid organizers managed to \_\_\_\_\_ together an impressive array of high profile sporting and political figures to \_\_\_\_\_ over the International Olympic Committee members. A huge boost came \_\_\_\_\_ an endorsement from Nelson Mandela. Other big names in the London \_\_\_\_\_ included Australian Olympic champion Kathy Freeman, England's soccer captain David Beckham and Britain's \_\_\_\_\_ two-time Olympic gold medalist Sebastian Coe. Prime Minister Tony Blair took time off from the G8 summit to make an eleventh-hour \_\_\_\_\_ to Singapore to add further weight to \_\_\_\_\_ the balance in London's favor. His whistle-stop visit \_\_\_\_\_ big dividends.

*via*  
*dash*  
*win*  
*paid*  
*own*  
*tip*  
*camp*  
*string*

## AFTER READING / LISTENING

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words **'right'** and **'host'**.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. GAP FILL:** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the gap fill. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT OLYMPICS SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about London and the Olympics.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| • awarded  | • 1948          |
| • longtime | • array         |
| • voting   | • endorsement   |
| • pip      | • two-time      |
| • confetti | • eleventh-hour |
| • fizz     | • dividends     |

## DISCUSSION

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the story?
- c. How did this headline make you feel?
- d. Are you glad London won the right to host the 2012 Olympics?
- e. Do you think London will do a good job at hosting the Games?
- f. Would you like your city to stage the Games?
- g. Why do you think Paris lost when it was expected to win?
- h. What do the Olympic Games mean for a city?
- i. What are your first memories of the Olympics?
- j. What do you think of Olympic athletes taking drugs?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. Would you like to go to the 2012 Olympics in London?
- d. Do you think the Olympics are the world's most important sporting event?
- e. What's your favorite event at the Olympics?
- f. What can you remember from previous Olympics?
- g. Do you think Africa should get its first Olympic Games in 2016?
- h. Is London a better city to host the games than the other contenders – Paris, Madrid, New York and Moscow?
- i. Do you think America gets the Games too often?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

## SPEAKING

### OLYMPIC GAMES:

Imagine the 2012 Olympic Games will not be held in London but in your town or city or where you are currently studying. In pairs / groups, discuss and agree on the factors below:

FACTORS	YOUR DECISIONS
The 2012 Games motto	
Where will the Olympic village be?	
What new sports will you introduce?	
What infrastructure needs to be built?	
What problems need to be overcome?	
Other	

After you have finished, change partners and show each other your plans. Give each other advice on how to improve your plans.

Return to your original partners and incorporate the advice you received into revising your original plans.



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### London to host 2012 Olympics

**BNE:** London has been awarded the \_\_\_\_\_ the 2012 Olympic Games after the most closely contested fight to \_\_\_\_\_ the event in its history. Up to the last minutes of the final decision it looked like Paris, the longtime \_\_\_\_\_, would get the victory it had expected. However, with the final round of voting \_\_\_\_\_ cities, London managed to \_\_\_\_\_ its rival by 54 to 50 votes and \_\_\_\_\_ Paris to the finishing post. Following the announcement, crowds in London \_\_\_\_\_ and were showered with confetti. Meanwhile, expectant Parisians that had gathered to celebrate a Paris win went home in \_\_\_\_\_ and stunned silence. The \_\_\_\_\_ from their planned celebrations had \_\_\_\_\_.

It is the first time the Games will be held in London since 1948. \_\_\_\_\_ managed to string together an impressive \_\_\_\_\_ profile sporting and political figures to \_\_\_\_\_ the International Olympic Committee members. A huge boost came \_\_\_\_\_ endorsement from Nelson Mandela. Other big names in the London \_\_\_\_\_ included Australian Olympic champion Kathy Freeman, England's soccer captain David Beckham and Britain's \_\_\_\_\_ Olympic gold medalist Sebastian Coe. Prime Minister Tony Blair took time off from the G8 summit to make an \_\_\_\_\_ to Singapore to add further weight to \_\_\_\_\_ in London's favor. His whistle-stop visit \_\_\_\_\_ dividends.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on the what to expect from London 2012. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. 2016:** Make a poster outlining why your city or town should be awarded the Olympic Games in 2016. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Give a mini presentation and take a vote on the best city / town.

**4. LETTER:** Write a letter to the head of the International Olympic Committee. Tell him what you think of the decision to award London the 2012 Olympics. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

a. F      b. F      c. T      d. F      e. F      f. T      g. T      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

a. host	stage
b. contested	fought
c. pip	beat
d. euphoria	ecstasy
e. subdued	crestfallen
f. string together	amass
g. array	lineup
h. endorsement	backing
i. eleventh hour	last minute
j. whistle-stop	campaigning

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. awarded	the right to...
b. the longtime	fronrunner
c. London managed to edge	its rival
d. pip Paris	to the finishing post
e. went home in subdued	and stunned silence
f. string	together an impressive array
g. an endorsement	from Nelson Mandela
h. make an eleventh-hour	dash
i. tip the balance	in London's favor
j. His whistle-stop visit	paid big dividends

### GAP FILL:

#### London to host 2012 Olympics

**BNE:** London has been awarded the **right** to host the 2012 Olympic Games after the most closely contested fight to **stage** the event in its history. Up to the last minutes of the final decision it looked like Paris, the longtime **fronrunner**, would get the victory it had expected. However, with the final round of voting down to two cities, London managed to **edge** its rival by 54 to 50 votes and pip Paris to the finishing **post**. Following the announcement, crowds in London **erupted** into euphoria and were showered with confetti. Meanwhile, **expectant** Parisians that had gathered to celebrate a Paris win went home in subdued and stunned silence. The fizz from their planned celebrations had gone **flat**.

It is the first time the Games will be held in London since 1948. Bid organizers managed to **string** together an impressive array of high profile sporting and political figures to **win** over the International Olympic Committee members. A huge boost came **via** an endorsement from Nelson Mandela. Other big names in the London **camp** included Australian Olympic champion Kathy Freeman, England's soccer captain David Beckham and Britain's **own** two-time Olympic gold medalist Sebastian Coe. Prime Minister Tony Blair took time off from the G8 summit to make an eleventh-hour **dash** to Singapore to add further weight to **tip** the balance in London's favor. His whistle-stop visit **paid** big dividends.