

# Wrestling

When athletes come together from around the world to compete in the Olympic and Paralympic Games, they are fulfilling their dreams and competing at the highest level. Billions of people across the globe join in; watching, listening to and reading about the greatest global celebration of sport. To celebrate the London 2012 Games, the British Council is making a wide range of classroom resources available for learners of English worldwide.

Wrestling is one of the oldest sports in the world. Cave paintings of wrestlers have been found which are five thousand years old. It was included in the ancient Olympics and was considered so historically significant that it became a focus of the modern Olympics when they were organised in Athens in 1896. Have you ever tried wrestling or seen a bout? If not, would you like to?

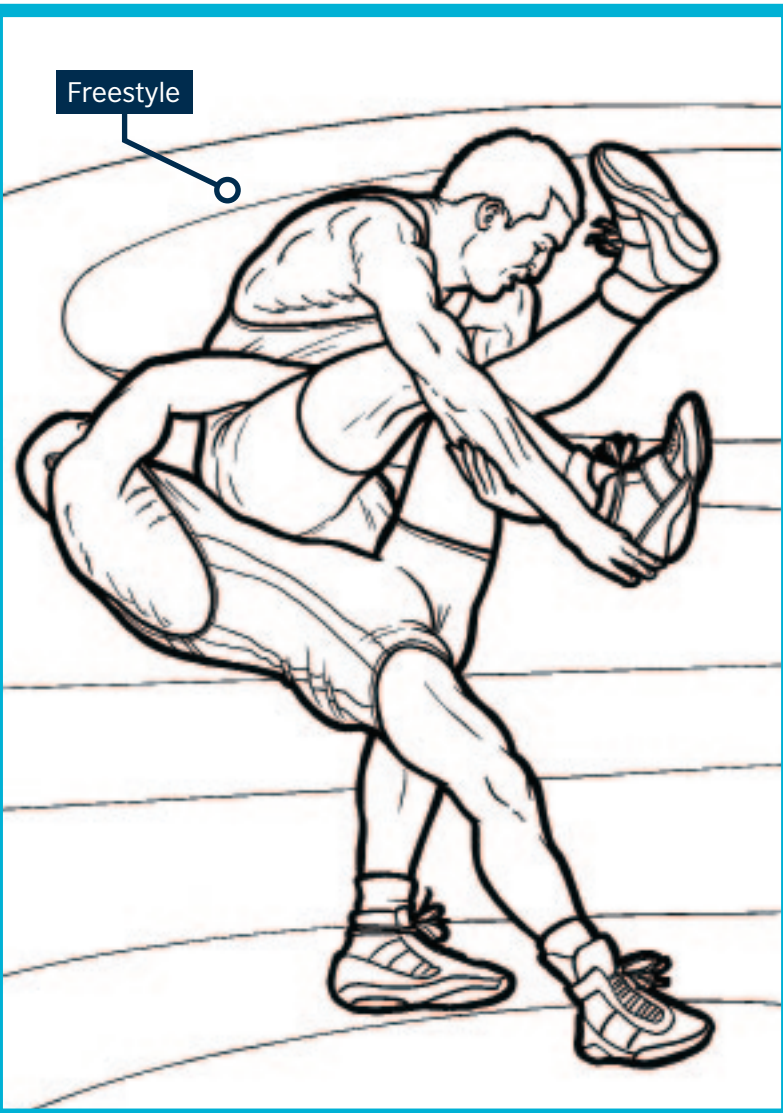
Wrestling suit



Wrestling boots



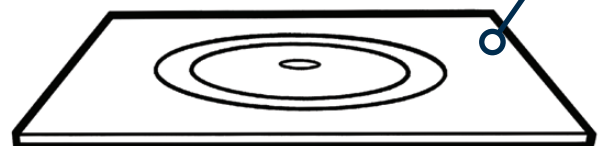
Freestyle



Greco-Roman



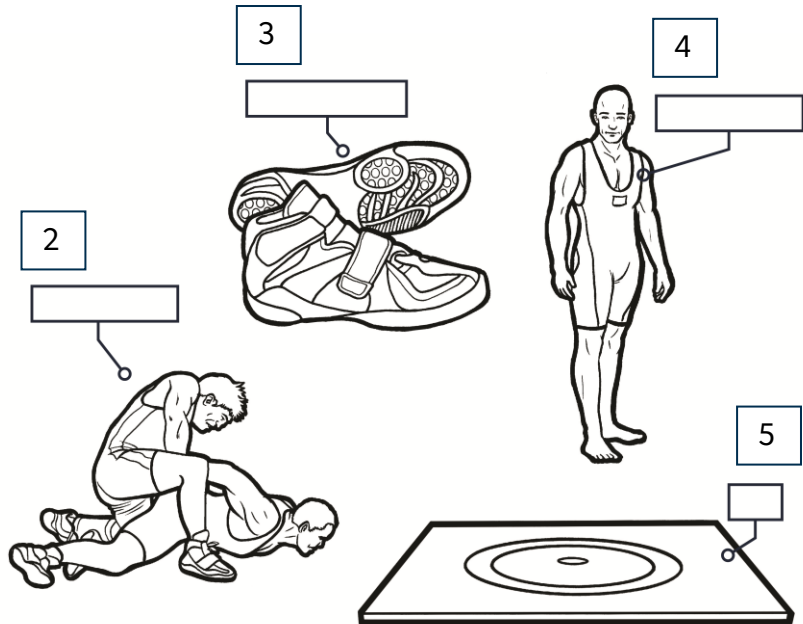
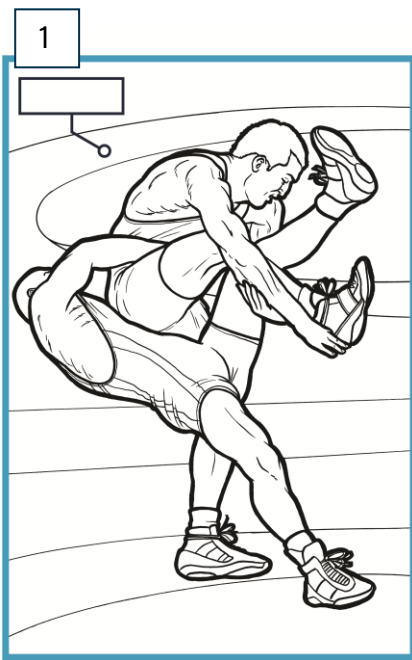
Mat



**1. Vocabulary**

**a. Write the correct words in the spaces provided.**

a. Wrestling suit	b. Freestyle	c. Mat	d. Wrestling boots	e. Greco-Roman
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## 2. The rules of wrestling

Wrestling is very ancient and very simple. First, you stand in front of your opponent. Then you throw him to the ground. If both his shoulders touch the ground, you win.

There are two different kinds of Olympic wrestling: Greco-Roman and Freestyle.

- In Greco-Roman wrestling you can't use your legs to attack or hold your opponent - you can only attack him above the waist.
- In Freestyle wrestling you can use your whole body.
- The rules for both kinds of wrestling are the same.
- Men compete in Greco-Roman and Freestyle.
- Women only compete in Freestyle.

There are different weight categories for both men and women.

A wrestling competition is called a bout. The bouts are held on round mats, 9m across.

Bouts can last for up to three periods. Each period is two minutes and there's a thirty-second break between periods.

If a wrestler wins the first two periods, he wins the bout. If a wrestler holds his opponent's shoulders to the mat, it's called a 'fall' and he wins the bout.

If there's no fall within the time limit, points are used to decide the winner. You get points for moves called: takedowns, reversals and escapes.

### a. Match the words in the table with their definitions below.

a. Greco-Roman wrestling	b. a bout	c. a fall
d. a period	e. Freestyle wrestling	f. the mat

1. When a wrestler's shoulders are held on the ground.
2. Part of a bout that lasts two minutes.
3. Wrestling using only your upper body to attack and hold.
4. Where the wrestling bouts are held.
5. Wrestling using your whole body to attack.
6. A wrestling competition.

### 3. Questions & Answers

**Every school boy can wrestle! Why is it an Olympic sport?**

Listen. There are cave drawings, 15,000 years old, of wrestlers. In the tombs of ancient Egypt you can see wrestlers - and they're using the same holds that wrestlers use today. Wrestling's in our blood. Of course it's an Olympic sport!

**So they had wrestling in the ancient Olympics, too?**

Yes. The first sport at the Games was running - but wrestling was the second. The first wrestling match was in 708BC.

**Were the rules the same as today?**

No. Wrestling in Ancient Greece was much more dangerous. The rules were: do not bite, do not scratch your opponent's eyes out, do not hit or kick your opponent. Apart from that, you could do anything.

**It doesn't sound very nice. Anything else?**

Yes, the referee decided if you could break your opponent's fingers. Oh, and you wrestled naked, covered only in olive oil.

**Hmm, is that why Freestyle wrestling became more popular than Greco-Roman?**

Well, Greco-Roman wrestling is safe now. In 1921 any moves that could kill or injure you were forbidden. But Greco-Roman wrestling was also quite boring. Some bouts went on for a very long time. In the 1912 Olympic Games one bout lasted nine hours.

**Nine hours? They deserved a medal for not falling asleep!**

That is almost what happened. Everybody was so tired of it the referee called a draw and both wrestlers got a silver medal. There are time-limits now!

**And what about women's wrestling? Did they have that in the ancient Olympics?**

Certainly not! Women weren't even allowed to watch. The first bout of women's wrestling took place in the 2004 Olympics.

**So if a schoolboy pulls a girl's hair nowadays, he could find himself in a headlock?  
Help!**

Quite right.

**a. Put these sentences into the order that they happened in the text.**

- a) It was very dangerous.
- b) There were very early pictures of wrestlers in caves in Egypt.
- c) Nowadays, women can wrestle in the Olympics.
- d) Later, wrestling became safer.
- e) Wrestling was a popular sport in Ancient Greece.
- f) There were pictures of wrestlers in Egyptian tombs, too.

**b. Put these nouns, verbs and adjectives from the text into the right column.**

a. wrestled	b. safe	c. wrestler	d. boring
e. bite	f. bout	g. scratch	h. referee
i. kick	j. won	k. naked	l. got
m. match	n. hit	o. dangerous	p. lasted

<b>Adjectives</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Nouns</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Verbs, present tense</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>Verbs, past tense</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____

## 4. Solution

### Exercise 1a

1. b; 2. e; 3. d; 4. a; 5. c

### Exercise 2a

1. c; 2.d; 3. a; 4. f; 5. e; 6.b

### Exercise 3a

1. b; 2. f; 3. e; 4. a; 5. d; 6. c

### Exercise 3b

Adjectives: safe, dangerous, naked, boring

Nouns: match, bout, wrestler, referee

Verbs, present tense: bite, scratch, hit, kick

Verbs, past tense: won, wrestled, got, lasted