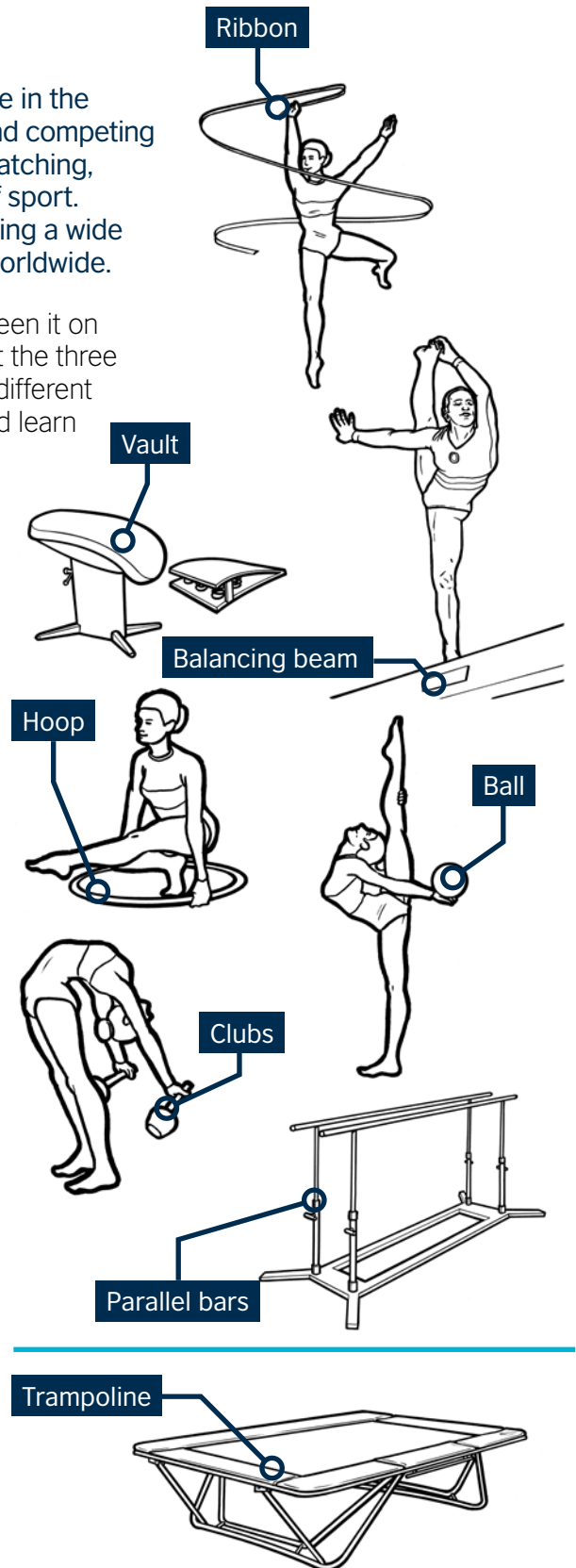
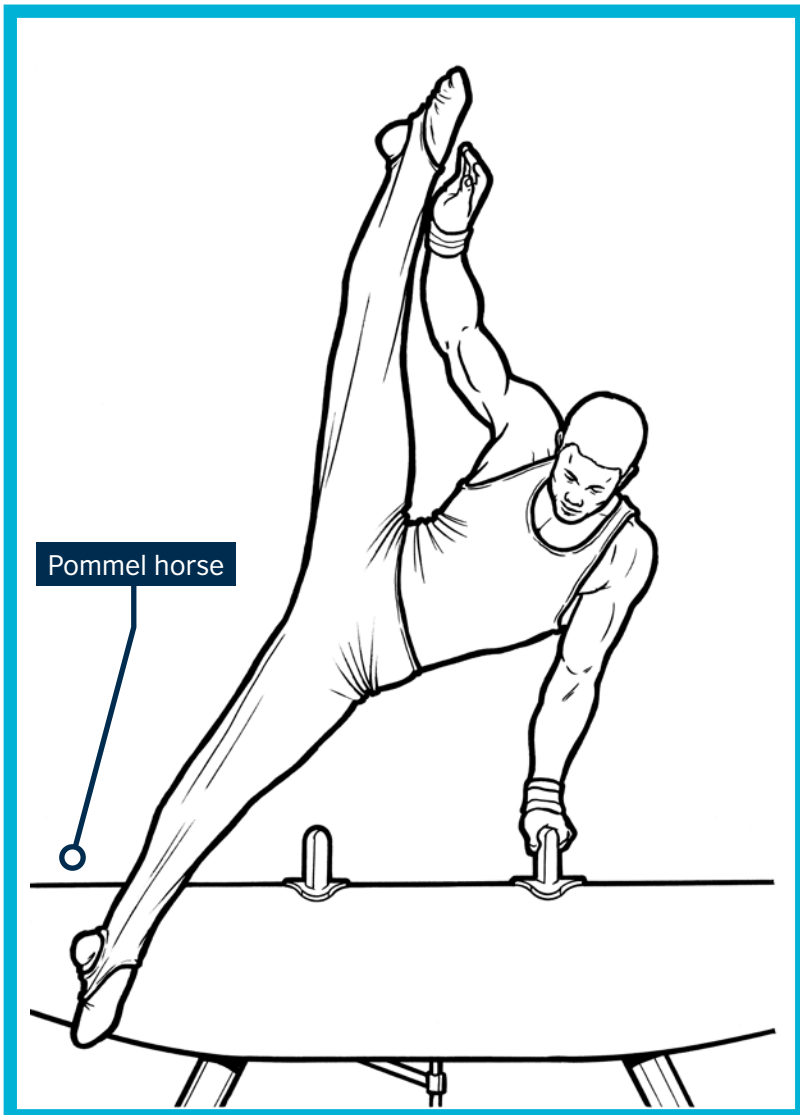


Gymnastics

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.

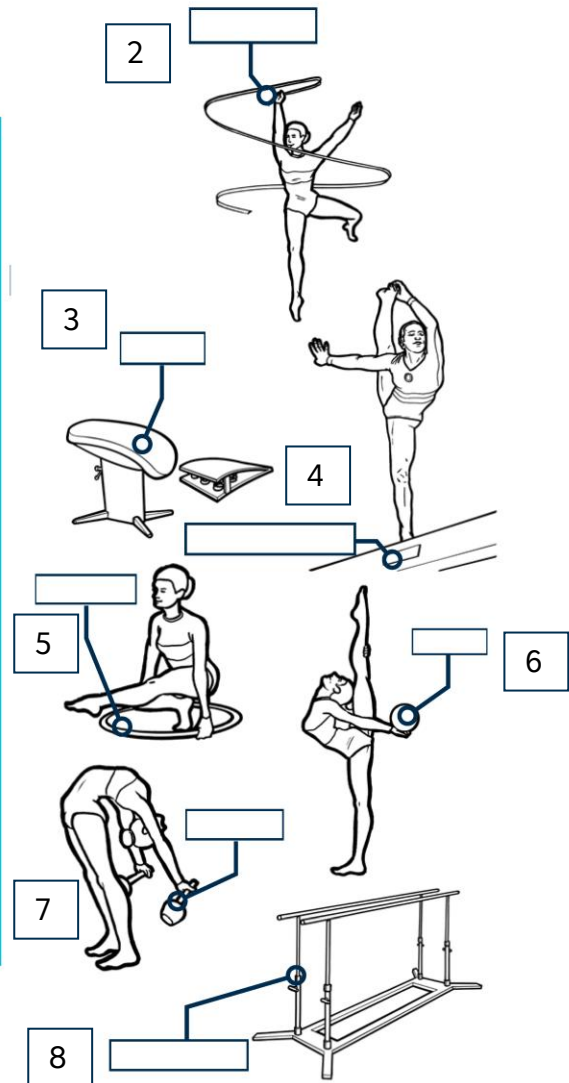
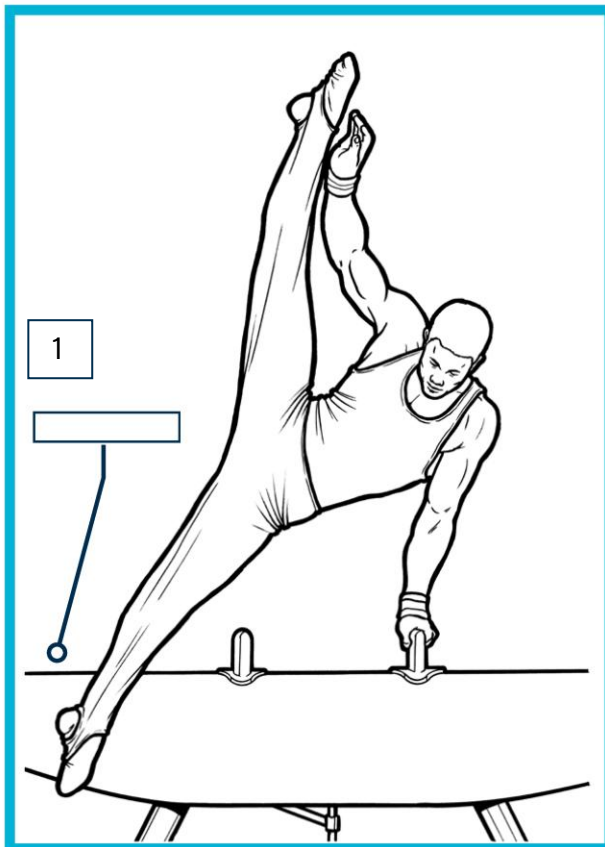
Gymnastics is very popular all over the world. You have probably seen it on television. Have you ever tried it? Would you like to? Find out about the three different types of gymnastics at the Olympics. How are the events different for men and women? Find out about the origins of these sports and learn vocabulary and useful language.



1. Vocabulary

a. Write the correct words in the spaces provided.

a. pommel horse	b. ribbon	c. balancing beam	d. clubs
e. hoop	f. parallel bars	g. vault	h. ball



2. The rules of gymnastics

- There are three different events in the Olympic gymnastics programme: artistic, rhythmic and trampoline.

- **Artistic** There are three different competitions: team, individual all-around and single events.

In the team finals gymnasts compete in national teams.

Both men and women compete on the vault and floor exercises.

Women also compete on the balance beam and uneven bars.

Men also compete on the horizontal bar, parallel bars, pommel horse and rings.

In the all-around finals, the gymnasts are individual competitors and compete on all apparatus.

In the event finals, the top eight gymnasts on each apparatus compete for medals.

Judges give scores in two categories: technical and artistic aspects.

- **Rhythmic** This is a women-only event. Gymnasts perform on a floor area with a rope, hoop, ball, clubs or ribbon accompanied by music.

There are individual and team events.

Scores are given in three categories: difficulty, artistry and execution.

- **Trampoline** Gymnasts perform a series of short routines, which contain a variety of twists, bounces and somersaults.

Scores are given in three categories: difficulty, execution and flight time.

- To compete in the 2012 Olympics, gymnasts must have been born before January 1, 1997.

Glossary

Apparatus (plural = apparatus): the different pieces of equipment that the gymnasts use

Somersault: a movement where someone turns over completely, with their feet over their head

Bounce: to hit something and move away quickly. *The athlete bounced high on the trampoline*

Twist: bend and turn part of the body

Floor exercises: a gymnastics routine consisting of a series of acrobatic moves, performed on a floor area measuring 12x12 metres

Horizontal bar: an apparatus that consists of a bar 2.5 metres above the floor, on which gymnasts perform acrobatic moves

Rings: an apparatus that consists of two round handles at the ends of two long ropes which hang from the ceiling

Uneven bars: an apparatus that consists of two horizontal bars of different heights, on which gymnasts perform acrobatic moves

Rope: a strong, thick string

a. Match the words and phrases in the table with their definitions below.

a. apparatus (plural = apparatus)	b. (artistic) gymnastics
c. rhythmic gymnastics	d. trampoline

1. a piece of sports equipment which you use for jumping on. Also the name of the gymnastics event using this.
2. a gymnastics event for women, who perform acrobatic and dance moves on a floor area, accompanied by music, and with a rope, hoop, ball, clubs or ribbon.
3. an Olympic sport, in which athletes compete against each other on different apparatus
4. a piece of equipment which is used as part of a gymnastics event

b. Match the words and phrases in the table with their definitions below.

a. balance beam	b. ball	c. club
d. floor exercises	e. hoop	f. horizontal bar
g. parallel bars	h. pommel horse	i. ribbon
j. rings	k. rope	l. uneven bars
m. vault		

1. a series of acrobatic moves, performed on a floor area measuring 12x12 metres
2. a large ring, made of plastic or wood
3. a long, narrow strip of material
4. a strong, thick string
5. a bar 2.5 metres above the floor, on which gymnasts perform acrobatic moves
6. a type of table, which gymnasts jump over by first putting their hands on it, and then performing acrobatic moves
7. a wooden bar on which gymnasts balance and perform acrobatic moves
8. two bars, both of which are 1.75 metres above the floor, on which gymnasts perform acrobatic moves
9. two horizontal bars of different heights, on which gymnasts perform acrobatic moves
10. two round handles at the ends of two long ropes which hang from the ceiling
11. this has four legs and two handles on the top that gymnasts hold and swing their body and legs around
12. an object like a stick that is thinner at one end than the other. Gymnasts throw it in the air
1. a round object used for throwing, kicking or hitting in sports

3. Questions & Answers

I'm not feeling very well today.

You must be out of tune. Try doing some exercise.

Excuse me?

The ancient Greeks believed that the mind and body could only be in tune if a person did both intellectual and physical exercise. Plato, Aristotle and Homer all encouraged gymnastic exercise.

Did they invent gymnastics?

I don't know but I'm sure they thought about it!

If gymnastics isn't what I do in the gym, what is it?

Gymnastics as we know it developed in Germany and Czechoslovakia at the start of the 19th century. The German Friedrich Ludwig Jahn is known as the father of gymnastics and he invented some of the apparatus still used today.

Appa-what?

Apparatus. It means equipment. There is a lot of apparatus in gymnastics. Something to do with the fact that there are a lot of different events.

I heard about events where the men climb ropes and swing clubs.

Ah, not any more. That was a long time ago. Nowadays the apparatus includes the parallel bars, the vault, the rings, the balance beam, the pommel horse...

"Pommel horse"? Never mind. Did Ludwig Jahn compete at the Olympic Games?

No. He died about 50 years before the modern Olympics began.

When did the first women's event start?

Actually as far back as 1928.

Some of the most famous gymnasts are women, I think.

That's right, and very young too. Nadia Comaneci and Nellie Kim both got perfect 10 scores at the 1976 Games when they were 14, but nowadays gymnasts have to be 16 to compete at the Olympics.

By the way, do you know the origin of the word 'gymnastics'?

It comes from the Greek word for 'naked', and early gymnasts used to perform without any clothes on.

Really? That was the Summer Olympics and not the Winter Olympics then?

Ha! Ha!

a. Decide if the following statements are true or false, according to the text.

1. Plato, Aristotle and Homer thought that gymnastic activity was a good thing.
2. The ancient Greeks used the same apparatus that is used in gymnastics today.
3. A lot of different equipment is used in gymnastics because there are a lot of different events.
4. The age limit for gymnasts at the Olympic Games has changed since 1976.
5. Olympic gymnasts will compete without any clothes on at London 2012.

True	False

b. Put the words in the following sentences in the correct order.

1. all / Aristotle and / encouraged / exercise. / gymnastic / Homer / Plato,
2. apparatus / He / invented / of / some / still / the / today. / used
3. at / compete / Did / Games? / Ludwig Jahn / Olympic / the
4. 50 / about / before / began. / died / He / modern / Olympics / the / years
5. did / event / start? / the first / When / women's

4. Solution

Exercise 1a

1. a; 2. b; 3. g; 4. c; 5. e; 6. h; 7. d; 8. f

Exercise 2a

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

Exercise 2b

1. d; 2. e; 3. i; 4. k; 5. f; 6. m; 7. a; 8. g; 9. l; 10. j; 11. h; 12. c; 13. b

Exercise 3a

1. true; 2. false; 3. true; 4. true; 5. false

Exercise 3b

1. Plato, Aristotle and Homer all encouraged gymnastic exercise.
2. He invented some of the apparatus still used today.
3. Did Ludwig Jahn compete at the Olympic Games?
4. He died about 50 years before the modern Olympics began.
5. When did the first women's event start?