The story of the Olympics

This year the Olympic games were to be held in Japan and start this month. They were cancelled for the 4th time in their history. Instead they will be held next year!
The Story of the Olympics

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Chapter 6

The Games expand

After a very successful beginning, the IOC decided to hold the Olympics every four years, in a different city each time.

In 1900, the Games were held in Paris, France. This time women could enter, but only in ‘ladylike’ sports, such as golf and tennis.

This is the list of sports at the 1900 Olympics:
- Archery
- Athletics
- Basque Pelota
- Cricket
- Croquet
- Cycling
- Equestrian
- Fencing
- Football
- Gymnastics (Artistic)
- Golf
- Polo
- Rowing
- Rugby union
- Sailing
- Shooting
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Tug of war
- Water Polo

Women can do any of these sports, but were not considered as able as men. In some countries in 1900, Women were still not allowed to vote in elections.

Now, women are treated far more equally and take part in the same sports.
For the London marathon, King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra wanted to watch the start from Windsor Castle.

After the 1904 Olympics in St. Louis, USA, the IOC awarded the 1908 Games to Rome, Italy. Then Mount Vesuvius erupted and the Olympics were quickly shifted to London, UK.

So the race had to be lengthened to exactly 42.195km (26 miles 385 yards). Since then, every marathon race has been this distance.
The volcano did not damage Rome, but damaged nearby Naples. The Italians needed money to repair the city and area, so could not afford to host the Olympics that year.
It was at the London Olympics that people first heard de Coubertin’s Olympic ‘creed’ – a set of ideas that summed up what he thought the Olympics were all about.

After the 1920 Games in Antwerp, Belgium, the IOC decided there were enough sports on snow and ice to have a separate winter competition.

The first Winter Olympics took place in Chamonix, France, in 1924 and included skiing, figure skating and ice hockey. Since 1992, it has taken place two years after the Summer Olympics.
There are 3 categories of winter sports

1. Ice Sports
   Bobsled
   Luge
   Skeleton
   Ice Hockey
   Figure Skating
   Speed Skating
   Curling

2. Skiing / Snowboarding
   Alpine Skiing
   Freestyle Skiing
   Snowboarding

3. Nordic
   Biathlon
   Cross-Country Skiing
   Ski Jumping
Over the years more events have been added as new sports have become more popular. In 1896 (Athens) there were 9 sports and 52 events, in 1952 (Helsinki, Finland) there were 17 sports and 149 events, and by 2004 (Athens again) there were 28 sports and 301 events.

Sports that have been added more recently include ice dancing in 1976 (Innsbruck, Austria),

beach volleyball in 1996 (Atlanta, USA),

and snowboarding in 1998 (Nagano, Japan).
BMX cycling was included in the 2008 Games in Beijing, China...

...along with a marathon 10km (6 mile) swimming race.

After the Second World War, a sports contest was held in Stoke Mandeville, England, for war veterans with spinal cord injuries. This was a huge success and led to the first international Paralympic* Games in 1960 for athletes with disabilities.

This was followed by the first Winter Paralympics in 1976.

*Para means 'alongside' in Greek.
Chapter 7

Pomp and ceremony

The opening ceremony at the Olympic Games is like a giant carnival.

After a huge parade of athletes, there are amazing displays of music, lights, dance and fireworks.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4As0e4de-rI

The London Olympic opening ceremony in 2012 was 4 hours long!! Its really starts at 3 mins 30 seconds.
After singing the Olympic hymn, the Olympic flag is raised. De Coubertin designed the flag with five rings. The rings represent the continents of the world—Africa, America, Asia, Australasia and Europe—joined in peace and harmony.

Months before the Games begin, a flame is lit in Olympia and passed by a relay of torches by foot, air, road, rail or water*.

Finally, a runner brings the last torch into the stadium at the opening ceremony and lights a cauldron.

The fire burns until the end of the Games.

A flame was kept burning throughout the ancient Games, too.

* Divers have even carried a torch under the water in Australia, using chemicals that burn in water.
The Olympic flag has a white background, with five interlaced rings in the centre: blue, yellow, black, green and red. It represents the five continents of the world, united by Olympism, while the six colours are those that appear on all the national flags of the world at the present time.
The Olympic Flame travels from Greece to the Opening Ceremony and lights the Cauldron. At the end of the Games there is a closing ceremony and the flames are put out.