

Jesse Owens

Today we are going to be learning about Olympic hero Jesse Owens.

He is one of the most famous athletes in history and has a very brave story to tell.

Let's read the book all about his life and see what we can find out.



The Olympics

The modern Olympics were first held in Athens in 1896. 280 athletes from 12 countries participated in the games. Since then, the Olympic Games have become a global event. At the 2016 Rio Games, over 11,000 athletes from 206 countries took part.



Today, the goal of the Olympics is 'to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind'.

**Talk
About
It**

How do you think international sporting events, such as the Olympics, can help to make the world a better place?

Jesse Owens

James “Jesse” Owens was born in 1913 in Oakville, Alabama. His family were **sharecroppers**. By the time he was seven, he was picking up to 100 pounds of cotton each day to help his family. When he was nine years old, his family moved to Cleveland, Ohio. He attended much larger schools in the city than he had in **rural** Alabama.

He began to make a name for himself as a sprinter in high school. He won three track and field events at the 1933 National Interscholastic Championships. After high school, he attended Ohio State University. While competing in college, he tied one world record and broke three others.



Did You Know...?

Jesse Owens competed in several running events and the long jump.

Sharecropping is a type of farming in which families rent small plots of land from a landowner in return for a portion of their crop

Jesse Owens

Jesse competed in the 1936 Olympics. Despite Hitler's attempts to prove the superiority of the 'Aryan race', Jesse won four gold medals. These were for the 100m, 200m, 4x100m relay and the long jump.

Despite his success, Jesse faced racism. On his return to the USA, a victory parade was held in New York. Jesse wasn't allowed to use the main entrance of the hotel where the celebration was being held. Unlike many other Olympic athletes, Jesse wasn't invited to meet the president at the White House.



Did You Know...?

At an athletics event in 1935, Jesse broke five world records and equalled another one in the space of 45 minutes.

Racism and the Olympics

Despite the goal of the Olympics, there have been times throughout history when competitors have faced racism. This racism has come from people in their own country, the host country or even from fellow athletes.



**Talk
About It**

Can you think of people in history who have faced racism? What happened to them? How did they manage their feelings? What steps did they take to deal with their experience?

What is Racism?

**Talk
About
It**

What do you understand about the word racism?



Racism relates to the belief that races have certain characteristics which make them better than others. A race is a grouping of humans based on physical or social similarities. Racism causes hurt and sadness.

Let's watch this clip, it is a trailer for a movie all about Jesse Owens life. Think about what some of the key moments are and how Jesse might have been feeling.



The 1936 Games

In 1936, the Olympics were held in Berlin, Germany. Some countries felt Berlin was an unsuitable choice for the games. This was because Adolf Hitler was the leader of Germany at the time. Hitler's Nazi party were enacting laws that **persecuted** Jewish people, Roma Gypsies and anyone else who did not belong to their idea of an 'Aryan race' (white people). These laws would eventually lead to the Second World War and the Holocaust, where six million Jewish people were killed.

Many countries considered boycotting the games, although only Spain and the Soviet Union carried through with a boycott. Many individual athletes refused to compete in the games.



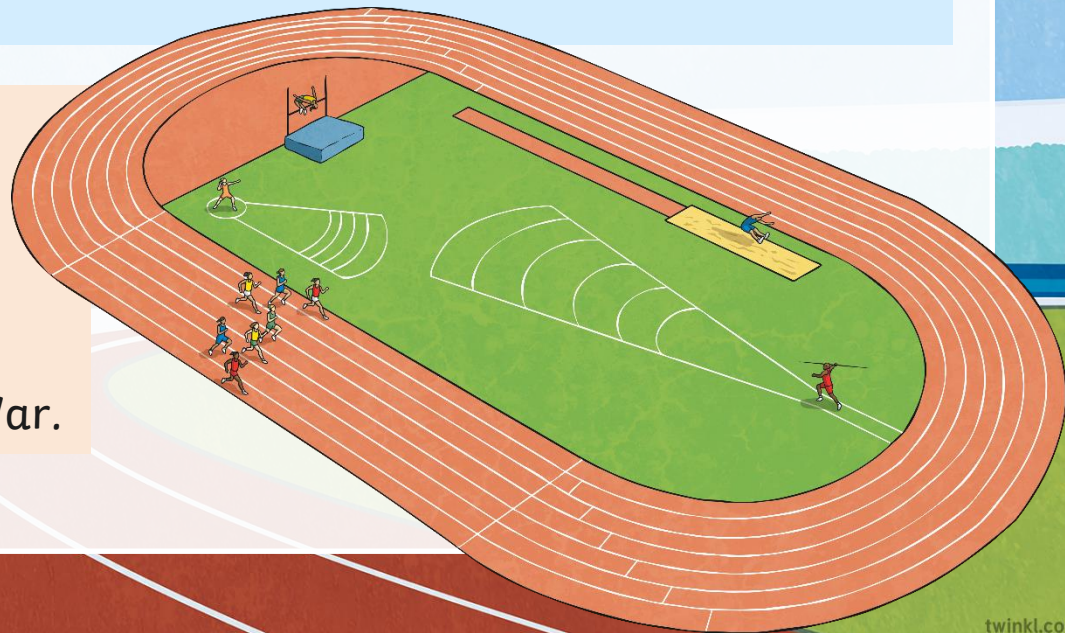
persecuted - When people are treated cruelly or unfairly because of a particular characteristic, such as race or religion.

The 1936 Games

Hitler viewed the 1936 Olympics as an opportunity to show that the 'Aryan race' were superior to any other. In line with this thinking, people who didn't belong to this group were virtually banned from competing for Germany. This meant that several of Germany's best athletes, including Lilli Henoch and Gretel Bergmann, who were both Jewish, were unable to take part. Ultimately, only one Jewish athlete, Helene Meyer, was allowed to compete. This was because she only had one Jewish parent. No Roma Gypsy athletes, or anyone from other racial groups, competed for Germany in the games.

Did You Know...?

The 1940 Olympics (due to be held in Helsinki) and the 1944 Olympics (due to be held in London) were both cancelled because of the Second World War.



How does the story of Jesse Owens promote the Olympic values of friendship, respect and excellence?



Jesse Owens

Today, we are going to create a fact file all about Jesse Owens.

What important things might we include in a fact file?

There will be some fact sheets on your tables as well as the iPads and what we have discussed during this PowerPoint.

