

The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION



SPORT AND POLITICS

Child-led learning resource

ABOUT

You should complete Sport and Politics Part 1 before you begin these activities. They will help you develop the arguments about whether sportspeople should be allowed to express their political opinions on the field.

You will be able to explore interesting questions like:

- Is sport only a game?
- When have players shared their views during matches?
- Should players keep their opinions off the field?

You can give this a go on your own, but if there's someone at home who can join you, why not work together? You could also connect with someone by telephone or video.

We'll practise some critical-thinking skills which are important for understanding and discussing the news.

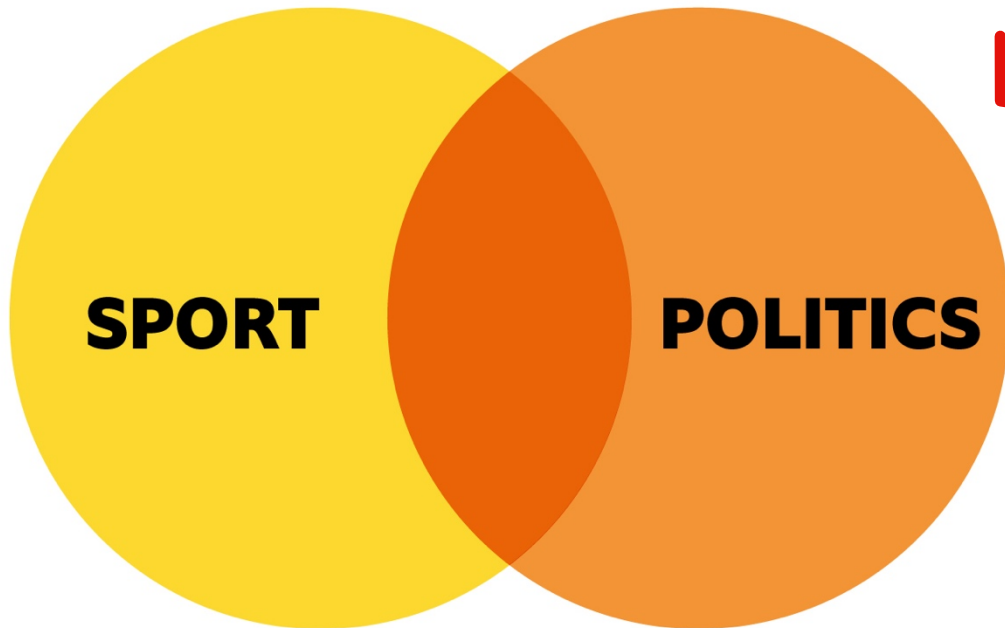


Ready? Let's go!

WARM UP

Create a Venn diagram, like this.

What words would you use to describe sport? What words would you use to describe politics?



Place your words in the correct places on the diagram, with words that are common to both in the middle. Use these words to help:


FUN **TEAMWORK**
Serious **COMPETITIVE**

Look at your diagram. What words are in the middle and common to both sport and politics? Do the two things have more similarities or differences?

Does this help us answer the question about whether players should keep their personal and political opinions off the pitch?

TEST YOUR MEMORY

Last time, you looked at four arguments about sport and politics.
Can you remember what they were?




SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

If we start mixing _____ and _____, it wouldn't be about people's _____ any more. It would be about what their _____ has been doing.



SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

Athletes are also _____. The _____ that affect people around the world, like racism and sexism, affect _____ too.



SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

If you make a _____ statement during _____ events, a _____ number of people are going to see it and may take notice.



SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

People watch _____ to _____
They shouldn't have to think about _____ when they're trying to relax.

TEST YOUR MEMORY

Check whether you remembered everything.



SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

If we start mixing politics and sport, it wouldn't be about people's skill any more. It would be about what their country has been doing.

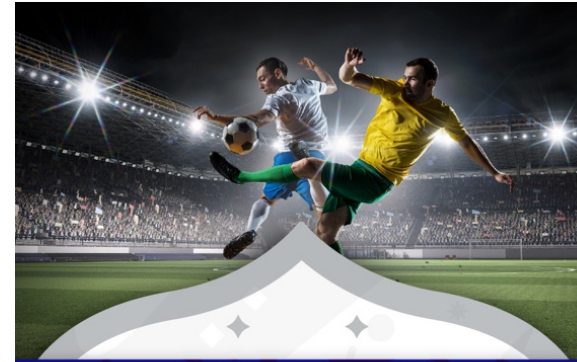
Example:
Apartheid and sporting boycott



SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

Athletes are also citizens. The issues that affect people around the world, like racism and sexism, affect athletes too. They have a right to freedom of speech and to fight for the causes they believe in.

Example:
Colin Kaepernick "take the knee" in the NFL



SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

If you make a political statement during sporting events, a huge number of people are going to see it and may take notice. Over 3 billion people are said to have watched some part of the 2018 FIFA World Cup

Example:
Indigenous protests and the Commonwealth Games 2018



SHOULD POLITICS MIX WITH SPORT?

People watch sports to enjoy themselves.
They shouldn't have to think about politics when they're trying to relax.

Example:
Rule 51 of the Olympic Charter



YOUR CHALLENGE

Become the host on a radio show!

You need to plan a radio show where you are the host. You'll have two special guest on your show, who will have a debate about whether players should be allowed to share political opinions on the field.

Choose two of these characters (one from each side of the argument) and read their perspectives on the following pages.

NO

YES

Huck Jones



Olympic representative



Gary Lineker



Tommie Smith & John Carlos



NO. SPORT AND POLITICS SHOULDN'T MIX



HUCK JONES
Fictional person

Huck Jones is a gymnast. Ever since he was five and first saw an Olympic gymnast competing on TV, he has wanted to win an Olympic gold medal. He has trained at least five times a week since the age of seven and hasn't had a dessert since his 18th birthday as he sticks to a strict training diet.

Huck trains hard and is at the top of his sport; he is obsessed with gymnastics. For him, politics and sports don't mix. He focuses all his energy on being the best athlete he can. If he had to think about anything other than gymnastics while competing, he would be distracted and wouldn't be able to do his best.

"I understand that people are angry about things going on in the world but there are other places where they can express their opinion. The gym is for competing athletically, not politically."



OLYMPIC REPRESENTATIVE
Fictional person

Rule 51 of the Olympic Charter says:

"No kind of demonstration or political, religious or racial propaganda is permitted in any Olympic sites, venues or other areas."

This means that athletes are banned from expressing themselves politically while competing in the games.

The Olympic committee says this is because it wants to make sure athletes from a diverse range of backgrounds feel welcome at the competition.

An example of it acting on these rules is Voula Papachristou. Papachristou was supposed to compete for Greece at the London 2012 Olympics but was expelled from the Greek team after she tweeted racist comments about African migrants (for which she later apologised).

YES. SPORT AND POLITICS SHOULD MIX



GARY LINEKER
Real person

Gary Lineker is one of Britain's best-known sports presenters. He went from playing football for Leicester City and other clubs to scoring more World Cup goals than any other Englishman. He has presented "Match of the Day" and commented on some of Britain's highest-profile sporting events. In short, Gary Lineker is a big deal.

A few years ago, Lineker started voicing his opinion on political issues in the UK, like the refugee crisis. He faced quite a lot of criticism from his fans, who didn't agree with his opinions.

In May 2015, Lineker called for football clubs and organisations to boycott FIFA, the world's governing body of football. FIFA had been caught in a corruption scandal and Lineker wanted to push it to be better. He was highly critical of FIFA, calling it a "revolting organisation" with "nauseating" levels of "corruption".



TOMMIE SMITH & JOHN CARLOS
Real people

In 1968 Tommie Smith and John Carlos made history. They had just won gold and bronze Olympic medals, but it wasn't their sporting achievements that shook the world. As they stood on the podium in front of 50,000 people in the stadium in Mexico City, with millions more watching on TV, they raised their fists - a symbol of black power. At that time, the American civil-rights movement was well under way. This was a nationwide campaign to give rights to black citizens, who had been mistreated for years.

Both men had their medals taken away, were ordered to leave the stadium and faced death threats when they got back to their homes. In a recent interview, John Carlos stood by his decision to take a stand, saying:

"I had a moral obligation to step up. Morality was a far greater force than the rules and regulations they had."

PREPARE YOUR RADIO SHOW

You will need to:

- ☐ Read two characters' perspectives. What do they think about mixing sport and politics?
- ☐ Plan your questions - what will you ask each person? Remember, you want to hear about their experience, as well as their opinion.
- ☐ Plan the responses - what do you think they would say?
- ☐ Include some examples - which examples can you include that would help to develop their arguments?
- ☐ Find two people to act as your characters! Explain who they are and give them a script or notes to follow
- ☐ Rehearse - radio shows are slick, without big pauses or gaps in the conversation
- ☐ Record! Have a go at recording the debate.
- ☐ Listen to your recording - who do you think gave the best argument? Has listening to the recording changed your mind?



COOL DOWN

- What kinds of things should you consider when you present different perspectives to an audience?
- Why is it important to include more than one perspective in a news story?
- Whose perspective was not included, that you think is important?



SUPER-REFLECTION

- Who do you think has more power: the players or the fans?
- If players shouldn't express their opinions about politics, should politicians be allowed to express their opinions about sport?
- Are there other professions where political opinions should be kept separate?

NOW...



Do some research

Find out about when a person in the public eye shared personal beliefs that they faced consequences for



Have a discussion

Talk to someone else about the issues covered in these activities



Become the teacher!

See if you can go through these activities again, as the teacher, with somebody else in your household