

A stylized illustration featuring three athletes: a runner in the upper right, an archer on the left, and a weightlifter at the bottom. They are surrounded by thick, expressive brushstrokes in red, blue, green, and yellow that form the Olympic rings. The background is white.

The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

TOKYO OLYMPICS

PART 1: IN THE KNOW

LEARNING INDEPENDENTLY?

Check out this week's
introduction video

bit.ly/NewsCycle

KEEN TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

Share your opinion on
this week's News Cycle

bit.ly/NewsCycleFeb23

PLAGIARISM =
when something is copied
without permission

DEROGATORY =
disrespectful

SCEPTICISM =
When you doubt or question
the truth of something

NEWS CYCLE

WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?



The games must go on?

In 2013, Tokyo celebrated the news that it would host the 2020 Olympic games. The organisers saw it as an opportunity to show off Japan's strength and recovery following a devastating earthquake in 2011. However, things have not gone to plan.

In 2015, the plans to build a \$2 billion stadium were scrapped and the Olympic logo had to be changed following accusations of plagiarism. In March 2020, with just four months to go, the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic games were postponed until July 2021 due to the covid-19 pandemic.

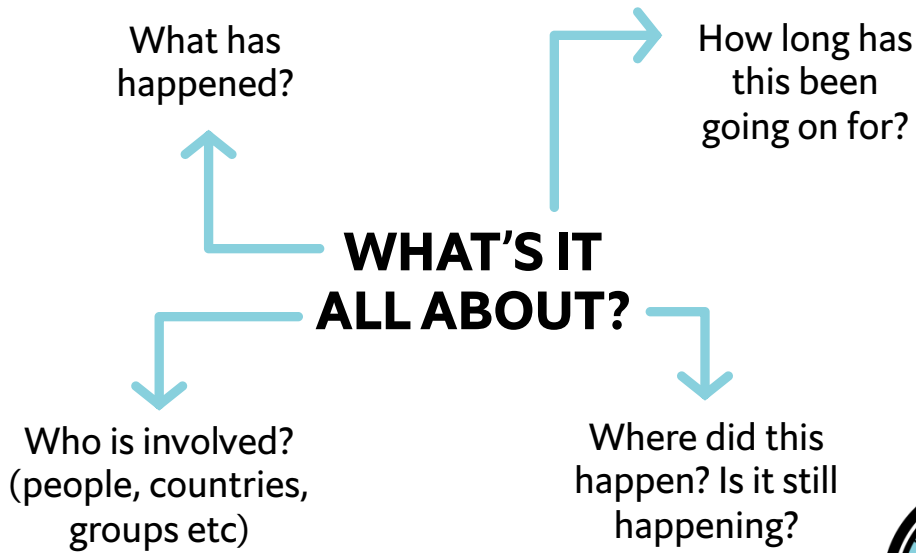
Then, in February 2021, Yoshiro Mori, the Tokyo Olympics chief, was forced to resign for making derogatory comments about the women in his team. Days later, another earthquake hit the region of Fukushima - where the Olympic torch is due to begin its journey. For some, this could be a symbolic warning that things won't go to plan.

Because of the ongoing pandemic, people in Japan have begun to question whether the games should go ahead at all. In a recent survey by the Kyodo news agency, 80% people surveyed in Japan thought they should either be postponed again or cancelled altogether. Scepticism is also growing amongst athletes, sponsors and volunteers.

However, event organisers have not backed down. The Olympic games are seen by many as a global celebration that can boost the host country. Competing on the Olympic stage is often a highlight of an athlete's career. The head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, recently said, "We are not speculating whether the games will take place, we are working on how the games will take place."

But with only five months to go, the IOC still has a marathon ahead: will it be able to organise a safe event and get people back on side?

Want to know more? Look here: tokyo2020.org/en



NEWS SCALE

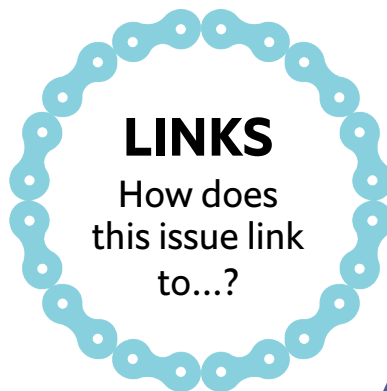
Is this news story a big concern for you? Mark your opinion on the scale below with an X. What about an elite athlete? Where would they put their X? What about a sports journalist?



A school subject?

Your life?

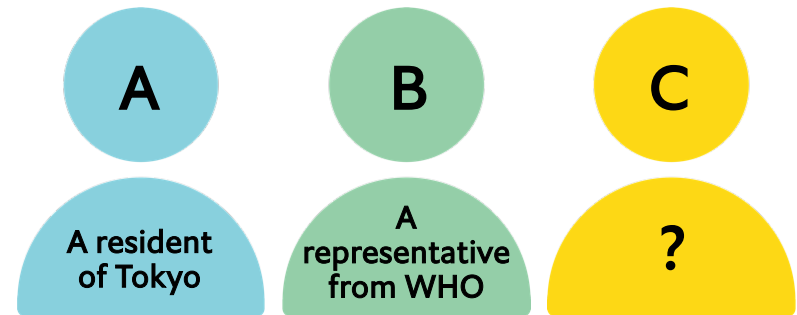
A different news story?



*NEWS CONCEPT:
democracy?*

PERSPECTIVE FLIP

What would Person A think about this issue? How are they affected by the issue? Now flip to Person B and think about the same questions. Are any perspectives missing?



(World Health Organisation)

CHALLENGE: how is this issue developing in the news?



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PART 2: THINKING HARDER

LEARNING INDEPENDENTLY?

Check out this week's
introduction video

bit.ly/NewsCycle

KEEN TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

Share your opinion on
this week's News Cycle

bit.ly/NewsCycleMar2

First, limber up by thinking about everything you learnt last week:

- What was the key information about this issue? (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)
- Why was this issue news? (How big was this piece of news? How many people does it affect? Is it global or local news?)
- What did you think about it? Did everyone you talked to have the same opinion?
- What have you seen about this in the news? How is this issue developing?

Then, take a ride through this week's activities.

WHAT'S THE FULL STORY?

Even though the games didn't happen in 2020, they will still be known as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games.

Organisers agreed that they will not be postponed again

– instead, if necessary, they will be cancelled.

In March 2020, Abe Shinzo, who was then prime minister of Japan, said that the rescheduled Olympic games would be

a celebration of humankind's victory over covid-19.

Before the pandemic struck,

15,400

ATHLETES,

150,000

STAFF MEMBERS,

600,000

TOURISTS AND

25,000

JOURNALISTS

were expected to gather for the games in Tokyo. Organisers now have to decide how to restrict these numbers to keep everyone safe.

"We have, at this moment, no reason whatsoever to believe that the Olympic games in Tokyo will not open on July 23rd...there is no plan B,"

Thomas Bach, the Head of the International Olympic Committee, said in January. However, he used very similar words in March 2020 – days before the games were postponed.

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics are the most expensive summer games on record.

Locals are now concerned that even if the games go ahead, Japan will struggle to make the money back. However, the legacy of hosting the games can be hard to accurately measure with numbers.



TURN THE COGS

1. This issue is about more than a sporting competition.
Can you explain the bigger picture?
2. Look at the facts on the previous page.
 - Which facts support the games taking place?
Which facts support cancelling the games?
 - Which side of the argument is stronger?

Support your answers with a fact and explain why.

SHOW OFF YOUR SKILLS



What questions need to be answered before a decision is made?



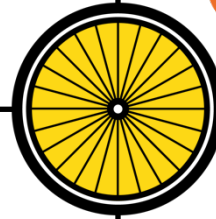
Should sport and entertainment be priorities in 2021?



What other perspectives might help you to think differently about this?



The decision rests with the Olympic organisers. Should it?



PUSH YOURSELF

Some members within the Olympic community think vaccinating all Olympic athletes might be the best way for the games to go ahead.

- With a limited amount of vaccines, is it fair to put elite athletes at the front of the queue?
- Can you think of an alternative plan to keep athletes and spectators safe?

TYRE CHANGE

Brakes on! Let's change the scenario.



The games are cancelled?



There is a large covid-19 outbreak in Japan?



Athletes compete virtually instead?

Challenge: can you spot this issue in the news? How has the issue developed since last week?