



A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games

The flash of skis, the thud of a perfectly landed vault, the strain on the faces of runners stretching toward the finish line—what is more exciting than watching an Olympic event?

There is one event that regularly brings people together—the Olympic Games. People around the world watch the Games. It's hard to imagine the numbers, but statistics about the 2012 Olympic Summer Games in London, England reveal that there was a global audience of over three billion people. What better venue for promoting a message of peace and understanding?

Preparations to host the Olympics begin far in advance. The host city is chosen seven years before the events are held. It takes a significant effort to determine if a city should apply to be a host city. First the city must determine what will be needed. Next the city must research the private and government resources that might be available to help offset the cost. Hosting the Olympics is a huge obligation, and the costs must be carefully weighed against the benefits. Years of planning and assessment are likely to precede the application. If the city is selected for the Olympic events, the final stages of planning begin.

Most cities that apply to host the Olympics do so because it can be profitable for the community. The costs are daunting, but the potential for a good return on the investment is great. Good planning is the key. Since new development occurs, employment opportunities increase. The city is also brought into the spotlight for hosting the Olympics, bringing people to the community and often increasing business. If the city successfully hosts the Olympic Games, it is remembered by many people for years and years. The underlying message given to citizens around the world is that the host city welcomes visitors and is open for business. The value of that kind of advertising is hard to calculate.

The Olympics are sometimes accused of being political, and at times they have been. It doesn't have to be that way. Hosting is one way to be sure that doesn't happen. With proper planning, the Games are loaded with possibilities for advancing understanding between countries and cultures without inserting politics. In the past, promoters have hardly scratched the surface of what might happen in the years leading up to and following the competition. Imagine regular concerts held in the stadiums and featuring music from other countries. What about showcasing other new structures with art, music, dance, literature, and commerce from around the world? If these activities are sponsored, they can generate even more revenue for the host city while promoting cultural understanding.

One of the arguments against a city hosting the Olympic competition is that sometimes the facilities constructed go unused. After the huge Olympic crowds move on and the cheering fades away, buildings may fall into disrepair or continue costing huge sums for maintenance. Is there a reason why creative architects shouldn't be able to design those structures so that they could be easily converted into affordable housing, factories, or stores? London incorporated some of that thinking and is an example of a city that planned ahead for future use of their facilities. Several of the venues have been converted into public recreational facilities, and the Olympic Park will host new housing, schools, parklands, and a community health center.

One of the first benefits that usually comes from Olympic preparation is an improvement in roads and public transportation. The improvements are often needed regardless of events, and they continue to pay off for years. Those upgrades don't just make travel easier. They can also mean lower levels of pollution and a healthier population.

In summary, there are many economic and social positives to hosting the Games. The preparations for the Olympics bring a boom in employment for at least four years before the games. New jobs and new people mean new spending in the community, which is good for business. The community puts on a show to welcome the athletes and many others, much like we do when we have visitors to our home. Tourists and other potential customers are attracted. The facilities created can be used by the citizens for years to come. There is a certain glory and pride attached to being a host city.

On a more idealistic level the Olympics are about spirit, not money. Many of the most important benefits can be intangible. The payoff comes not only in tourism and commerce, but in the happiness we get, and in the inspiration and the dreams of the people who live where the Olympics are hosted. We need heroes. We need encouragement. We need the examples of those who overcome hardship and those willing to work hard enough to fulfill their dreams. America has long been known as the country where dreams come true. Hosting the Olympics is a perfect way to continue that legacy.

No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games

The benefits are not enough to justify hosting the Olympic Games. No city in the United States should host a future Olympics competition. Rusting stadiums, unused roads, empty rooms, and a mountain of debt—these are part of the legacy left to a number of the cities who have hosted past Olympics. Montreal, Canada, for example, was nearly a billion dollars in debt after hosting the 1976 Games. It took the citizens of this city three decades to pay that debt. The stadiums built in Greece sit empty. The people of Nagano, Japan, who hosted the 1998 Olympics are still paying the bills.

Although the Olympics may be about showing national pride and competing in sporting events, the Olympics are also about business. Cities hoping to host the Olympics are making substantial investments. In 2012, London, England spent over \$10 billion dollars hosting the Olympics. Two years later, in 2014, Russia spent over \$51 billion hosting the Olympics. With price tags like these, many countries are beginning to think twice about being a host to the Olympics.

A study completed by the University of Oxford concluded that the average cost overrun of the Olympics between 1960 and 2012 is 179%. With most Olympics having a cost overrun, who is responsible for paying the bill? If a city in the United States were to host the Olympics the answer would be different than many other countries. Unlike other countries that host the Olympics, in the United States, it is a city rather than the country that hosts the Olympics. Although the federal government does pay some of the expenses related to the Olympics, taxpayers of the host city are also responsible for paying for the event. Other financial help comes from private sources who choose to donate money.

Imagine for a moment what 15 billion dollars might do for fixing roads and bridges. What might that amount do if it were used to provide housing, improve education, or address the health of a city? What would 15 billion dollars do if it were applied to scholarships, public transportation, or conservation?

The costs aren't just in dollars. An Olympic venue, the location where the events are housed or held, takes valuable space, which is expensive and difficult to find in urban areas. Inevitably, some people and businesses are forced to move. They are paid for their property, but what price can you put on the home or business that has been in that particular neighborhood for years? Is it worth changing the neighborhood to accommodate three weeks of Olympic events? And for those citizens who remain in nearby areas, property values and taxes go up. Due to the increased living expenses in the area, many people discover they cannot afford to live in their own homes.

Hosting is a huge responsibility. The cost of keeping athletes and spectators safe has spiraled higher and higher in the past few years. Thousands of men and women are needed to ensure the safety of participants and of visitors. Hosts of the Olympics have spent hundreds of millions to billions of dollars to provide the security needed.

So what about all the money that will come from the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Olympic Games? What about all of those people who will be attracted to the events? The sports lovers who come to town for an Olympic event will surely want to wear a new T-shirt when they go home, and they'll pay for food and hotels and other souvenirs, but that is only part of the picture.

Interestingly, some studies have concluded that there is actually a decline in tourism and local spending during the Olympic events. People who would ordinarily come to the city want to avoid the Olympic traffic and the crowds, so they stay home. In addition, those same crowds and that same traffic can make it difficult at times for some local businesses to operate.

While some of the construction undertaken for the Olympics can benefit a city in the long term, some structures will remain empty, such as the famous Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing, China. Other struggling venues, such as those Olympic stadiums in Greece, are costing great sums for maintenance or are sitting as empty as their over-two-thousand-year-old neighbors.

Many economists agree with Arthur Fleisher, a professor of economics at Metropolitan State University of Denver, who says, "In the long run, staging the Olympics [is] not helpful [to the home cities]. . . . Part of the problem is local, state and national level. They don't care what the data seems to say. They just get caught up in the feel-good aspect of chasing these things."

The lessons are clear. A growing number of cities from around the world have withdrawn their bids to host future Olympics. Oslo, Norway; Stockholm, Sweden; Krakow, Poland; and Munich, Germany, have all seen the light. Hopefully American cities will prove as wise.

39. Read the claim from "A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games."

"The Games are loaded with possibilities for advancing understanding between countries and cultures without inserting politics."

Is there enough evidence in "A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games" to support the claim?

- (A) Yes, there is sufficient evidence to support the claim. The author provides specific examples of sponsored activities that promote the understanding of other cultures.
- (B) No, there is not sufficient evidence to support this claim. The author fails to explain how countries communicate with one another to promote an understanding of cultures.
- (C) Yes, there is sufficient evidence to support this claim. The author explains how countries have incorporated cultural activities into the Olympic ceremonies.
- (D) No, there is not sufficient evidence to support this claim. The author fails to explain how advertising conveys the cultures of the Olympic participants.

40. How does the last paragraph in "A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games" contribute to the development of ideas in the passage?

- (A) It uses experts to share solutions to the challenges mentioned throughout the passage.
- (B) It uses imagery to recall the various events and ideas mentioned in the passage.
- (C) It uses emotional language to make one last appeal for hosting the Olympics.
- (D) It uses statistics to support the reasons given for hosting the Olympics.

41. Which sentences from "No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games" supports the inference that Olympic organizers may struggle to find host cities in the future? Choose **two** answers.

- (A) "Rusting stadiums, unused roads, empty rooms, and a mountain of debts—these are part of the legacy left to a number of cities who have hosted past Olympics."
- (B) "The people of Nagano, Japan, who hosted the 1998 Olympics are still paying the bills."
- (C) Unlike other countries that host the Olympics, in the United States, it is a city rather than the country that hosts the Olympics.
- (D) "Thousands of men and women are needed to ensure the safety of participants and of visitors."
- (E) "People who would ordinarily come to the city want to avoid the Olympic traffic and the crowds, so they stay home."

42. Read the sentences from "No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games."

"Other struggling venues, such as the Olympic stadiums in Greece are costing great sums for maintenance or are sitting as empty as their over-two-thousand-year-old neighbors."

What is the meaning of the word maintenance as used in the passage?

- (A) artificial benefits
- (B) continued care
- (C) complex issues
- (D) accumulated debt

43. How does the second to last paragraph in “No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” contribute to the development of ideas in the passage?

- (A) It uses data from research to explain the high costs of hosting the Olympics.
- (B) It uses persuasion to convince local governments to consider the effects of hosting the Olympics.
- (C) It uses a sequence of steps to illustrate how to increase tourism in a city choosing to host the Olympics.
- (D) It uses an opinion from an expert to explain why cities continue to host the Olympics.

44. This question has two parts. Answer Part One and then answer Part Two.

Part One

How do the authors of **both** passages shape their presentation of key information about hosting the Olympics?

- A. “A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” gives specific costs for hosting the Olympics, but “No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” states examples of past host cities of the Olympics lacking the support they needed from other countries.
- B. “A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” describes the locations of unused buildings following the Olympics, but “No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” uses statistics to claim that the Olympics have lacked enough participants for some sporting events.
- C. “A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” uses facts about that impact to local residents after the Olympics, but “No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” uses facts to illustrate how the Olympics are too disorganized and expensive for anyone to attend.
- D. “A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” emphasizes the advantages of the Olympics, but “No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” suggests that past host cities have found the Olympics too expensive.

Part Two

Which evidence from the passages supports the answer in Part One? Choose **two** answers.

- A. “Next the city must research the private and government resources that might be available to help . . .” (“A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games”)
- B. “London incorporated some of that thinking and is an example of a city that planned ahead . . .” (“A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games”)
- C. “One of the first benefits that usually comes from Olympic preparation is an improvement in roads and public transportation.” (“A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games”)
- D. “Montreal, Canada, for example, wound up nearly a billion dollars in debt after hosting the 1976 Games.” (“No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games”)
- E. “Although the Olympics may be about showing national pride and competing in sporting events, the Olympics are also about business.” (“No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games”)
- F. “The sports lovers who come to town for an Olympic event will surely want to wear a new T-shirt when they go home . . .” (“No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games”)

45. The authors of “A U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” and “No U.S. City Should Host Future Olympic Games” **both** describe how the Olympics impact the host city. Write an essay analyzing how the authors use key information to advance different interpretations of the facts. Use evidence from **both** passages to support your response.