

Olympics 2012: the bidding begins

By the end of May, a number of cities had confirmed that they will submit a bid to host the Olympic Games in 2012. More bids are expected and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will select the host city in July 2005.

- How many of the cities bidding for the 2012 Olympics can you name?
- The following texts refer to six cities that have submitted Olympic bids. Read the texts and match them to the cities in the box.

Leipzig	New York	London	Madrid	Paris	Moscow
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a _____
The Big Apple offers superb cultural facilities and a well-developed tourism infrastructure, although security fears and concerns about rising crime could deter the Olympic Committee. This ambitious bid will cost \$32 million.

b _____
The 1992 Olympics were held in the rival city of Barcelona in what was a superb event. Getting the Games can bring a 'feel-good factor' to a country, and many Spaniards are hoping for a successful Olympic bid.

c _____
Already has the infrastructure for and experience of holding the 1980 Olympics, although several countries including the USA boycotted these Games. Some people fear terrorist attacks. Huge investment opportunities await the winner.

d _____
This city of 490,000 will compete against a number of capitals to host the Games. Gerhard Schröder announced the national winner in April this year. Winning the Games is likely to lead to increased employment.

e _____
An excellent location with good transport links, which would benefit from a tourism boost if this city were successful. The Stade de France, the stadium built for the 1998 World Cup, has a seating capacity of 80,000.

f _____
These could become the third Olympic Games to be held here: the last time was in 1948. Eighty-one per cent of people support the bid – amid fears of prohibitive costs – which could be about £2.4 billion. The Prime Minister is backing the bid!

- Match some collocations relating to advantages and disadvantages of hosting the Games. Eight of them were in the texts above. What other pros and cons can you think of?

Advantages

feel-good	benefits
tourism	employment
increased	infrastructure
improved	boost
economic	opportunities
investment	factor

Disadvantages

rising	costs
prohibitive	attacks
traffic	crime
security	impact
terrorist	congestion
environmental	fears

- Discuss the following.
 - Of the cities that have submitted a bid, decide which one you think should host the Games. Give reasons for your choice.
 - Huge amounts of money are spent on hosting the Games – in marketing, promotions and sponsorship. Have the modern Olympics become too commercial?