

Timeline of athletics history



If you want to find out more about this athletics event, type in 'Ancient Olympics' into your search engine or try these websites:

www.olympics.org

www.historyforkids.net/ancient-greek-olympics.html

www.ancientgreece.com/s/Olympics

4

8th Century BC

3

The Ancient Olympics

2

History of Athletics Timeline ↗

Here are some research questions to get you started:
Where was the first Modern Olympics held?
Why was it organised?
Who organised it?
What sort of races were there?
How many nations took part?



1896

The First Modern Olympics

Find out about the International Amateur Athletic Federation at www.iaaf.org



How many events are they in charge of?

How important are they to UK and international athletics?

1912

The International Amateur Athletic Federation



Why were trust funds for amateur athletes important to the sport of athletics?

Find out at: www.iaaf.org/about-iaaf/history

1985

The International Amateur Athletic Federation created trust funds for amateur athletes.

Until the 1970s, athletes only had the Olympic Games to compete in every 4 years. Today, the official IAAF (The International Amateur Athletic Federation) now includes:

World Championships

World Junior Championships

World Youth Championships

World Indoor Championships

Continental Cup

World Cross Country Championships

World Race Walking Cup

World Half Marathon Championships

The International Diamond League

World Challenge series

Combined Events Challenge

Race Walking Challenge

Hammer Throw Challenge

Road Race Labels

Can you choose one of these events and research it?

Find out where it is held, who competes and how long it has been a recognised event within athletics .

Are there any other events not listed that interest you?

Here are the names of some famous athletes, from past and present. All have made a significant contribution to the world of athletics. Cut these names out and give them to the children. Ask them to find out more about them and answer the question:
How has this person made a significant difference to athletics?

This is a good website: www.biography.com/people/groups/track-and-field-athletes

Jesse Owens

Usain Bolt

Alice Coachman

Jessica Ennis

Veronica
Campbell-Brown

Paula Radcliffe

Michael Johnson

Tommie Smith

Jonathan
Edwards

Hot seating: Roger Bannister

You have been asked to pretend to be Roger Bannister, the 25 year old medical student who, in 1954, became the first man to run a mile in less than four minutes. When you come into the classroom, the children will ask you questions about what you are wearing, who you are and what you are famous for.

Please dress as much like Roger Bannister as possible. You could wear PE kit or running gear or a combination of running gear and a doctor's coat, etc. You may also have items with you to help the children: running shoes, stop watch, energy drinks, doctor's kit, etc.



Below are some of the questions the children may ask you, and some of the information you will need to answer those questions. You may use this sheet during the hot seating and the class teacher will also have a copy, to help guide the children's questioning and learning.

What is your name? Roger Bannister
Other information: Born: 23 March
1929 (age 86)
Born in Harrow, England.



What are you famous for?

In 1954 you broke the four-minute mile. You were 25 years old and studying medicine at Oxford University. You were the first person to run a mile in under four minutes, doing it in 3mins 59.4 seconds.

You broke this record at the Iffley Road track in Oxford and were watched by about 3,000 spectators.

You ran behind the lead runners for most of the mile but just over 200 yards from the finish, you took the lead with a final burst of energy. You sprinted to the line in record time and fell exhausted into the arms of a friend, the Rev Nicholas Stacey.

Pandemonium broke out when spectators heard news that you had officially beaten the four-minute mile.

You had trained for the race the previous week at Paddington Green in London in high winds . The weather at Iffley Road was not ideal for record-breaking - a 15mph crosswind with gusts of up to 25mph meant that you nearly called off the attempt.

What do you consider to be your greatest achievement in life?

On the 50th anniversary of running the sub-4-minute mile, you were interviewed by the BBC. At the end of the interview, you were asked whether you looked back on the sub-4-minute mile as the most important achievement of your life. You replied to the effect that no, you rather saw your subsequent forty years of practising as a neurologist and some of the new procedures you had introduced as being more significant.

Article about Roger Bannister breaking the 4-minute mile

Sixty years ago Roger Bannister collapsed into a swarm of men wearing stiff macs and bowler hats, his body feeling "like an exploding flashbulb" as he fell. Then came the words that revived him quicker than any pharmaceutical pick-me-up.



"Result of event eight: one mile. First, RG Bannister of Exeter and Merton colleges, in a time which, subject to ratification, is a new track record, British record, European record, Commonwealth record and world record – Three minutes and ..."

The rest of the sentence was drowned by cheers. Bannister, a 25-year-old medical student, had become the first to break through the four-minute barrier.

Bannister does not remember the last time he watched the Pathe News footage of him accelerating towards history with a time of 3min 59.4sec. But really, he tells the Guardian, there is no need. Why recall in black and white what your mind's eye replays on demand in glorious technicolour?

"They tell me more people have climbed Everest than have run a four-minute mile," he chuckles, before he is taken back to Thursday 6 May 1954, a day when the weather flip-flopped between squall and sunshine, bluster and gales. For much of it Bannister worried that the 25mph winds would make going under four minutes impossible. He nearly didn't run at all.

Breakfast was porridge at his Earl's Court flat, lunch a ham and cheese salad at a friend's in Oxford. In between he spent the morning at hospital, where he sharpened his spikes on a grindstone in a laboratory, before catching the train to Oxford. "I got to the track at 4.30pm but didn't decide to race until about half an hour before it was due to start at 6pm," he says. "My pacemakers Chris Brasher and Chris Chataway were getting a little impatient. They were saying: 'Make up your mind!' But it was I who had to do it. I was very concerned about the weather but when the wind dropped it proved just possible."

Bannister also knew that the Australian runner John Landy, who had gone under 4min 02sec for the mile four times, was heading to Finland with the aim of breaking four minutes. The attempt was on.

He talks through the race fluently but dispassionately; the best bits have to be teased out of him. The anger he felt after a false start by his first pacemaker Chris Brasher. Then feeling so full of energy on the first lap that he was shouting: "Faster!" at Brasher. And then the fear at the end of the 62.4sec third lap when the record appeared to be slipping away.

"I heard the lap times as they went by," he says. "The first was 58. The half-mile 1.58. But the three-quarters was three minutes and one second so I knew I had to produce a last lap of under 59."

Did you worry at the end of that third lap? "Oh yes! And I was also unsure whether I should start my finish immediately or wait another 150 yards and overtake Chataway in the back straight. I decided I would stay a bit longer and then went. There was plenty of adrenaline then, I can assure you!"

He had intended to keep his record attempt quiet. However his friend Norris McWhirter – later, appropriately, a presenter of Record Breakers – alerted the press. The BBC sent a lone cameraman, who captured the race stood on top of his van parked in the centre of the track. The footage was quickly sent back to London where it would be shown on that evening's Sportsview. Bannister's performance was more remarkable still given his lack of training. He would skip his gynaecology lectures, enabling him to run for 45 minutes at lunchtime, and did only 35 miles a week. Most modern club runners would exceed that. However only 1,338 people have ever broken four minutes for the mile. It is also worth noting the effects of the cinder track, which is around one to one-and-a-half seconds a lap slower than modern surfaces.

What Bannister produced that day was very special. However his record lasted just six weeks before Landy lowered it by more than a second. But later in 1954, when the pair met at the Empire Games in Vancouver, Bannister emerged triumphant after an epic contest – later called, with complete justification, the Miracle Mile – coming from 15 yards down with a surprise sprint off the last bend.

As Bannister relates in his autobiography, *Twin Tracks*, he retired from athletics later that year and went on to become a neurologist as well as the first chairman of the Sports Council. Even now, at 85, he remains sharp and jolly, despite suffering from Parkinson's.

"I'm slow and need help walking but I'm taking it with a proper sense of perspective," he adds. "At 85 I have had many opportunities. I also have many friends and a very supportive family. These are all things I feel very blessed about"