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The Paris Olympics: sport as politics and culture

With Paris preparing to host the summer 2024 Olympics, it is the perfect time to step back and situate this grand event in a proper global context. Why do countries compete to host the Olympics, even with endless reports of financial loss for other host countries years afterward? And what is the larger geopolitical project behind what appears to be merely an international sporting event? Paris has put its reputation on the line for these Olympics, and we will situate the Paris games in a comparative context with other Olympics from the past. The Olympics have always been much more than the sports they showcase—they have also been a festival of cultural and political pageantry for the countries that host them.

Week One

Politics in motion: Understanding the politics of Olympism

Week Two

Locating politics: why the Olympics will be in Paris

Week Three

The economics and aesthetics of Olympic grandeur

Week Four

Competition, nationalism, and identity in the Olympics