



Lesson Three

NBC DOCUMENTARY, *THE ROAD TO BEIJING*

- Organizing Questions**
- Who are some of the Olympians of the Beijing Olympic Games?
 - What is the significance of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing to some of the Olympic athletes?

Introduction In this lesson, students view and analyze a documentary produced by NBC. They also learn about some of the Olympians participating in the 2008 Beijing Olympics and participate in an activity based on one of the quotes from the documentary. This lesson includes an optional research project.

- Objectives** In this lesson, students will
- learn about the Olympic Games;
 - analyze some of the key themes of a documentary produced by NBC about the Beijing Olympics;
 - learn about some famous sites in Beijing;
 - become familiar with some of the Olympians of the Beijing Olympics; and
 - participate in an activity based on a quote from an Olympian.

Materials Handout 1, *Quotes from Olympians*, pp. 50–51, 30 copies
Handout 2, *Beijing Olympics: Day-by-Day*, pp. 52–55, 30 copies
DVD, NBC Documentary, *The Road to Beijing*

Equipment DVD Player

- Teacher Preparation** Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.
1. Make appropriate number of copies of the handouts.
 2. Prepare DVD player.

Time Two 50-minute class periods

Procedures

1. Ask students what comes to mind when they hear the word “Olympic Games.” After a brief discussion, point out that the Olympic Games are subdivided into summer and winter games. The summer and winter games are each held every four years. An Olympiad is a period of four years, associated with the Olympic Games. Mention that the 28th Olympiad was held in Athens, Greece in 2004. The 29th Olympiad will be held in Beijing, China in 2008.
2. Ask students to comment on the following:
 - Describe an experience when you were anxiously awaiting an event.
 - Have you ever prepared for an event over many months or years? What was the event? What were some of the benefits and challenges of the preparation?
 - What are some positive and negative aspects of competition?
 - What words or images come to mind when you hear “Beijing” and/or “China”?
3. Ask students to keep these questions in mind as they view a six-and-a-half-minute documentary. The documentary was produced by NBC. It features many American Olympians reflecting upon the road leading up to the Beijing Olympics and their thoughts on Beijing and/or China. Ask students to think about some of the documentary’s key topics or themes, take note of historic sites that are shown in the documentary, and consider some statements made by the Olympians.
4. Show the NBC documentary, *The Road to Beijing*.
5. Ask students what some of the key topics or themes of the documentary were. Some examples are generations of people (young and old); coexistence of new and traditional culture; competition; food; music.
6. Ask students if they were familiar with some of the historic sites that were shown in the documentary. Some of the sites in China were:
 - **The Great Wall**—The Great Wall is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Zigzagging and traversing nearly 4,000 miles east to west, it is the longest human-made structure in the world. China’s first emperor, Qin Shi Huang Di, ruler of the Qin (pronounced “Chin”) Dynasty, began construction on a section of the Great Wall more than 2,000 years ago. Much of the original Great Wall was built out of soil rather than stone.
 - **Temple of Heaven**—built in 1420, the Temple of Heaven and its surrounding area were designed to be more than twice as large as the Forbidden City to show respect to the heavens. It served as a place for emperors to worship, perform ceremonies, offer sacrifices, and pray for rain and good harvests. There are also Temples of Earth, Sun, and Moon, each located in different sections of Beijing.





- **Forbidden City**—also called the Imperial Palace; where emperors and families from two dynasties, the Ming and the Qing, lived and ruled the country.
- **The Summer Palace**—a royal garden during China’s Qing Dynasty, with classic Chinese landscaping. The garden features a large lake, a hill, palaces, pavilions, temples, halls, and bridges.
- **Tiananmen Square**—a large, open square in the center of Beijing surrounded by government buildings and monuments.

7. Ask students to comment on some of the statements (about Beijing, China, and the hosting of the Olympics) that were made by the Olympians. After the discussion, distribute copies of Handout 1, *Quotes from Olympians*, to the students. The handout includes some quotes (from the documentary) from Olympians about Beijing, China, and the hosting of the Olympics. Have students individually or in pairs read the quotes and chose one of the activities on the handout.
8. Have students present two-minute presentations of their work.
9. For homework, assign Handout 2, *Beijing Olympics: Day-by-Day*. Tell students that this handout was developed by NBC. Encourage students to explore <<http://NBCOlympics.com>> to learn more about the Beijing Olympics and the Olympians described on this handout. You may want to assign students to develop research projects on a specific Olympic event, on one of the Olympians mentioned in the handout, or the significance of the opening and closing ceremonies.

Assessment

The following activities may be used to assess students’ work in this lesson:

1. Student presentations of their selected activity from Handout 1, *Quotes from Olympians*.
2. Class discussions, evaluating students’ ability to
 - clearly state their opinions and observations;
 - exhibit sensitivity toward different cultures and ideas;
 - respect and acknowledge other students’ comments;
 - ask relevant and insightful questions; and
 - provide correct and thoughtful answers to classmates’ questions.

QUOTES FROM OLYMPIANS

The following quotes were taken from the NBC documentary *The Road to Beijing*. After reading the quotes, complete one of the activities and prepare a short two-minute presentation of your work.

- **David Durante** (gymnastics): David refers to Beijing as the “city of the future.”
Activity: Develop a poster of Beijing. Would you consider Beijing to be a “city of the future”? How does the documentary illustrate the coexistence of new and traditional culture in China?
- **Eric Vendt** (swimming): Eric refers to the Olympics as China’s “coming out party as a country to the rest of the world.”
Activity: Research past Olympics—for example, Tokyo Summer Olympics in 1964, Seoul Summer Olympics in 1988. Would you consider the hosting of the Olympics (by a particular country) to be a “coming out party” to the rest of the world? Write a short summary of your thoughts.
- **Natalie Coughlin** (swimming): “I’ve never been to China before so I’m kind of a blank slate, and I’m looking forward to the experience.” Being an Olympian “... represents all the years [of training] along the way, the journey of my career.”
Activity: Write a poem about a place that you have never visited or about training for an event.
- **Donny Robinson** (BMX cyclist): “... just take in the [Chinese] culture and what they [the Chinese] have to offer...”
Activity: Design a poster that promotes travel to China. What aspects of Chinese culture would you promote?
- **Paul Hamm** (gymnastics): “... if we were to beat them [the Chinese], it would sort of be the equivalent of Team U.S.A beating the Russians in hockey back in the day”; Paul is referring to the “Miracle on Ice” during which the United States hockey team defeated the Soviet Union in the 1980 Winter Olympics in a medal round. The United States went on to beat Finland to win the gold medal.
Activity: Research the “Miracle on Ice” and develop two articles about the event—one for a United States newspaper in 1980 and one for a Soviet newspaper in 1980. How have politics influenced the Olympics in the past? Alternatively, develop two political cartoons that show two different perspectives on the “Miracle on Ice.”
- **Terrence Trammell** (track): “Well, it’s going to be very loud [before the event starts] but it might be pretty quiet when it’s over.”
Activity: Write a journal entry about a time when you experienced or observed a dramatic shift in emotions.
- **Laura Wilkinson** (diving): “You feel like the odds are always stacked against you. I feel like I rise to the occasion...”
Activity: Draw a cartoon strip that illustrates an event in your life when you felt the odds were stacked against you.

- **Shawn Johnson** (gymnastics): “Having my coach ... from Beijing, they tell us how hard the Chinese work, and it kind of transfers over in our own gym.”
Activity: Write song lyrics or a poem about a time when you worked with a person or people from a different culture or country.
- **Katie Hoff** (swimming): “... my view of China when I was younger was just that it was a really crowded place.”
Activity: Develop a class poll that assesses what students (in your class) think of China. Have their views changed recently?
- **Michael Phelps** (swimming): “... just being able to see the architecture around here [the Forbidden City] is pretty neat.”
Activity: Research life in the Forbidden City. Develop a short dialog between people who once lived in the Forbidden City.
- **Hunter Kemper** (triathlon): “The Great Wall... it’s one of the wonders of the world.”
Activity: Conceptualize a board game using the Great Wall. As a requirement, players would need to draw upon their mathematical skills in the game.

BEIJING OLYMPICS: DAY-BY-DAY

This handout was developed by NBC. You may want to learn more about the Beijing Olympics by visiting <<http://NBCOlympics.com>>.



Friday, August 8th: **Opening Ceremony**

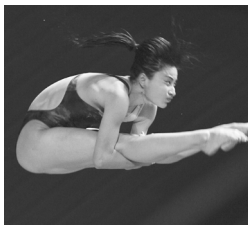
For the first time in history, the world's most populous nation will host the world's largest sporting event: the Games of the XXIX Olympiad. The Opening Ceremony for the 2008 Games begins on August 8, 2008 (8/8/08) at 8 p.m., in honor of the number 8, which is a symbol of good luck in China. When the ceremony unfolds at the National Stadium, Beijing will become the focal point of the sports world, as more than 10,000 athletes from over 200 nations gather to compete.



Saturday, August 9th: **Michael Phelps**

Swimming

The 23-year-old from Baltimore was the star of the Athens Games with his remarkable eight-medal performance (six gold, two bronze). Since then, he has made a case for being the greatest competitor his sport has ever seen; at the 2007 World Championships, Phelps won seven gold medals and set five world records. And at a historic Olympics in Beijing, the best swimmer in the world has a chance to become the best Olympian of all time: If he wins four gold medals at the 2008 Games, Phelps will have more Olympic golds than any other athlete in history.



Sunday, August 10th: **Guo Jingjing**

Diving

In China, diving is an immense source of national pride, and the biggest star on the world's dominant diving team is Guo, whose image is ubiquitous around the Olympic host city, appearing on everything from cans of soda to public buses. The 26-year-old Beijing resident has been virtually unbeatable in women's springboard since the Athens Games, and is aiming to sweep the springboard events for the second straight Olympics in Beijing.



Monday, August 11th: **Natalie Coughlin**

Swimming

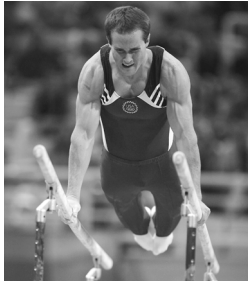
The California native had a breakout performance in Athens, winning a medal in each of her five events (including two gold). In 2005, she graduated from Cal-Berkeley with a degree in psychology, and in 2006, she released a book about her road to success. For Coughlin, navigating around Beijing may not be as difficult as it will be for some of her fellow U.S. teammates—the 25-year-old has dabbled in learning to speak Mandarin.



Tuesday, August 12th: **Katie Hoff**

Swimming

In 2004, Hoff (then 15) was the youngest member of the entire U.S. delegation at the Athens Olympics. Now, at 19, the six-time world champion is one of the most formidable swimmers in the world. Hailing from the same Baltimore swim club that produced Michael Phelps, Hoff—who graduated from high school in 2007—has the potential to be the female swimming star of the Beijing Games.



Wednesday, August 13th: **Paul Hamm**

Gymnastics

In Athens, the Wisconsin native became the first American man in history to win Olympic all-around gold. Following his victory, the 25-year-old took time away from the sport to attend Ohio State along with his twin brother Morgan, who is also an Olympic gymnast. Having received his degree in accounting from Ohio State, Hamm is returning to make his third Olympic appearance, ready to contend for an all-around medal yet again.



Thursday, August 14th: **Shawn Johnson**

Gymnastics

The 16-year-old—who stands 4-foot-9 and is nicknamed “Peanut”—is in a position to become the female gymnastics star of the Beijing Games. She enters Beijing as the reigning world champ and favorite to win gold in the biggest event in women’s gymnastics, the all-around competition. Johnson has taken an interest in China’s language and culture, and at the 2006 and 2007 Nationals had her name in Chinese characters down the sleeve of her leotard. Furthermore, she will travel to Beijing with a coach, Liang Chow, who is a native of that city. And perhaps most importantly, the Iowa native, who in many ways is a typical teenager—one who values attending high school football games and spending time with her parents, friends, and dog—has proven that she can thrive under pressure.



Friday, August 15th: **Laure Manaudou**

Swimming

The French star—whose life has received a constant stream of media headlines overseas—is one of the world’s premier swimmers. In her Olympic debut as a 17-year-old in 2004, Manaudou won three medals (gold, silver, bronze) and was nicknamed “L’or Manaudou” (“L’or” means gold in French; it is pronounced roughly the same as “Laure”) by the French press. After claiming five medals at the 2007 World Championships, the biggest French Olympic star is set to be a multi-medal threat in the pool once again—despite all the distractions.



Saturday, August 16th: **Tyson Gay**

Track and Field

During his dominant 2007 season, the former University of Arkansas star made a forceful claim that he's the top sprinter in the world. At the 2007 World Championships, Gay won gold in the 100 meters, 200 meters, and 4x100 meter relay. In Beijing, the challenge will be significant—Jamaican star Asafa Powell stands in Gay's path—but the Kentucky native has a chance to become the first man to win the 100 meter and 200 meter at the same Olympics since Carl Lewis in 1984.



Sunday, August 17th: **Lauryn Williams**

Track and Field

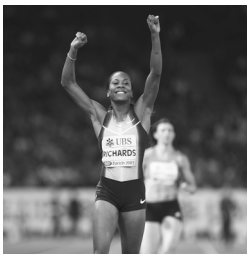
Nicknamed "Sub-11" (a reference to her swift times in the 100 meters), the 2004 Olympic silver medalist is arguably the fastest woman in the world—she won gold in the 100 meter at the 2005 World Championships and silver at the World Championships in 2007. Remarkably, Williams regularly outruns her opponents despite being one of the smaller sprinters in the world at 5-foot-3.



Monday, August 18th: **Misty May-Treanor/Kerri Walsh**

Beach Volleyball

The queens of the beach have dominated their sport like no other competitors since 2003, winning three straight world titles and an Olympic gold in Athens. Since the 2004 Games, both have gotten married: May-Treanor to Florida Marlins catcher Matt Treanor, and Walsh to beach volleyball player Casey Jennings. In Beijing, they will seek to extend their dynasty on the beach, but will face a strong challenge from China, which has an emerging beach volleyball tradition of its own.



Tuesday, August 19th: **Sanya Richards**

Track and Field

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, the 2005 world 400 meter silver medalist makes up half of what could be the world's fastest couple: Her fiancé is New York Giants cornerback (and Super Bowl champion) Aaron Ross. A talented singer and dancer who enjoys bowling against Ross in her spare time, Richards races wearing her trademark good luck charm—a necklace with a bullet, representing her blazing speed.



Wednesday, August 20th: **Donny Robinson**

Cycling (BMX)

The Napa, California, native has been riding BMX bikes since age six, singing in choirs since age eight, and dancing since age 12—and he aspires to be on Broadway someday. At 5-foot-5 he is half a foot shorter than most of his opponents, but still won the 2007 U.S. title in a sport that is dominated by Americans. The deeply religious Robinson says his iPod is mostly filled with Christian music and admits that he still sleeps on the same Dumbo sheets that he had as a child. Nonetheless, the son of a former motorcycle racer and a former gymnast—who did gymnastics himself when he was younger—is a fierce competitor. Having visited Beijing prior to the 2008

Games, he says, “I was in Beijing for three weeks, and it was unreal. It was an awesome experience.”



Thursday, August 21st: **Liu Xiang**

Track and Field

Despite popular belief, China’s biggest Olympic star is not basketball player Yao Ming; it is 110 meter hurdler Liu Xiang, a 26-year-old from Shanghai whose face can be seen on advertisements all across Beijing. As the reigning Olympic and world champion, Liu is China’s greatest hope in track and field at the Beijing Games, and he will be under enormous pressure to succeed. His event (which lasts less than 13 seconds) will be one of the most anticipated moments of the 2008 Olympics. And for China, his success is an immense source of national pride.



Friday, August 22nd: **Allyson Felix**

Track and Field

The world’s dominant 200 meter runner and arguably the top female sprinter in the world, Felix claimed three gold medals at the 2007 World Championships, a feat she could duplicate in Beijing. The Los Angeles native and daughter of an ordained minister is deeply devoted to her religious upbringing; when she’s traveling for track, Felix’s mother sends her audio CDs of her father’s sermons. The 22-year-old has a degree in elementary education from USC and hopes to teach fifth grade when her track career is over.



Saturday, August 23rd: **Jeremy Wariner**

Track and Field

The two-time Olympic gold medalist from Baylor University is well known for his unique appearance on the track—he races in diamond earrings and sunglasses, even at night. The Texas native receives guidance from another 400 meter great, his mentor and agent, Michael Johnson. Wariner has spoken openly about his plans to break Johnson’s 400 meter world record of 43.18 seconds in Beijing. Contemplating his experience in Beijing, Wariner says, “In 2004, I didn’t get to go to the Opening Ceremony so that’s what I’m looking forward to in Beijing. Just walking in the stadium with all the other countries, all the people in the world watching and all of us just coming together as one.”

Sunday, August 24th: **Closing Ceremony**

At the end of the final day of competition at the Games of the XXIX Olympiad, the Closing Ceremony at Beijing’s National Stadium will signal the conclusion of the Beijing Games. The focus of the Olympic world will first shift to Vancouver (site of the XXI Olympic Winter Games in 2010) and then to London, which is set to host the Games of the XXX Olympiad in 2012.

APPENDICES

Lesson One, *Beijing Introduction*

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Lesson Two, *The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games*

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- ⁷ Rylan Sekiguchi, *10,000 Shovels: China's Urbanization and Economic Development* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education, 2006), 1.
- ⁸ Jim Caple, "Beijing or Bust: Beat Olympics Traffic, Get Here Now," ESPN.com, http://sports.espn.go.com/travel/columns/story?columnist=caple_jim&id=2804908 [15 September 2007].
- ⁹ DZWWW.Com, "Beijing 2008 Games: One World, One Dream," http://www.dzwww.com/english/pic/t20050627_1107000.htm [17 September 2007].
- ¹⁰ Nick Mulvenney, "Olympics—Beijing Residents Support Relocation—Official," *Reuters*, 15 August 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/latestCrisis/idUSPEK192932> [24 September 2007].
- ¹¹ Mickey Spiegel, "BEIJING 2008—The Olympic Games Come to China: Will Human Rights?" Human Rights Watch, <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/10/06/china14347.htm> [10 September 2007].
- ¹² Spiegel.
- ¹³ Mulvenney.
- ¹⁴ Kevin Sack, "Atlanta's Renewal Has Been Less Than Olympian," *New York Times*, 20 July 1996, <http://www.nytimes.com/specials/olympics/0720/oly-atlanta-poor.html> [24 September 2007].
- ¹⁵ Beijing 2008: The Official Website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, "Wang Wei: Games-time Air Quality Guaranteed," 16 September 2007, <http://en.beijing2008.cn/bocog/bocognews/headlines/n214159678.shtml> [24 September 2007].
- ¹⁶ Ling Li, "Beijing Traffic Restriction Not a Silver Bullet for Air Pollution," Worldwatch Institute, 27 August 2007, <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/5320> [27 September 2007].
- ¹⁷ Mure Dickie and Roger Blitz, "Beijing Warned on Olympics Air Quality," *Financial Times*, 8 August 2007, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/cc8ae706-458d-11dc-b359-0000779fd2ac,dwp_uuid=723ba534-41c2-11dc-8328-0000779fd2ac.html [24 September 2007].
- ¹⁸ *Beijing Review*, "Beijing's Public Transport to Go Greener," http://www.bjreview.com.cn/quotes/txt/2007-04/25/content_62425.htm [10 September 2007].

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