

Research Lenses & the 2012 Olympics

THIS POST INITIALLY APPEARED IN A 2012 BLOG POST FEATURED ON THE GLOBAL PEN. IT IS BEING RE-FEATURED HERE WITH THE HOPE THAT IT'LL INSPIRE YOU TO APPLY THE 'HAND' TO THE 2016 OLYMPICS WITH THE SAME CREATIVITY AND VIGOR!

At first glance, the Olympic games might make you think merely of supreme athletic ability, but this event isn't just about sport. Let's see how the 'hand' categories lend themselves to the **2012** Olympics...

2012 OLYMPICS



Do prosthetic legs give athletes an unfair advantage on the playing field?

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY *(the thumb lens):*

- Perhaps read an article or watch a brief clip about Oscar Pistorious, the South African track star with prosthetic legs...students can explore the controversy of technological advancements here. *(Note this is 2012, prior to jail time he now faces for allegedly shooting his wife.)*

- Blood transfusions that are unethically administered to athletes to hide evidence of doping
 - Explore the GP-style prompt: "Is scientific progress a dream or a nightmare?" in light of Olympic athletes and health, medicine, treatment, etc.
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POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT *(the index finger lens):*

- Take a look at the taxes that are placed on the gold medals/prize money that Olympians receive...is this fair?
- How does tourism enhance the economy of the host country?
- The opening ceremony's tribute to the Industrial Revolution



I couldn't resist...

ENVIRONMENT (the middle finger, er, lens):

- Quite opposite the political finger, what are the drawbacks of tourism on the environment?

*ENVISION YOUR ESSAY: Use lenses to move fluidly from idea to idea...“While tourism positively impacts a nation's **economy**, the same cannot necessarily be said for its impact on the **environment**...” This would be a seamless transition between two opposing viewpoints in a discursive essay. Moving from Point A consideration to Point B consideration WITHOUT sounding contradictory. Boom.*

SOCIAL/CULTURAL (the ring finger lens):

- Maybe take a look at Serena Williams' controversial "Crip Walking" or "C-walking" after winning her tennis tournament; a native of Compton, CA, where gang culture runs high...what kind of a message, if any, does this send to the captive audience of 219 million?
 - The participation of two Saudi Arabian women in the Olympic games despite systemic gender discrimination in their homeland.
 - The "year of the woman"...Should women be more prominent in the public life of your country?
 - The Tunisian basketball player who approached Kobe Bryant for an autograph post-game
 - The oddly unique psychology behind speed cycling (did anyone see this event?! wow...interesting stuff...?!)
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The media...friend or foe?

MEDIA/ENTERTAINMENT *(the pinky finger lens):*

- Inaccurate disparaging...i.e. how does news coverage influence viewer perception of the athletes, such as the disputed unfairness of the media against runner Lolo Jones or the use of social networking to speculate drug use/doping of certain athletes
- Pressure to embrace endorsements
- Back story media coverage too personal/invasive?
- GP-style prompt exploration could easily include: "How justified are the high salaries and bonuses paid out in some professions (i.e. sports athletes)?" or "The media focuses too much on opinion, rather than fact. Do you agree?"

There are lots of other avenues to explore when it comes to the Olympics, especially with a little helping 'hand.'