

Reading Level 1: Sochi Winter Olympics

9th February 2014

Topics: olympics, Sochi, Russia, sports

Learning points:

- vocabulary
- numbers
- word order
- there is/are/was/were/will be

1 The 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, opened on Friday evening. Did you watch the opening ceremony?
2 I didn't see it, but I read in the news that it was 'spectacular', 'glittering'¹ and 'dazzling'². There were 22
3 tonnes of fireworks and 3,000 performers³ in the ceremony. The stadium cost about⁴ 600 million dollars to
4 build.

5
6 There are lots of interesting facts about the Sochi Winter Olympic Games. Did you know that Sochi is the
7 warmest city ever⁵ to have a Winter Olympics? The average⁶ temperature in February is 9 degrees celcius.
8 It is a Black Sea summer holiday resort, like⁷ the Mediterranean coast in France! Sochi is the longest city in
9 Europe – it is 90 miles long!

10
11 Lots of people know about the cost of the Games. At fifty-one billion dollars, it cost more than the Beijing
12 2008 Summer Olympics (\$40bn) and a lot more than the Winter Olympics in Vancouver in 2010 (\$8.7bn) or
13 the London Summer Olympics in 2012 (\$15bn). In fact, the cost of the Sochi Winter Olympics will be more
14 than all of the other Winter Olympics combined⁸!

15
16 The good news is that 2,900 athletes from 87 countries will participate⁹ – a record for a Winter Olympics.
17 There will be 98 events, also a record, with 12 new events like women's ski jumping, ski halfpipe and
18 snowboard parallel slalom. Did you know that snowboarder Shaun White is probably¹⁰ the richest athlete at
19 Sochi? He is worth¹¹ about \$20mill. Another new event is the biathlon mixed relay. Ole Einar Bjoerdalen is
20 a biathlete and he has 6 Olympic gold medals. He needs two more to equal¹² the record. Bjorn Daehlie from
21 Norway has 8 gold medals and 4 silvers. He was a cross-country skier.

22
23 Did you know that Alpine skiing was not part of the Winter Olympics at the beginning?
24 Austria has 105 alpine skiing medals, more than twice as many as Switzerland, France or the USA.

25

¹ glittering = glitzend

² dazzling = blendend

³ performer = Künstler(in) / Darsteller(in)

⁴ about = circa, ungefähr

⁵ ever = jemals

⁶ average = durchschnitt

⁷ like = (ähnlich) wie

⁸ combined = zusammen

⁹ to participate = teilnehmen

¹⁰ probably = wahrscheinlich

¹¹ worth = wert

¹² to equal = etw gleichkommen, erreichen

Level 1 questions

Numbers

1. Can you say the numbers in this text easily? Listen to the audio and then repeat the numbers.

Word order

2. In English, the word order in a sentence is very important:

SUBJECT - VERB - OBJECT

In this text, you can see that the subject can be more than one or two words, but the verb always comes next. You can have an 'adverb' before the subject, but then the 'subject – verb' rule stays the same!

Find the subject and the verb in the following sentences (Tip: look for the verb first):

- a. The average temperature in February is 9 degrees celcius
- b. Lots of people know about the cost of the games
- c. In fact, the cost of the Sochi Winter Olympics will be more than all of the other Winter Olympics put together
- d. At fifty-one billion dollars, it cost more than the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics
- e. The good news is that 2,900 athletes from 87 countries will participate (2 clauses; 2 subject-verb pairs)

There is/are/was/were

3. For some sentences (with the verb 'be'), there is no clear subject – only a fact. But in English, we need a 'subject' and so we use the word 'there' first. 'There is' or 'there are' or 'there was'. 'There ' is a 'fake subject'!
Look for examples of this in the text (eg. lines 6, 17).

Answers

2. **SUBJECT - VERB**
 - a. The average temperature in February **is** 9 degrees celcius
 - b. Lots of people **know** about the cost of the games
 - c. In fact, the cost of the Sochi Winter Olympics **will be** more than all of the other Winter Olympics put together
 - d. At fifty-one billion dollars, **it cost** more than the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics
 - e. The good news **is** that 2,900 athletes from 87 countries **will participate** (2 clauses; 2 subject-verb pairs)