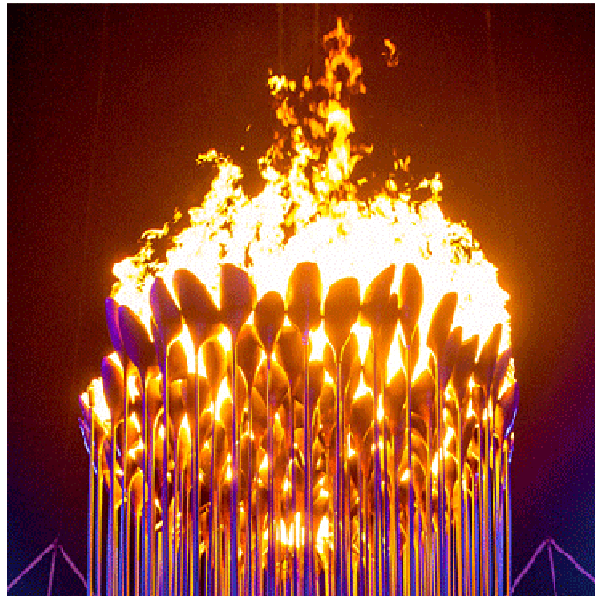


## The Olympic Games in Britain by Jane Lawson at DailyStep.com

The 7-year build up to the Olympic Games in London has not been easy. Since the news in 2005 that we would be hosting the Games, there has been a global financial crash and a long recession. The cost of hosting the Games has risen from the original estimate of two point four billion pounds (£2.00.4 bn) to whatever figure it is now – the most recent estimate is high as eleven billion pounds (£11.00 bn)! You can imagine how unpopular that has been with the British people, now that money is so tight! On top of that, we have been sick of hearing all the rules stipulated by the Olympic Committee, banning us from using the Olympics to promote our businesses. For example, a butcher was told that it was against the law for him to arrange sausages in the shape of the 5 Olympic rings! We have also been pretty annoyed that two of the biggest sponsors are MacDonald's and Coca Cola and that all their profits will be tax free and that... well, in short, many British people were feeling cynical and fed up with the Olympics before it even started.



But since the Olympic Opening Ceremony on 27<sup>th</sup> July, we have all suddenly gone Olympics crazy! I can't quite believe it, but it seems that nearly all we can talk about now is how great the Olympics are and how much we are enjoying watching the world's greatest athletes compete at the highest level. There has never been this level of interest in the Olympics when it is in other countries – it's something to do with it being hosted here in Britain. Tickets to any events are now impossible to get hold of, and you can't even get into the Olympic Park in east London, as it is completely booked up.

I thought the Opening Ceremony itself was amazing – it was like a short history of Britain, even if parts of it were rather idealised! Some of the most famous characters in British history were represented, such as the great engineer, Sir Isambard Kingdom Brunel. You can learn all about him in the level 4 subscriber audio lessons over the next 2 weeks. I really loved all the music included in the ceremony – it's such an important part of our culture, and I thought that in all its spectacular fun, chaos and colour, the show managed to capture something about the essence of Britishness. Then, when the Olympic flame was carried along the River Thames by David Beckham in a speedboat, and handed to Steve Redgrave, our greatest Olympic athlete, to bring into the stadium, we were all wondering who would finally light the Olympic cauldron. The idea to use unknown athletes to light it was truly inspired, and the cauldron itself, which you can see in the picture, was made up of 204 parts, each one representing a country competing in the Olympics.

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My favourite events to watch so far have been the athletics and gymnastics. Of course I love watching our British athletes, but it's great to see any athlete win a medal – their emotion and sheer determination is so inspiring. And it's not always about winning – take a look lower down this page at the Audio Proverb, and you'll see what I mean!

So, let's move on now to our Audio Word Study, where you can learn some common expressions associated with the Olympic Games.

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