



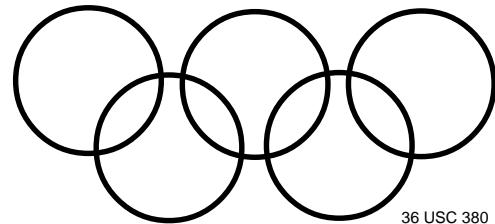
Olympiex Lesson 3

Stamps from Different Continents



Skill: Using reference works

What image comes to mind when you see the word “Olympics”? For most people, it will be the Olympic Rings. The Olympic symbol was designed in 1913, and the following year was placed on a white background to form the Olympic flag. From left to right, the top three rings are blue, black, and red, while the lower two are yellow and green. Frequently, the rings appear in color on Olympics stamps, though you will also see them all black or all white.



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Take a second and look at the rings. What do you think they stand for? According to the Olympics Charter, “The Olympic symbol represents the union of the five continents and the meeting of the athletes from throughout the world at the Olympic Games.”

When the Olympics were revived in 1896, only fourteen countries representing four continents participated. By the time the Olympic symbol was designed in 1913, the number of nations sending teams had doubled so that five continents were now represented. The Olympic Movement continued to grow, and soon all continents (except frigid Antarctica) were represented. Today, 197 nations around the world are sending athletes to the 1996 Summer Games. Some of these are from island nations far removed from any continent, so in a way you might say that the Olympic Rings have come to symbolize the global union of athletes around the world.

Speaking of continents, have you ever wondered what a continent is? The usual definition



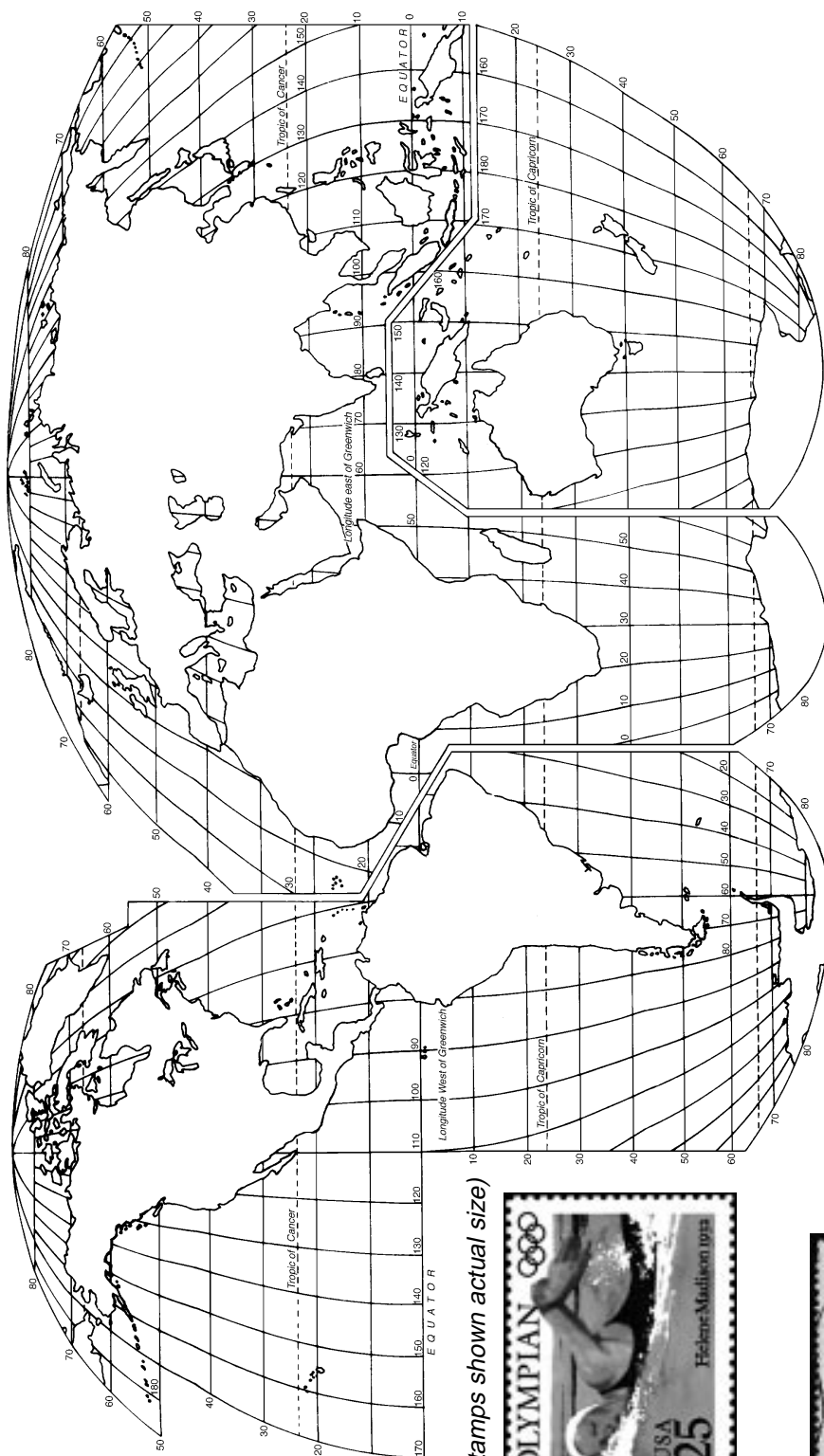
is that a **continent** is one of the major land areas on earth. Unlike an island, continents are not necessarily surrounded by water on all sides. For example, Australia is a giant island continent, but as the map of the earth on the stamp at left shows, Europe, Asia, and Africa are all part of the same giant land area. The customary dividing line between Asia and Europe is the Ural mountain range. There is no natural feature dividing Asia from Africa, though building of the Suez Canal created a convenient cultural dividing line.

You probably have been taught that there are seven continents on earth—Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. However, remember that these are *geographic* continents. For purposes of international sports competition, the International Olympic Committee and other associations deal only with inhabited continents (thus excluding Antarctica). Also, these organizations traditionally consider North and South America as simply “America.” Thus, for purposes of international athletic competition, there are five continents —Africa, America, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

To help you better understand the earth’s continents, take a look at **Handout F**. Using an encyclopedia or atlas, complete these activities or questions:

1. Enter the names of the seven *geographic* continents in their correct location on the map.
2. On the map, draw a line from each stamp to the approximate location of the country that issued the stamp.
3. Beneath each stamp, indicate its origin in terms of (a) geographic continent, and (b) international sports continent.
4. Which of the seven stamps on this handout represents the northernmost country of the seven? The southernmost?
5. Were more of the seven stamps issued from north or south of the Equator?
6. Which stamp represents both a country and a continent?
7. Why does one continent not have Olympic stamps of its own?
8. Although not represented by a stamp on the handout, can you identify which large country of the earth extends into two continents?

Stamps and Continents



(Stamps shown actual size)



a.



b.



c.



d.



e.



f.



g.