



The Mini Page

Next Week:
Our states:
Nebraska

Issue 04, 2026

Founded by Betty Debnam



Let the Games Begin!

Mini Fact:

The 1998 Winter Olympics featured snowboarding for the first time.

photo Jostein Vedvik / Lillehammer 2016

Italy welcomes the world to the XXV Winter Olympic Games starting on Feb. 6. Last week, The Mini Page explored the European country shaped like a boot. This week, let's dive into the Games themselves.



images courtesy Milano Cortina 2026

Mascots

Each host of the Olympics creates mascots to represent their city, their nation and the Olympic spirit. This spirit, or feeling, is that the Olympic athletes come together to compete in peace, friendship and fairness.

The mascots for the 2026 Italy Games are Tina and Milo, two cheerful stoats. (A stoat is a small mammal whose fur turns pure white in the winter.) Tina represents the Olympic Games, while Milo is the face of the Paralympic Games, which will begin on March 6.



Tina and Milo are accompanied by six little snowdrops called "The Flo."

Venues

While most of the Games will take place in Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, there are six other venues, or sites, for the competitions. The opening ceremony will take place in Milan at the San Siro Olympic Stadium.



San Siro Olympic Stadium in Milan.

The closing ceremony on Feb. 22 will be held in the Verona Olympic Arena, a stadium built in 30 A.D. for gladiator battles. In addition, the opening ceremony for the Paralympic Games will take place there.



photo courtesy International Luge Federation

Armin Zöggeler, two-time Olympic champion in luge from Italy, holds the 2026 Olympic torch in Olympia, Greece.

The torch

The Olympic flame began its journey from Ancient Olympia in Greece toward Milan, Italy, on Nov. 26. Along the way, 10,000 torchbearers will visit 300 towns throughout Italy.

The torch itself was designed by an Italian architect, Carlo Ratti, to highlight the flame itself.

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Pictogram Quiz-a-Roonie

A **pictogram** (PIC-toe-gram) is a symbol that represents something. For example, in ancient times, people drew pictograms (or pictographs) on rock walls to tell stories about their lives.

With each Olympics, pictograms are used to identify the events.

The Mini Page challenges you to a matching game! Try to match these 2026 pictograms to Winter Olympic events.

	1.	A. Snowboard	6.	
	2.	B. Ice hockey	7.	
	3.	C. Ski jumping	8.	
	4.	D. Ski mountaineering	9.	
	5.	E. Curling	10.	
		F. Luge		
		G. Speed skating		
		H. Nordic combined		
		I. Figure skating		
		J. Biathlon		

Answers: 1-D, 2-G, 3-E, 4-F, 5-J, 6-I, 7-A, 8-C, 9-B, 10-H.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/4oq6PZT

At the library:

- "Bella Goes to the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy" by Suzanne Fronefield

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of the Winter Olympics are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

ATHLETES, EVENTS, FLAME, GAMES, ITALY, MASCOTS, MILAN, MILO, OLYMPICS, PICTOGRAM, SPIRIT, SPORTS, STADIUM, STOAT, TINA, TORCH, VENUES, WINTER.

H M X Z F E V E N T S X H P N
O D T I N A T W F L A M E Q L
P Y B U D M E V M I L A N O R
A T H L E T E S T A D I U M Q
Z Y O L Y M P I C S P O R T S
C O G A M E S R C J I T A L Y
P I C T O G R A M S T O A T S
O T M A S C O T S V T O R C H
I Z I B W I N T E R U N L V C
M I L O V E N U E S P I R I T



Mini Jokes



Will: Why don't bobsledders ever get lost?

Wendy: Because they always follow the right track!

Otis: What can be plowed but not planted?

Olive: Snow!

Eco Note



A new study finds that tropical house crickets readily consume polyethylene microplastics when the particles are small enough to fit in their mouths, suggesting the insects cannot distinguish plastic from food. Researchers say that crickets ate more plastic-contaminated food over time even when uncontaminated food was available, and their growth was not stunted by what they ate. As the crickets in the study grew larger, their expanding mouthparts let them consume even bigger fragments, grinding those plastics into tiny nanoplastics that can remain much longer in soil and water.

adapted with permission from Earthweek.com

For later:

Look in your local newspaper for news about the Winter Olympics. Which events will you be watching?

Cook's Corner

Orange and Red Salad

You'll need:

- 2 cups cantaloupe, cut in small chunks
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, chopped
- 2 tablespoons orange juice

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon salt



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Combine cantaloupe, tomatoes and chopped red pepper in a medium bowl.
2. Mix the two juices and honey in a smaller bowl.
3. Pour juice mixture over fruit and vegetables. Sprinkle with salt and stir well to mix flavors.
4. Refrigerate or serve immediately. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

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1. A piece of cloth with a design/colors used as a symbol (4-letter noun)

□ □ □ □

2. Group of people who work or play together (4-letter noun)

□ □ □ □

3. Contest in a sports program, or something that happens (5-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □

4. A physical activity enjoyed for pleasure or exercise (5-letter noun)

□ □ □ □ □

1. Sam liked the colorful _____ that flew on top of buildings.
2. The American _____ wore clothes in red, white and blue.
3. A new _____ is featured in the 2026 Olympics.
4. Karl's favorite winter _____ is hockey.

ROOTONYM®
by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition. When you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Flag, Team, Event, Sport.

KidSpot

Play ball
Match each sports term to its sport.

1. Fumble	Baseball
2. Bogey	Tennis
3. Home run	Football
4. Turkey	Golf
5. Love	Basketball
6. Rebound	Bowling