



Ancient Greek Aryballoi and Athletes



The first Olympic Games happened in 776 BCE - that's over 2700 years ago! They were originally part of a religious festival to worship and honor the Greek god Zeus, who we can see on this silver coin called a tetradrachm from around 340 BCE.



Every four years athletes would journey to the sacred site of Olympia to compete against one another. Demonstrating incredible strength and physical ability was considered an offering to the gods, and winners were heroes!

There are two athletes participating in an ancient and modern Olympic sport on this silver coin called a stater.

Can you tell what sport it is?

These two athletes are wrestling! Have you ever wrestled?



Ancient Greek Olympic athletes often covered their bodies in oil. This made it much harder to wrestle your opponent! But oil was also used to clean their skin after competing. A common oil in ancient Greece was olive oil, made from the fruit of olive trees.



Athletes kept their oil in clay containers called aryballoi (ar-uh-bah-loy), just like these ones.

A strap was attached to the handle so the aryballos could be carried on the wrist of the athlete or hung on the wall.

If you were an Olympic athlete, what sport would you compete in? It can even be a sport that hasn't been invented yet!



Ancient Greek wrestlers used oil from an aryballos to compete and to clean themselves. What substance will your sport need, and what will you keep it in? Use this space to imagine, design and create!

