

Starting up

- What sports is your country usually good at in the Olympic games?
- Which sports do you most enjoy watching?
- Read through the whole article. Then do the exercise below.

Reading 1

Read the article again to find:

- a) the head organiser of the Tokyo Olympics
- b) the organisations he worked at before
- c) the two sides involved in the contract for the games
- d) the Japanese prime minister
- e) the head of the International Olympic Committee
- f) one of the sponsors of the games
- g) the most important administrator of the Japanese capital

Vocabulary 1 – true or false

Look at the first two paragraphs of the article. Are these statements about words and expressions, as they are used in the text, true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false ones.

- 1 A *sceptic* is someone who believes that something is true, will happen etc.
- 2 If you speak with a *defiant tone*, you agree with everything people have said.
- 3 If there is a *resolution* to a crisis, it is solved.
- 4 If an event like the Olympics is *delivered*, it happens.
- 5 If you *wrestle* with something, it is easy to deal with.
- 6 A *challenge* is something that is difficult to achieve.
- 7 If something is *thrown up*, it happens unexpectedly.
- 8 If you *secure* something, you obtain it and keep it.
- 9 If you *take on* a task, you give it to someone else to do.
- 10 If you are *reassured* by someone, you don't trust what they have said.

Tokyo Olympics chief strikes defiant tone as sceptics question viability

The 2021 Olympic Games will be held “with corona”, according to the chief executive of the Tokyo organising committee, even as sceptics question whether the games will ever happen. Toshiro Muto struck a defiant tone in an interview with the Financial Times, asserting that the Olympics would take place even without a resolution to the Covid-19 crisis. His comments come as the country deals with a struggling economy, record infection rates in Tokyo, closed borders and questions about the government’s management of the health crisis. “I don’t know what the state of coronavirus infections will be next summer, but the chances it is a thing of the past are not high,” said Mr Muto, a former finance ministry official and deputy governor of the Bank of Japan, who has spent six years preparing for the games. “Rather, the important thing is to deliver an Olympics for people who must live with Covid-19.”

As Mr Muto wrestles with the challenges thrown up by the one-year delay — including added costs, rescheduling and having to secure staff for another year — he is reassured that the national government has taken on a higher level of responsibility. Although the contract for the games is between the International Olympic Committee and the city of Tokyo, the decision to delay was made by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in consultation with Thomas Bach, IOC president.

“It was the national government that decided to delay by a year. With that, the situation has changed a little,” said Mr Muto, acknowledging that Mr Abe’s government would take a larger role. “Furthermore . . . to hold an Olympics during corona means the antivirus strategy is crucial. The Covid-19 strategy has to be set at the national level.” A priority for Mr Muto and his colleagues is to cut costs. Mr Muto hopes to have a new budget by October, so talks can begin on who will pay more in what is already the most heavily sponsored sports event in history. One sponsor said there was an urgent need for clarity. “This is the month we plan our budget for next year. We have no idea how much we’re going to be asked to pay,” the sponsor said.

But Mr Muto said that he was encouraged by the reaction from sponsors. One new partner, the operator of the Skytree attraction in eastern Tokyo, has become the first new supporter to sign up for 2021, albeit at the third level of support. “I recognise that there is a range of opinion among the sponsors. For some of them, their results have been hit by coronavirus,” Mr Muto said. “But it is not necessarily the case that everyone has suffered a negative impact. There are companies that have gained as well.” Many sceptics, however, doubt whether the games will go ahead at all. In a recent interview with the Financial Times, Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike said that a basic precondition for the Olympics to take place was that foreign travellers should be able to enter Japan.



© The Financial Times Limited. All Rights Reserved.

Vocabulary 2 – synonyms

Look at these extracts from the last two paragraphs of the article. Replace the words and expressions in *italics* with the correct alternative that has the closest meaning. (The item must also fit grammatically into the surrounding context, which does not change.)

- 1 “It was the national government that decided to delay by a year. With that, the situation has changed a little,” said Mr Muto, *acknowledging* that Mr Abe’s government would take a larger role.
a) ignoring b) recognising c) hoping
- 2 “*Furthermore* . . . to hold an Olympics during corona . . .
a) Nevertheless b) However c) In addition
- 3 . . . means the antivirus strategy is *crucial*.“
a) very important b) slightly important c) unimportant
- 4 “The Covid-19 strategy has to be *set* at the national level.”
a) judged b) discussed c) agreed
- 5 A priority for Mr Muto and his colleagues is to *cut* costs.
a) reduce b) downsize c) lowest
- 6 One sponsor said there was an urgent need for *clarity*.
a) things to be clearing b) things to be clear c) things to be cleared
- 7 Mr Muto said that he was *encouraged by* the reaction from sponsors.
a) felt more positive following b) felt more optimist following c) felt more up following
- 8 . . . the operator of the Skytree attraction in eastern Tokyo, has become the first new supporter to sign up for 2021, *albeit* at the third level of support.
a) even if this is b) despite this is c) unlike this is
- 9 “I recognise that there is a *range* of opinion among the sponsors.”
a) similarity b) variety c) sameness
- 10 “For some of them, their results have been hit by coronavirus,” Mr Muto said. “But it is not necessarily *the case* that everyone has suffered a negative impact.”
a) true b) false c) certain
- 11 “There are companies that have *gained* as well.”
a) paid b) advantage c) benefitted
- 12 Yuriko Koike said that a basic *precondition* for the Olympics to take place was that foreign travellers should be able to enter Japan.
a) situation that can exist b) situation that must exist c) situation that might exist

Grammar – reported speech

Change these sentences from reported to direct speech.

- 1 Yuriko Koike said that a precondition for the Olympics to take place was that foreign travellers should be able to enter Japan.
Yuriko Koike said, "A precondition for the Olympics to take place is that foreign travellers should be able to enter Japan."
- 2 One sceptic said that she wondered if the Games would take place at all.
- 3 Toshiro Muto said that the Olympics would take place even without a resolution to the Covid-19 crisis.
- 4 Shinzo Abe said that the event would be delayed.
- 5 Thomas Bach said that he agreed with Mr Abe.

Change these sentences from direct to reported speech.

- 6 Toshiro Muto said, "I don't know what the state of coronavirus infections will be next summer."
- 7 Mr Muto also said, "The important thing is to deliver an Olympics for people who must live with Covid-19."
- 8 Mr Muto went on to say, "To hold an Olympics during corona means the antivirus strategy is crucial."
- 9 One sponsor said, "This month we're planning our budget for next year. We have no idea how much we're going to have to pay."
- 10 A foreign observer said, "The Japanese prime minister likes a challenge and is determined to host these games at all costs."

Reading 2

Which is/are the correct 'takeaway(s)' from the article?

The Tokyo Olympic games ...

- a) will not go ahead next year if the level of Corona infections is too high then.
- b) will be reorganised to take account of Corona.
- c) will ban people with Corona from attending.
- d) may not take place at all.

Further discussion / Group work

- 1 Do you think the Tokyo Olympics will go ahead next year? Give your reasons.
- 2 Should sport events in general go ahead given the current situation? If so, under what conditions? If not, why not?

ANSWER KEY**Reading 1**

- a) Toshiro Muto
- b) the Japanese foreign ministry and the Bank of Japan
- c) the International Olympic Committee and the city of Tokyo
- d) Shinzo Abe
- e) Thomas Bach
- f) the operator of the Skytree attraction
- g) the governor of Tokyo

Vocabulary 1

- 1 F – It is someone who does not believe that something is true, will happen etc.
- 2 F – You disagree with what people say.
- 3 T
- 4 T
- 5 F – It is not easy to deal with.
- 6 T
- 7 T
- 8 T
- 9 F – You are responsible for doing it.
- 10 F – You trust what they have said.

Vocabulary 2

- 1b 2c 3a 4c 5a 6b 7a 8a 9b 10a 11c 12b

Grammar

- 2 One sceptic said, "I wonder if the Games will take place at all."
- 3 Toshiro Muto said, "The Olympics will take place even without a resolution to the Covid-19 crisis."
- 4 Shinzo Abe said, "The event will be delayed."
- 5 Thomas Bach said, "I agree with Mr Abe."
- 6 Toshiro Muto said that he did not know what the state of coronavirus infections would be next summer.
- 7 Mr Muto also said that the important thing was to deliver an Olympics for people who had to live with Covid-19.
- 8 Mr Muto went on to say that to hold an Olympics during corona meant the antivirus strategy was crucial.
- 9 One sponsor said that this month they were planning their budget for next year and that they had no idea how much they were going to have to pay.
- 10 A foreign observer said that the Japanese prime minister liked a challenge and was determined to host these games at all costs.

Reading 2

b) and d)

Articles sourced from the Financial Times have been referenced with the FT logo. These articles remain the Copyright of the Financial Times Limited and were originally published in 2020. All Rights Reserved. FT and 'Financial Times' are trademarks of The Financial Times Ltd. Pearson ELT is responsible for providing any translation or adaptation of the original articles.

With a worldwide network of highly respected journalists, the Financial Times provides global business news, insightful opinion and expert analysis of business, finance and politics. With over 500 journalists reporting from 50 countries worldwide, our in-depth coverage of international news is objectively reported and analysed from an independent, global perspective.

For more information: <http://membership.ft.com/pearsonoffer/>