

# English Tutorial Classes Week 5

# Gymnastics

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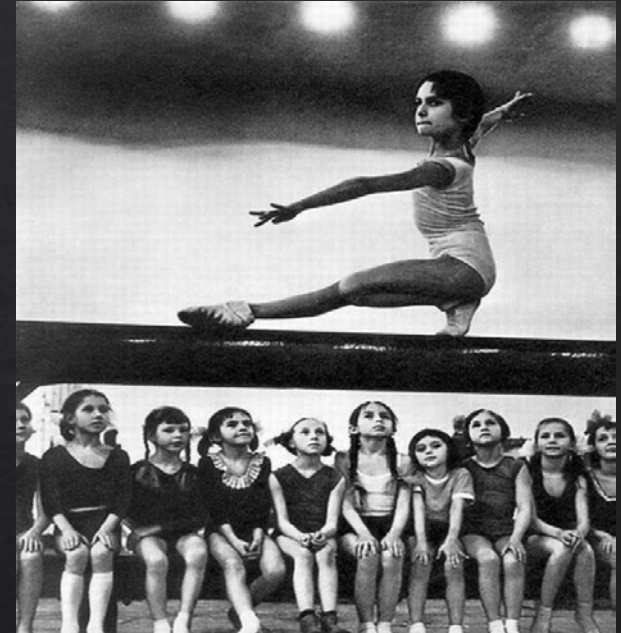
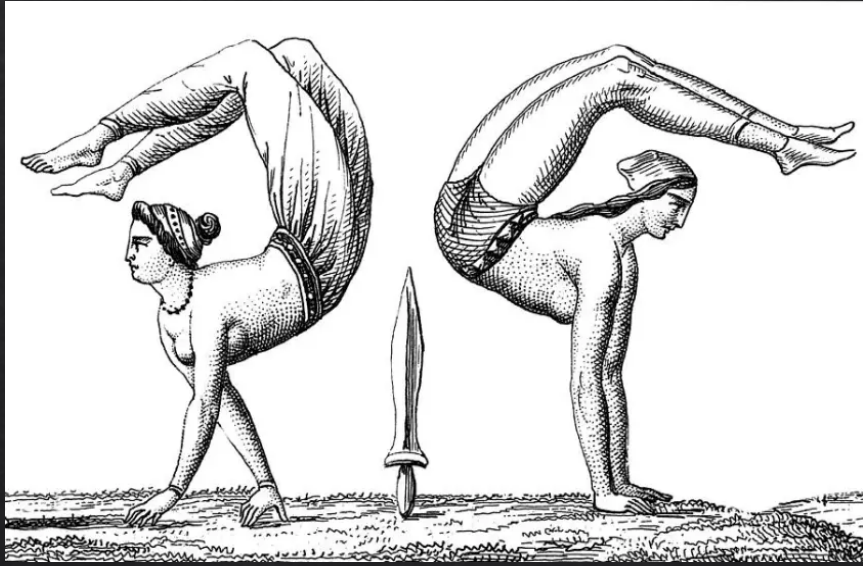
Gymnastics has been an essential Olympic event since the founding of the modern games. Athletes compete in events such as **the vault, rings,** and **parallel bars.**

In this image, a Danish gymnast performs a perfect dismount from a **pommel horse** during the 1908 London Olympics.





# How gymnastics became a deeply beloved Olympic sport



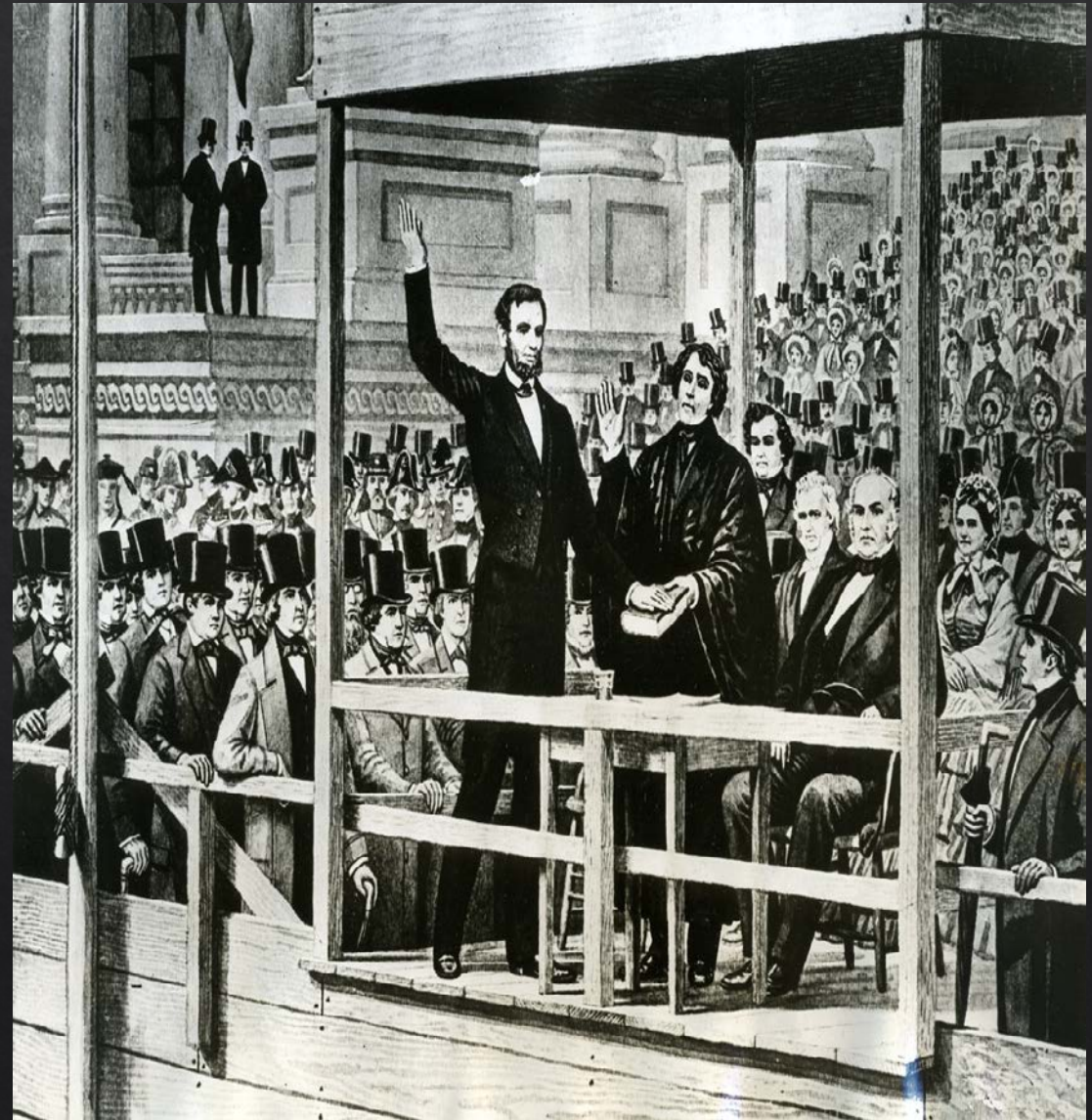
Its roots can be traced to ancient Greece. But the rise of modern gymnastics has been fueled by nationalism—from the Napoleonic Wars to the Soviet era.



Naked men exercising in open-air plazas. Stalwart bodyguards at Abraham Lincoln's inauguration.

Diminutive teenagers rocketing off of the ground into a dizzying **sequence of flips and jumps.**

These images aren't random—they're all part of the history of gymnastics.





With the dominance of athletes like Simone Biles and Kohei Uchimura, the sport has become one of the Olympic Games' most beloved.



Simone Biles is an American artistic gymnast widely regarded as one of the greatest gymnasts of all time.



Kohei Uchimura is a retired Japanese artistic gymnast who is widely regarded as one of the greatest male gymnasts of all time.

# Early Iterations

Gymnastics hasn't always included the uneven bars or balance beam—early iterations included feats like rope climbing and swinging clubs.

But during its evolution from ancient Greek tradition to modern Olympic sport, gymnastics has always been closely paired with ideas of **national pride and identity**.

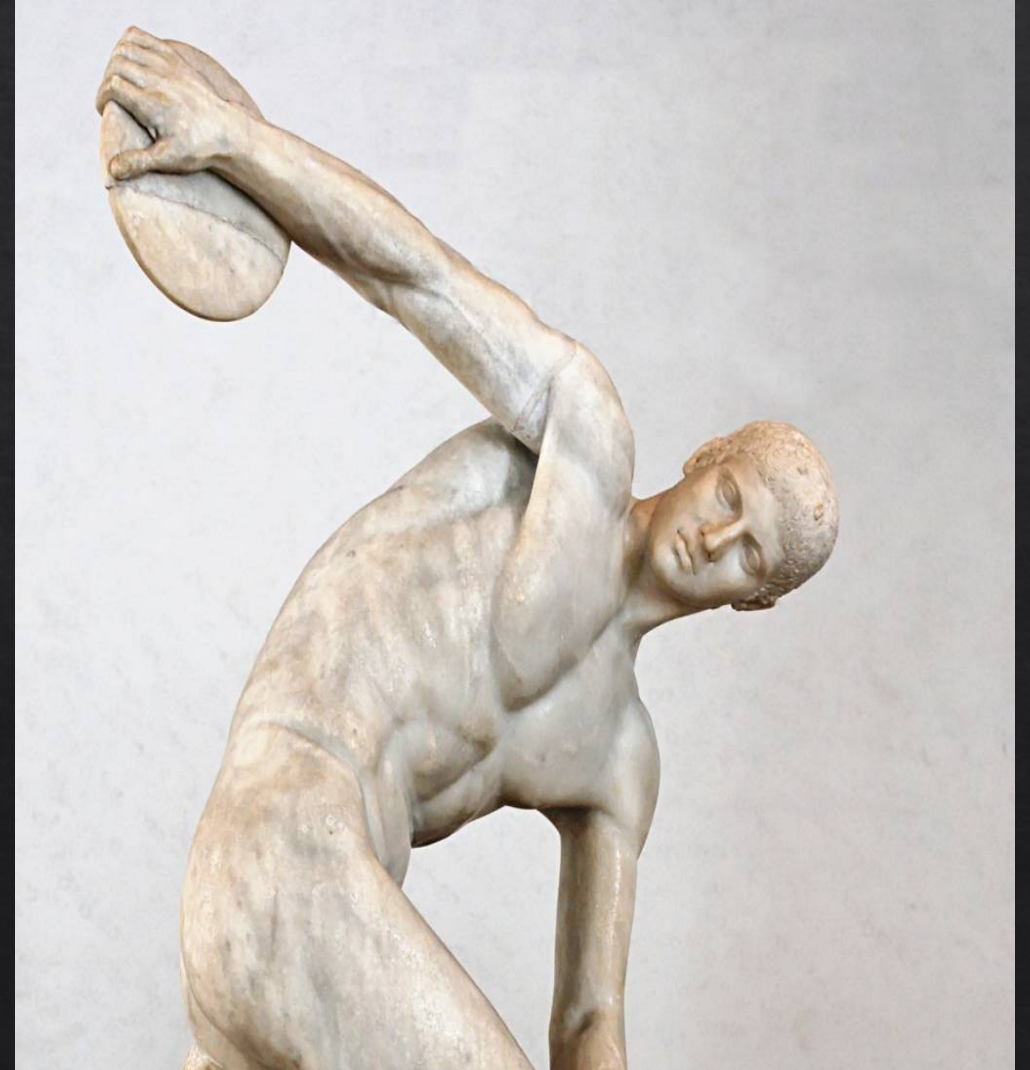




# The origin of gymnastics

The sport has its origins in **ancient Greece**, where young men underwent intense physical and mental training for warfare.

The word stems from the Greek word **gymnos**, or “**naked**,”—appropriate, since the youths trained in the nude, performing floor exercises, lifting weights, and racing one another.



# The origin of gymnastics

For the Greeks, **exercise and learning went hand in hand**. Gyms were more than just places for physical exercise; they were hubs for scholarship and discovery.

Fourth-century-B.C. Greek philosopher Aristotle wrote that **“the education of the body must precede that of the mind.”**





# 18th- and 19th-century Europe

But gymnastics, as we know it today, comes from another hotbed of intellectualism and intense debate: **18th- and 19th-century Europe**.

There, as in ancient Greece, physical fitness was considered an **integral part of citizenship and patriotism**. The era's popular gymnastic societies combined all three.





# Friedrich Ludwig Jahn

Former Prussian soldier **Friedrich Ludwig Jahn**—who would later become known as the “**father of gymnastics**”—embraced Enlightenment-era concepts of national pride and education.

After Prussia was invaded by France, Jahn saw the Germans’ defeat as a national humiliation. To uplift his countrymen and unite its youth, he turned to physical fitness.





# Friedrich Ludwig Jahn

Jahn created a gymnastics system called **Turnen** and invented new equipment for his pupils, including the parallel and high bars, the balance beam, and the horse.

Jahn's Turnen system encompassed a variety of exercises and activities performed in outdoor gymnasiums known as "**Turnplatz.**" These exercises included calisthenics, strength training, running, jumping, and climbing.





# How nationalism fueled the rise of gymnastics

In the early 1800s, Jahn's followers, known as **Turners**, bonded over moves similar to modern gymnastics in cities throughout Germany.

At Turner festivals, they exchanged ideas, competed in gymnastics, and discussed politics. And over the years, they brought their ideas about philosophy, education, and fitness to **the United States**, where their gymnastics clubs became crucial community centers.





# How nationalism fueled the rise of gymnastics

Turners became an **American political force**. Some Turners became abolitionists and supporters of Abraham Lincoln.

Meanwhile, another European sect that worshiped physical fitness emerged in **Prague in the mid-19th century**. **THE SOKOL MOVEMENT** was made up of nationalists who thought that mass coordinated calisthenics could bring the Czech people together.



# Gymnastics at the Olympics

By 1881, international interest in the sport had grown enough that the **International Gymnastics Federation** was formed.

During the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, gymnastics was high on founder Pierre de Coubertin's list of must-include activities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Germany swept the medals, earning five golds, three silvers, and two bronzes. Greece followed with six medals, trailed by Switzerland's three.





# Gymnastics at the Olympics

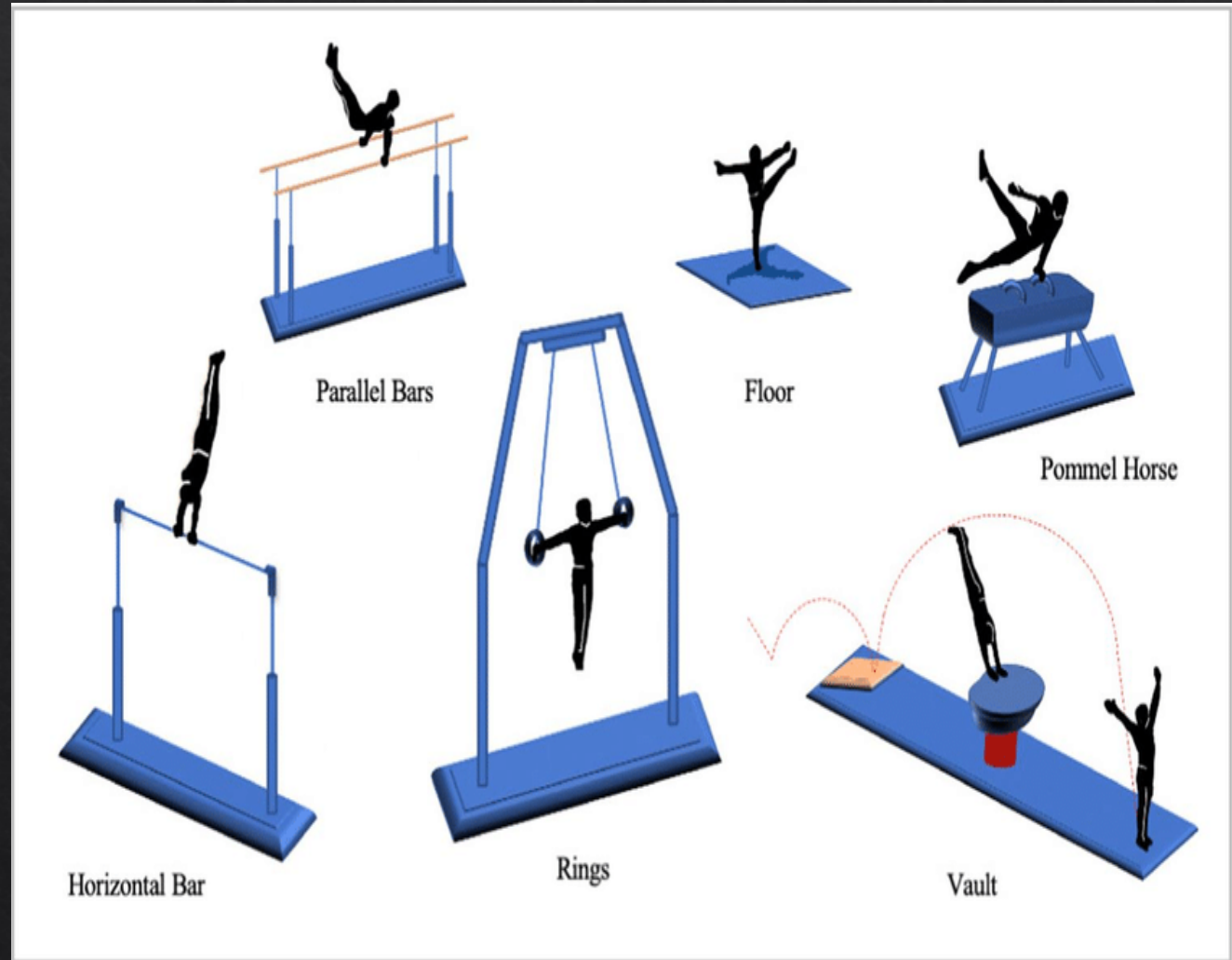
In the years that followed, gymnastics split into two divisions:  
**ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS** AND **RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS**.



# ARTISTIC GYMNASTICS

Artistic gymnastics is a competitive sport that involves performing routines on various apparatus, showcasing **strength**, **flexibility**, **agility**, **coordination**, and **grace**.

Artistic gymnastics routines are performed **without** any **equipment**.





The vault, rings, balance beam, floor exercise, uneven bars, parallel bars, and pommel horse are all part of artistic gymnastics.



# The Vault

In the vault event, gymnasts **sprint down a runway, launch themselves off a springboard** onto a stationary **vaulting horse** (for men) or a **vaulting table** (for women), and perform acrobatic maneuvers in the air before landing on a padded mat.

Judges evaluate the height, distance, form, and difficulty of the vault.





# The Rings

The rings event involves gymnasts performing **a series of strength and swing elements** on a pair of suspended rings.

Athletes must demonstrate control, balance, and power as they execute movements such as **swings, holds, and strength-based maneuvers** while maintaining a stationary or swinging position.



# Balance Beam

The balance beam is a narrow, elevated beam approximately 10 centimeters wide and 5 meters long, set at a height of about 1.2 meters above the ground.

Routines on the balance beam typically include jumps, leaps, turns, acrobatic skills, and intricate footwork, all executed with precision and confidence.





# Floor Exercise

The floor exercise is a large, spring-loaded mat measuring 12 meters by 12 meters, where gymnasts perform dynamic tumbling passes, dance elements, and expressive choreography.

Gymnasts execute a series of acrobatic skills, including flips, twists, somersaults, and aerial maneuvers, combined with dance elements such as leaps, jumps, and turns.





# Uneven Bars

The uneven bars consist of two horizontal bars set at **different heights**, typically referred to as the **high bar** and the **low bar**.

Gymnasts perform routines that involve swinging, releasing, and regripping the bars, as well as transitions between the high and low bars.



# The Parallel Bars

In the parallel bars event, gymnasts perform a series of dynamic movements on two horizontal bars that are parallel to each other.

They **execute swings, releases, and intricate handstands**, transitioning smoothly between the bars while demonstrating strength, precision, and fluidity in their routine.





# Pommel Horse

Gymnasts mount the pommel horse by **swinging** their legs over the horse and positioning themselves in a straddle or scissors position, with one leg on each side of the pommel.

Once mounted, gymnasts perform a series of circular and pendulum-like movements, called circles and flairs, using their hands to support their weight on the pommels while swinging their legs in various directions.



# RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

Rhythmic gymnastics is a discipline of gymnastics that combines elements of dance, ballet, and acrobatics with the use of handheld apparatus such as ribbons, hoops, balls, clubs, and ropes.







PERFORMANCE



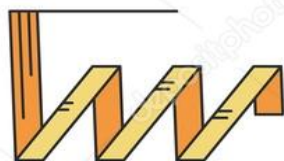
CLUBS



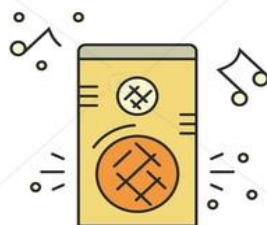
ROPE



BALL



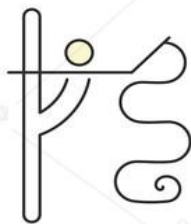
RIBBON



MUSIC



HOOP



GYMNAST



SPORTSWEAR

# RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS

## Equipment

# The Drawbacks of Gymnastics?

Gymnastics encouraged national unity and celebrated physical perfection. But that has come at a dire cost for athletes.

The discipline for which the sport is praised lends itself to **abusive training methods**, and the sport has been criticized for favoring extremely young participants.





# The Drawbacks of Gymnastics?

In 2016, Larry Nassar, the team doctor of USA Gymnastics, the governing body of American gymnasts, was charged with sexual assault of a child.

Over the months that followed, a scandal unraveled the behind-the-scenes world of gymnastics, exposing a culture of verbal, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and subjugation.



# Legacy

Gymnastics is no longer part of a broader political movement espousing nationalism and social unity. But its popularity—and its role in national pride endures.

“These purported celebrations of one-world togetherness succeed because they indulge precisely what they want to transcend: the world’s basest instinct for tribalism.”



Thank you for your  
attention!