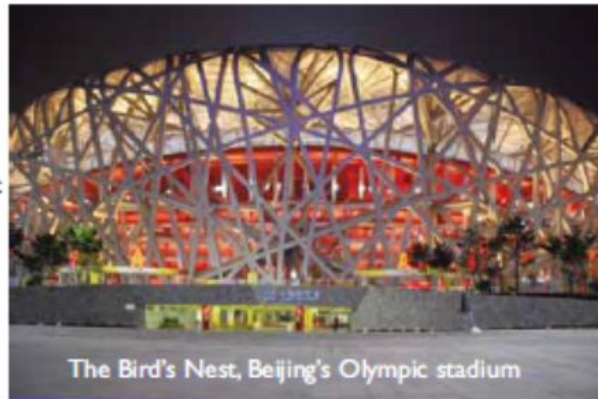


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|------------------------|------------------------|
| a Closing ceremony | c Venue |
| b Success of the Games | d Medals and champions |



The Beijing Olympic Games

- 1 In August 2008, China hosted the Summer Olympic Games for the first time. The Games were a brilliant success. They opened on 8 August in Beijing in a fantastic ceremony which lasted over four hours and featured more than 15,000 performers. During the Games, several hundred million people across the world watched on TV as more than 40 world records and over 130 Olympic records were broken.



The Bird's Nest, Beijing's Olympic stadium

- 2 Thirty-seven venues were used, including six outside Beijing. The equestrian events took place in Hong Kong while the sailing events were in Qingdao. Football matches took place in four other Chinese cities. The venues for the Games combined the best of ancient and modern China. The National Stadium, nicknamed the 'Bird's Nest', and the National Swimming Centre, nicknamed the 'Water Cube', were amazing examples of modern Chinese architecture. The road for the cycling race followed the Great Wall and passed in front of the Forbidden City, symbols of China from thousands of years ago.
- 3 Athletes from a record 204 National Olympic Committees took part in the Games. Several countries won medals for the first time, such as Tajikistan, which won a bronze medal in judo, and a silver medal in wrestling. Mongolia won gold medals in boxing and judo, and Panama took its first gold medal in athletics. There were many champions at the Games. Two of the most memorable were the US swimmer Michael Phelps, who won 8 gold medals in swimming, and Usain Bolt, the Jamaican sprinter who broke both the 100m and 200m world records.
- 4 The closing ceremony was held on 24 August at the Bird's Nest and was just as amazing as the opening ceremony. It included singers from Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland, Singapore, Taiwan and the UK. The German film maker, Klaus Bedelt, wrote the music for the closing ceremony. Famous English footballer David Beckham made an appearance. The ceremony included the handover of the Olympic flag to the Mayor of the city next in line to host the Games – London 2012.