

## NIE Winter Contest for Grades 9-12

Use The Seattle Times special report “Freezing out the fans” for this lesson. You can find this report here:

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/olympicticketing/>

Have students divide into four groups. Students assigned to each group, 1-4, should read the corresponding article in the report. Everyone in that group will become an “expert” about that part of the series. After all groups have had a chance to read and reflect on their assigned article have students discuss the article in depth with the other members of their assigned group.

Once this is complete, students should split into groups of four (where there is one person from group number 1, one from number 2, one from number 3 and one from number 4). Student number 1 will take 3 minutes to briefly explain what they learned in their assigned article. Each student in the group will share the highlights of their article for 3 minutes. When all members of the group have had a chance to share and ask any questions they have, the class will come back together. Students should sit in a circle and discuss what they learned in the series. Use the following questions to prompt this class discussion.

### Part 1

What were Vancouver’s promises to the public? Have these promises been honored? Why or why not?

Is it fair for the U.S. to get only 2% of the tickets? Why or why not? If you say no, what would be a more appropriate percentage?

Does your answer remain the same when you consider that a private sponsor got almost three times that amount and charged fans well above the actual value?

Discuss some of the experiences fans have had trying to get tickets.

### Part 2

Who is Sead Dizdarevic? Explain his background and how he is involved in this year’s Olympics?

How did he gain the controlling share of Olympic tickets sold in the U.S. and Canada?

What was Dizdarevic’s part in the South Lake City Olympics controversy?

Should Olympic ticket sales remain unregulated? Can you think of a better system?

Is it a crime to make money when your actions are technically legal?

What ethics are, or should be, involved in the Olympics ticketing process?

What is Sead Dizdarevic's relationship with Olympics insiders and the IOC?

### **Part 3**

Why would a "revolving door" of Olympics officials lead to less ethical decision making?

Who is to blame for the ticket problems associated with the Olympics? Is this a product of the monopoly, the abuse, the ethics, the people?

### **Part 4**

Who is really exploiting/being exploited?

What allows scalping to happen each time there is an Olympics?

What steps has VANOC taken to prevent this from happening?

Have they gone far enough? Why or why not?

What the risks involved if they enforce their threats? Who really loses?

Below you will find various themes that were present in this series. There are both questions and topics listed for discussion. You can use these in the class discussion or as a writing assignment.

#### Openness/Transparency

- Why were there so many "no comments" from the IOC and VANOC in this article?
- Why is the IOC/VANOC exempt from public records laws?

#### Olympic Family

- Who are they? What do they control?

#### Ethics

- Making profits – Where is the line between a capitalistic environment and exploitation?
- Is there a true monopoly on Olympic ticket sales?
- Private gain at the public's expense

### Ticket Shares

- What is the general public's experience with tickets?
- What are the families of athletes experiencing?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of selling tickets to the public at cost vs. selling to sponsors to make more money? Is Vancouver profiting? Are the Olympics committees profiting?

As a response to the class discussion, have students create their own list of other discussion topics the class did not cover. If they cannot think of anything new, have them create a list of the most important themes that were discussed.

### **NIE Winter Contest:**

Students should develop a Letter to the Editor that shares their opinion about one of the themes presented in this series. Students can see examples of Letters to the Editor here: <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/northwestvoices/index.html>.

### Submission Details:

Students can submit their Letters to the Editor to The Seattle Times Newspapers In Education (NIE) by March 5<sup>th</sup> to be entered into the NIE Winter Contest.

Please submit your Letter to the Editor to:

NIE Winter Contest  
P.O. Box 70  
Seattle, WA 98111

Or e-mail it to:

[nie@seattletimes.com](mailto:nie@seattletimes.com)

Entries must be post marked or received via e-mail by March 5, 2010 to qualify.

### Prizes:

The first 80 people to enter the NIE Winter Contest will receive a commemorative Vancouver pin. 3 entries will be chosen as winners from this category: gold, silver and bronze.

*Gold:* Commemorative pin, your name and Letter to the Editor printed in the newspaper, a meeting with reporter Christine Willmsen

*Silver:* Commemorative pin, your name and Letter to the Editor printed in the newspaper  
*Bronze:* Commemorative pin, your name and Letter to the Editor printed in the newspaper

The teacher of the winning student will also receive a copy of the book “The Winter Olympics” by Seattle Times reporter Ron Judd.

#### Registration Rules/Requirements

Students must be in grades 9-12 to qualify.

All entries must be postmarked or received via e-mail by March 5, 2010.

All entries must be typed.

Entries must be 200 words or less.

Writing submissions must meet the writing standards for the grade level of the student.

Only students whose teachers are NIE Educators qualify for this contest. To register as an NIE Educator, please contact NIE at [nie@seattletimes.com](mailto:nie@seattletimes.com).

Other resources for your classroom:

[http://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/olympics/index.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/olympics/index.jsp)

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~atomic/snowcrystals/>

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/olympics/>