

# SHOULD THE WINTER OLYMPICS USE FAKE SNOW?



As the Winter Olympics takes place across northern Italy this month, questions have been raised about the environmental and safety costs of hosting the games in unpredictable conditions. Increasingly, fake snow is being used to ensure the competition can go ahead, with organisers planning to use more than 3 million cubic yards of artificial snow to ensure surfaces are competition-ready. Critics have raised concerns about the immense amount of energy and water it takes to make and also the more dangerous conditions it can lead to for athletes, whilst advocates have praised it for its reliability, faster racing opportunities and ability to balance enough snow with clear weather conditions. We asked young people to weigh in on the debate and decide whether they think it should continue to be used in future Olympics.

*Melanie*  
Data Manager 

**62,011**

**TOTAL VOTES**

**14,077**

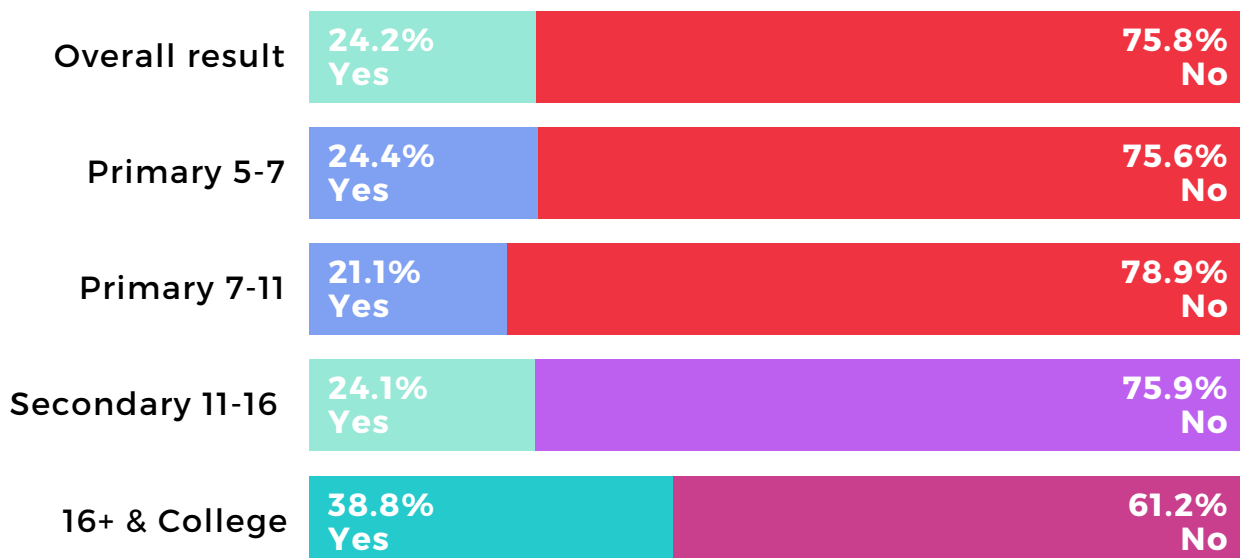
**VOTES AGE 5-11**

**47,934**

**VOTES AGE 11-16+**

The VoteTopic question, which was discussed amongst the different age groups:

**Primary 5-11, Secondary, 16+ & College:** "Should the Winter Olympics use fake snow?"



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Around 3 out of 4 students aged between 5-16+ were against the use of fake snow at the Winter Olympics, with Primary and Secondary pupils being the least in favour. For many, this was because of the detrimental impact on the environment, due to the large amounts of energy and water needed to create artificial conditions.

Others were concerned about the safety of athletes taking part in the games, as compared to the real thing, fake snow creates a much faster and icier environment. For the most part, they felt that the benefits of having a Winter Olympics does not outweigh the environmental and safety costs.

Rather than end the games altogether, the solution put forward was to only host the competition in places where we can reliably expect sufficient snowfall at this time of year. This would help to avoid situations such as Beijing, where they were entirely reliant on the artificial stuff in 2022.

Whilst most were against, a not-insignificant number of young people voted 'Yes' (almost 1 in 4). These students highlighted the joy and entertainment that the Winter Olympics brings, and noted that it is only for a short period of time every 4 years, making the environmental impact less of a concern for them. Others said it is fine to use in moderation to ensure the games can go ahead, as last-minute cancellations will be frustrating for spectators and competitors alike.

*Yes they should because the competition only happens once every 4 years and the Olympics brings everyone together.*

**Primary Yes Voter**

*I voted no because too much water is wasted. I've skied on the fake snow and it is icier! If it's hurting the environment it's not worth it.*

**Primary No Voter**

*People pay a lot of money to see the winter games so imagine being sent home because there was no snow.*

**Secondary Yes Voter**

*Organisers should host the events where there is reliable snowfall. Producing the fake snow takes an awful toll on the environment. Fake snow ruins the point of the Winter Olympics.*

**Secondary No Voter**