



FOOTBALL / SOCCER

“Some people believe football is a matter of life and death. I can assure you, it is much more important than that.”

Bill Shankly (1913 – 1981), Scottish football player and manager

1. Football / Soccer Discussion

1. Why do you like football? Why do you think football is the most popular sport in the world?
2. What do you know about the origins of football? Why do the British call football ‘football’, but people from other English-speaking countries say ‘soccer’?
3. Do you play football (or did you play when you were younger?) Which position?
4. Who is your favourite football team? Why do you support them? Do you have another team that you like? Should everyone only support their local team? Why or why not?
5. What is the best or most memorable goal you’ve seen?
6. Who is the best footballer in the world? Which team is the best in the world? Which are the best leagues in the world? Do you watch matches from these leagues? Which teams do you like to watch? Which are the best teams from your country?
7. Which is the biggest football team in the world? How do you define a ‘big’ team? Which teams have the best fans?
8. Who do you think will win the next World Cup? Why? Who’s going to win the Champions League?

2. Football / Soccer Vocabulary

- **derby** (noun) – a match played between two teams from the same city or region.
- **salary/wage cap** (noun) – an upper limit on the salary an individual player can be offered, or an upper limit on the total salaries a team is allowed to pay to all its players.
- **(football) hooligan** (noun, person), **(football) hooliganism** (noun, concept) – someone who attends football matches to fight with opposing fans; fan violence at football matches.
- **(to) referee** (verb, noun) – to apply rules during a competition; the person responsible for applying rules during a competition.
- **(to) dive** (verb, noun) – to deceive the referee into believing a foul was committed when in reality no foul was committed.
- **VAR (video assistant referee)** (noun) – a system to determine if the referee's decisions are correct using technology and video replays.

Using the vocabulary words above, complete the following sentences (remember to use the correct form of the word, e.g. verb conjugation or plural noun):

1. A game had to be called off at the weekend after **hooligans** began fighting in the terraces.
2. After consulting **VAR**, the referee rescinded the red card shown to Chris Basham and instead gave him a yellow.
3. The police have moved the kick-off time of the North London **derby** between Arsenal and Tottenham to midday on Sunday.
4. The home supporters were furious when their striker was shown a red card by the **referee**.
5. Video replays showed that Suarez clearly **dived** to win a penalty.
6. While a **salary/wage cap** may work in the NFL, which has no rival leagues to lose players to, football leagues are reluctant to introduce this as they would inevitably lose players to rival leagues that did not have a **salary/wage cap**.

Football / Soccer vocabulary comprehension questions

1. What are the biggest derbies in the world?
2. Do footballers get paid too much money? Should there be a wage cap? Is football sustainable without a wage cap?
3. Why does football seem to attract so many hooligans? Why doesn't this happen at other sporting events? What causes someone to become a hooligan? Is this a problem in your country?
4. What do you think about the standard of refereeing in football?
5. Which footballer players are known for diving? Is this more of a problem in certain leagues than others?
6. What do you think about VAR? Has it made football better or worse?

3. Video: Pelé

You are going to watch a video by FIFA called "Pelé | FIFA Classic Player."

Watch the video here: <https://yourenglishpal.com/blog/esl-conversation-lesson-plan-football-soccer/>

While you watch the video, answer the following questions:

Multiple choice

1. How games did Pelé play in World Cup finals?
a) 13 **b) 14** c) 15
2. When is Pelé's birthday?
a) 23rd October b) 24th October c) 25th October
3. How many goals did Pelé score against France in the 1958 World Cup?
a) 6 **b) 3** c) 2
4. What did Pelé make the score when he scored his wonder goal against Sweden?
a) 2 – 1 **b) 3 – 1** c) 5 – 2

Sentence completion

5. Pelé injured his **hamstring** in Brazil's second game in the 1962 World Cup.
6. After Brazil beat Czechoslovakia the 1962 World Cup, Pelé received his second **World Cup winner's medal**.
7. In the 1966 World Cup, Pelé was the **victim** of heavy fouling.
8. In the 1966 World Cup, Pelé was unable to play in a second **successive** final.

Short answer

9. How many goals did Pelé score in the 1970 World Cup? **4**
10. Pelé nearly scored a goal against Czechoslovakia from which part of the pitch? **The halfway line**
11. In which minute did Pelé score against Italy? **18th**
12. What can a national team that wins the World Cup three times do with the trophy? **Keep it**

4. Football / Soccer Conversation Questions

1. Do you ever watch football games in the stadium? Do you prefer to sit or stand at a football match? Is it safe to stand? What dangers does this cause?
2. Are ticket prices too high? What are all the costs involved in attending football matches? Has football become a sport for rich people and tourists? Do you agree that "twenty is plenty" (a campaign by English football fans that says £20 should be the maximum price of a ticket)?
3. Which formations do you think are the most effective in the modern game? Why do teams tend not to play the traditional 4-4-2 anymore?
4. Are footballers role models for children? How do they sometimes act that makes them bad role models?
5. What do you think about women's football? Do you like to watch these games? How does it compare to men's football?
6. In response to racism aimed at players in England, football teams took the knee before games to speak out against this racist abuse. What do you think about this form of protest? Why is there still so much racism in football in the modern day?
7. Do you like to bet on football games? Should this be allowed?
8. Is corruption a big problem in football? Can you think of any examples of corruption in football? What about match fixing?

5. Football / Soccer Writing Task

Write about your opinion of football / soccer. Try to use some of the vocabulary you learned earlier in this lesson. In your answer, you could include some of the following topics:

- Your favourite team and why you support them.
- The best team and player in the world.
- Your predictions for the next World Cup and why.

Alternative exam practice question:

With many football teams finding themselves in financial difficulties due to the high wages they are paying their players, there have been calls to introduce a salary cap to protect teams from going into administration. What are the advantages and disadvantages of introducing a salary cap in football?