

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: You will listen to an article about the history of football. In America, it's called soccer. The article is about 4 minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.

Step 2: Look at the questions. Read and understand them, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head. Don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Compare your answers with a partner.

Step 3: Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?

Step 4: Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

QUESTIONS

Answer the questions to check comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it. Then listen again.

1. How many people regularly play football around the world?
2. What happened in 1863?
3. What did the Football Association do?
4. Why did they do this?
5. When and where was football played first?
6. Why did English schools begin to play football?
7. What does the article say about rules, referees, and schools?
8. What did British ex-pats do during the 19th century?
9. Why was FIFA formed in 1904?
10. According to the article, what does football affect?

the ARTICLE

Football, also called soccer, is the most popular sport in the world today. More than 240 million people in more than 200 hundred countries play the game regularly. The World Cup, which is held every four years, boasts twice the number of spectators as the Summer Olympics.

Although football is far older, the sport as we now know it was born in England in 1863. At that time, football clubs from different areas often played with different rules. This hadn't been much of a problem before, because most teams only played locally. But as trains and train travel became widespread in the 1840s, more and more people could easily travel greater distances. Athletic clubs began to play teams from other areas in Britain, and those other areas sometimes had very different rules. The Football Association in London was formed, and a universal code was put together to minimize disputes.

Football is significantly older than 150 years, though. Before the 19th century, the game was played in a variety of forms. The first evidence of the game comes from more than 2,000 years ago in China. Players kicked a leather ball through a hole in a sheet of silk. But the Romans played an early kind of football as well. In medieval Europe, villages usually competed against one another, but there were few rules in the football matches. In fact, several balls were used, and the teams had an unlimited number of people!

It wasn't until the 17th century that the game began to evolve into something closer to the modern form. English public schools began to use the sport as a way to keep the students healthy. The schools also wanted to encourage competitiveness. To do this, formal teams, positions, and rules were formed. There were also referees and coaches.

In the late 1800s, the game continued to gain popularity as teams crisscrossed the country for increasingly formal matches. In 1872, English teams played for the first Football Association Cup in front of 2,000 paying spectators. And in 1888, the director of Aston Villa formed the first football league. In addition, during this time, British ex-pats spread the game around the world, so amateur teams regularly played throughout Europe and South America in the 1800s. And as teams began to play one another internationally, FIFA was formed to govern the sport in 1904.

Who would have thought how important and widespread football would one day become? It affects the lives of fans and non-fans alike, in communities all around the world. It inspires passion from the fans unlike any other sport.



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1. Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2. Listen for these words, understand the context, then try to repeat the information from the sentence:

boasts (paragraph 1)

widespread (paragraph 2)

significantly older (paragraph 3)

encourage competitiveness (paragraph 4)

ex-pats (paragraph 5)

3. Listen and write the sentences:

The World Cup, which is held every four years... (paragraph 1)

It wasn't until the 17th century that... (paragraph 4)

And as teams began to play internationally... (paragraph 5)

ANSWERS

QUESTIONS
1. More than 240 million people in more than 200 hundred countries play the game regularly.
2. The sport as we now know it was born in England in 1863.
3. The Football Association in London put together a universal code to minimize disputes.
4. Athletic clubs began to play teams from other areas in Britain, and those other areas had different rules.
5. The first evidence of the game comes from more than 2,000 years ago in China.
6. English public schools began to use the sport as a way to encourage competitiveness and to keep the students healthy.
7. Formal teams, positions, and rules were formed. There were also referees and coaches.
8. British ex-pats spread the game around the world in the 1800s.
9. As teams began to play one another internationally, FIFA was formed to govern the sport in 1904.
10. It affects the lives of fans and non-fans alike, in communities all around the world. It inspires passion from the fans unlike any other sport.
EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Listen and write the sentences.
...boasts twice the number of spectators as the Summer Olympics.
...the game began to evolve into something closer to the modern form.
...FIFA was formed to govern the sport in 1904.