Chapter summary

Chapter 1 (The beautiful game) As demonstrated by the huge numbers of people who watch the World Cup, soccer is undoubtedly the world’s number one sport. This is true not just for spectators but for participants too, with hundreds of thousands of teams of all kinds around the world.

Chapter 2 (What kind of football?) Association football (‘soccer’) is what is usually meant by ‘football’. However, there are several types of football, including rugby, American football, Gaelic football, Australian rules football, and five-a-side, as well as Subbuteo and computer football games.

Chapter 3 (Playing the game) Part of the attraction of soccer is that its rules are relatively simple. Also, it is a game that people of different sizes and skills can take part in, as they can play in a variety of positions.

Chapter 4 (The story of football) Ball games go back at least two thousand years. But the earliest football games in Britain were very different from modern soccer, with hundreds of men taking part in violent clashes with neighbouring villages that could last for days. In the 19th century football was popular in schools, but they did not all have the same rules. The Football Association, started in 1863, came up with a set of rules, and soon competitions using these rules were started, leading to the rise of soccer in England, Scotland, and eventually the whole world.

Chapter 5 (We won the cup) Most teams play in leagues which are usually divided into groups of about twenty teams (such as the English Premier League or the Italian Serie A). There are also many national, regional and international cup competitions, the FIFA World Cup being the most famous. Football is also included in the Olympic Games, although there are limitations on the use of professional players.

Chapter 6 (Women’s football) The first women’s soccer teams were started by women factory workers during the First World War. Despite the difficulties – including opposition from some national Football Associations – women’s soccer became popular in many countries. There is now a Women’s World Cup, and women’s soccer has produced some remarkable players.

Chapter 7 (Stars of football) Some soccer players, particularly the greatest strikers such as Pelé and Maradona, become international superstars. Some of them become ambassadors for football as they get older.

Chapter 8 (The business of football) The amount of money involved in football has shot up over the last fifty years. Top international players, big clubs, and TV companies have been the main beneficiaries, while smaller clubs often struggle financially and many fans find that ticket prices are beyond them.

Chapter 9 (The dark side of football) There have been several major disasters at football matches. One saw hundreds of people crushed by uncontrolled crowds. The introduction of seating for all fans has improved safety in this respect. Hooliganism too, while not completely eradicated, is less of a problem now than in the past. Another negative aspect of football is corruption. There have been cases where referees have been involved in fixing results.

Chapter 10 (Football today and tomorrow) The dominance of European and South American teams may fade as Africa and Asia become more important in the football world. It is possible that soccer will gain in popularity in the USA, too, although American football is still far more popular. The increasing commercialisation of soccer may mean rule changes which lead to faster play and more goals, and big international games will probably continue to attract the lion’s share of the money.
The Beautiful Game

Pre-reading activity

Is it true?

1 Do you think these sentences are true (T) or false (F)?

a  ____ People have played football for more than a thousand years.
b  ____ There are two halves of 45 minutes in a soccer match.
c  ____ When the referee shows a player the yellow card, the player must leave the pitch at once.
d  ____ The World Cup competition is every four years.
e  ____ Millions of people watched the first World Cup final on television.
f  ____ England have won the World Cup more often than any other country.

2 These are the titles of chapters in The Beautiful Game. Match them with the sentences from the book.

1 The beautiful game a 'Sometimes there were hundreds of men in each team, and there was a lot of fighting.'
2 What kind of football? b 'Perhaps in the next twenty-five years, African and Asian teams will be than the Europeans and South Americans.'
3 Playing the game c 'In Australia, there is a game called Australian rules football which has eighteen players in each team.'
4 The story of football d 'The most famous cup competition in the world is the FIFA World Cup.'
5 We won the cup e 'The fans are paying more and more money for tickets, and the players are getting richer and richer.'
6 Women’s football f 'Football is the world’s favourite sport.'
7 Stars of football g 'They were angry about the goal, and one of the men had a gun.'
8 The business of football h 'Like Pelé, Maradona was born into a poor family.'
9 The dark side of football i 'The referee blows his whistle to stop play when there is a foul.'
10 Football today and tomorrow j 'A crowd of 63,000 saw the USA beat Norway 2–1 in the final.'

To the teacher

Aim: To familiarize students with some of the facts and vocabulary about football.

Time: 10–15 minutes.

Organization: This can be done as one activity or two separate pre-reading activities. Give one copy of the worksheet to each student. Ask them to work on their own for five minutes for each activity and then compare their answers with a partner. If they are not sure of any of the words they could use a dictionary to check. Go through the answers with the whole class.

For activity 1, where students think that a sentence is false, ask them to explain why. For activity 2, ask students why they think the sentences might be connected to the titles.

Key: Activity 1: a T, b T, c F (a red card means the player must leave the pitch), d T, e F (the first World Cup was in 1930, when TV was in its infancy), f F (Brazil have won more often than any other country). Activity 2: 1 f, 2 c, 3 i, 4 a, 5 d, 6 j, 7 h, 8 e, 9 g, 10 b.
There are many different kinds of football, with different rules. For example, in rugby football, which started in Argentina and England, players can pass the ball with their hands. People in the USA play American football, and in Germany they play Gaelic football. Football is very old. The Spanish were playing a kind of football 2,000 years ago. In the city of Ashbourne in England, they still play a kind of football that is hundreds of years old. A game takes two hours, and there are very few rules.

When people talk about football now, they usually mean “soccer”. A soccer game lasts 80 minutes, and there are two teams of ten players. A referee controls the game. He holds up his flag to start and stop the game. When there is a foul, the referee gives a free kick. If the foul is in the penalty area, a player throws the ball at the goal from the penalty spot. Only the goalkeeper can try to stop it. This is usually very easy for the goalkeeper.

Soccer started in 1863, when a group of men met in Paris to start the Football Association. Soon people began to play soccer in other countries. For example, an English doctor in Montevideo started the first soccer club in Uruguay. At first, all soccer players were professionals. Now, soccer is the number one international sport, and the top players get a lot of money. The most famous soccer competition is the FIFA World Plate.
The Beautiful Game

After reading activity

Hidden words

Read the clues and fill in the words. Find the hidden adjective.

Clues
1. The last and most important match in a soccer competition.
2. Pelé was ________ years old when he first played in a World Cup competition.
3. Modern stadiums are not too dangerous, because they have ________ for all the fans.
4. The ________ is the only player who can touch the ball with his hands.
5. A top Italian club asked Birgit ________ to play on their men’s team.
7. The assistant referee holds up his ________ if a player is offside.
8. If a player is tired or is not playing well, a ________ can take his place.
9. ________ was a great French-Algerian player who often got angry during games.
10. The referee Robert Hoyzer sometimes got ________ from clubs before matches.
11. If a referee stops the game because a player is hurt, he can add ________ time at the end of the 45 minutes.
12. If both teams score the same number of goals, the match is a ________.
13. ________ are people who make trouble at soccer matches.

Key: 1 final; 2 seventeen; 3 seats; 4 goalkeeper; 5 Prinz; 6 Maradona; 7 flag; 8 substitute; 9 Zidane; 10 money; 11 injury; 12 draw; 13 hooligan. Hidden word: international.

To the teacher

Aim: To revise some key vocabulary, characters and events.

Time: 15–20 minutes.

Organization: Give each student, or group of students, a copy of the worksheet. Ask them to read the clues and fill in the words. They will then find the hidden word. When checking the answers with the class, ask students to give as much detail as they can about each answer.