Football History

Teacher's Key | Level C1 | EnglishBridges.com

Sections follow the student handout. Delete a section here when you delete it from the handout. The handout uses the short (quick) version of the reading.

Vocabulary: Fill in the Blank

1. has seen better days
2. ubiquity
3. unruly
4. to little avail
5. degenerate
6. sticking point
7. traces
8. pioneer
9. coincide
10. deterred
11. bolster
12. rallying point
13. outlawing
14. milestones

Word Partners

Part A. 1 c 2 d 3 h 4 e 5 g 6 b 7 a 8 f

Phrases: an unruly crowd; degenerate into chaos; a major sticking point; leave no trace; pioneer a new technique; be deterred by the high cost; bolster confidence; reach an important milestone.

Part B. 1 ubiquitous 2 pioneering 3 coincidence 4 deterrent 5 degeneration 6 traced

Comprehension Questions: Model Answers

1. *According to the writer, why can football be played almost anywhere?*
Because it needs almost no equipment: no special field or kit, just a ball or something round to kick.

2. *What was cuju, and what was it partly used for?*
Cuju was a kicking game played in China more than 2,000 years ago. It was partly used as training for soldiers.

3. *What was medieval football like in Europe, and how successful were the attempts to ban it?*
It was unruly: whole villages chased a ball through the streets with few rules. London banned it in 1314, and bans continued for centuries, but they had little effect.

4. *Why did matches between schools and clubs in England often end in arguments before 1863?*
Each school or club played by its own rules, so matches could degenerate into arguments about how to play.

5. *What was hacking, and what did the new Football Association decide about it?*
Hacking was kicking an opponent in the shins. The new Football Association banned it.

6. *Who was Charles Miller, and what did he bring to Brazil?*
He was the son of a Scottish railway engineer, born in São Paulo. He came home from school in England in 1894 with two footballs and a book of rules.

7. *Why did only 13 teams play at the first World Cup in 1930?*
The long sea voyage to Uruguay deterred most European countries from taking part.

8. *Why did a group of Algerian players leave their clubs in France in 1958?*
They left to form a team for the movement fighting for Algeria's independence and to bolster support for it.

9. *Why does the writer describe Curaçao's place at the 2026 World Cup as a milestone?*
Curaçao, an island of about 160,000 people, became the smallest country by population ever to qualify for a World Cup, which shows how far the game has spread.

10. *True, False, or Not Given? "Charles Miller later played for Brazil's national team."*
    Not Given. The reading says Miller brought footballs and rules to Brazil, but it says nothing about a national team.
11. *Yes, No, or Not Given? "The writer suggests that, by 1930, football still depended mainly on Britain to grow." Explain your answer using the reading.*
    No. The writer says local players made the game their own and that football was growing on its own terms, no longer simply a British export.
12. *Author's purpose: Why does the writer mention the spelling of AC Milan's name? Is it (a) to show a trace of the British origins of many clubs, (b) to compare the Italian and English languages, or (c) to suggest that AC Milan is the oldest club in Italy?*
    (a) To show a trace of the British origins of many clubs. Milan's English spelling is an example of how football spread through British residents abroad.

True or False

1. **T.** The reading says cuju was played more than 2,000 years ago.
2. **F.** It was unruly, with whole villages chasing a ball through the streets.
3. **T.** The Football Association was formed at the Freemasons' Tavern in London in 1863.
4. **F.** The new laws banned hacking.
5. **T.** Oxford students turned "association" into "soccer."
6. **F.** His father was Scottish, but he came home from school in England.
7. **F.** The long sea voyage deterred most European countries, and only 13 teams took part.
8. **T.** They left to form a team for the independence movement.
9. **T.** The FA called football "quite unsuitable for females."
10. **F.** It was the first World Cup with 48 teams.

Language Focus: Appositives: Noun Phrases That Rename

Model answers. Accept any answer that uses the form correctly and makes sense.

1. My hometown, a small port city in the south, is famous for its seafood.
2. My favorite athlete, a marathon runner from Kenya, trains at high altitude.
3. The best teacher I have ever had, my high school history teacher, made every class feel like a story.
4. One place I would love to visit is Patagonia, a wild region in the far south of South America.
5. At home, I still have my first football, a gift from my grandfather.
6. I admire my aunt, a doctor who works in rural clinics.
7. My favorite film is Spirited Away, an animated film by Hayao Miyazaki.
8. I know badminton best, a sport I played every day in high school.
9. Visitors should try jollof rice, a spicy rice dish popular across West Africa.
10. One famous person from my country is Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmental activist.

Accept any noun phrase that renames the noun before it, with commas. A short relative clause inside the appositive is fine (a teacher who…).

Notes on the Evidence

Early history: cuju is described in Warring States and Han dynasty texts, and a military treatise presents it as an exercise; FIFA calls it one of the earliest kicking games with documentary evidence. The 1314 London ban was a proclamation issued in the name of Edward II. FA founding: 26 October 1863, Freemasons' Tavern, eleven or twelve clubs; laws approved 8 December 1863 with hacking banned; Blackheath withdrew and was later a founding member of the Rugby Football Union (1871). Sources: thefa.com history page; Wikipedia (Cuju, Medieval football).

Spread and early World Cups: Charles Miller (born 1874, São Paulo) returned in 1894 with two footballs and a set of Hampshire FA rules. FIFA was founded in Paris on 21 May 1904 by France, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain,

Sweden, and Switzerland. The 1930 World Cup had 13 teams (seven from South America, four from Europe, two from North America); Uruguay beat Argentina 4-2 and was marking the centenary of its first constitution, usually described as its independence centenary. England first entered in 1950 and lost 1-0 to the United States in the group stage. "Football was now growing on its own terms" is the writer's interpretation.

Politics and women's football: 12 Algerian players left France on 4 April 1958; the Équipe FLN played over 100 matches in about four years. The Dick, Kerr Ladies match at Goodison Park (26 December 1920) drew about 53,000; the FA ban of 5 December 1921 applied to members' grounds and was lifted in 1971. Brazil's Decree-law 3,199 (April 1941) banned women's football until 1979. The claim that the bans are one reason the women's game is still catching up is attributed to historians and is debatable in degree.

2026 World Cup (checked October 2026): 48 teams, hosted by Canada, Mexico, and the United States; debutants Cape Verde, Curaçao, Jordan, and Uzbekistan; Spain beat Argentina 1-0 after extra time in the final on 19 July 2026. Curaçao (population about 160,000) is reported as the smallest country by population ever to qualify (Al Jazeera, May 2026). FIFA has 211 member associations; the UN has 193 member states.