



BLOOMSBURY INTERNATIONAL

British Culture - Football

Why is football so popular in England?



Football is a very popular sport in many countries around the world and many people become obsessed with the teams they support. This quote from former footballer and manager Bill Shankly describes it in a nice way:

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

Although [football](#) is considered important (even a way of life sometimes) all around the world, there is a particular obsession in England which may be because of the sport’s history.



Why is England considered the home of football?

England is considered the home of football and many people believe that the sport originated in England. Here are a few reasons why:

- Football was first played in England in medieval times and there is written evidence of the game being played as early as 1170!
- The Football Association (The FA) was set up in England in 1863 and in the same year, the modern rules that we know and play by today were set up.

- The world's first football club was set up in England (Sheffield F.C. in 1857).
- The world's first national competition (the FA Cup) started in England in 1871.
- England formed the first national football team and the world's first international football match was played in England (England vs Scotland in 1872).
- The first national football league began in England in 1888.
- Today, there are over 40,000 registered football clubs in England – more than any other country! (Brazil has the second highest amount, 29,000).
- The Premier League (England's top league) is one of the most popular sports leagues in the world.

Why is football so popular?

There are a few reasons why people believe that [football](#) is so popular, more popular than any other sport in England.

The main reason is because football is so easy to play! All you need is a ball, 2 goals and some friends to play with! You don't even need real equipment either – many people create goalposts from pieces of clothing or marks on the ground and a ball can be made of plastic bags and string!



In addition, there are very few rules in [football](#) compared to other sports so it can be very enjoyable to play and watch.

Did you know?

The UK doesn't actually have a football or rugby team! All the countries in the UK have their own teams (Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and England) because these two sports are so popular and there is a lot of competition between the countries. However, during the Olympic Games and some other sporting events, the UK is represented as one team.



England and the World Cup

Even though England is home to the oldest international [football](#) club in the world, we have only actually won the World Cup once, in 1966! Let's hope for some success next World cup!!



Are you even more interested in football now? [Bloomsbury International](#) offers an [English plus Football course](#), which is a fantastic option for football lovers who would like to play "the beautiful game" and improve their English at the same time!

Have fun with English!

Football vocabulary

Can you unscramble these words to find English football terms? Look up the meanings in a dictionary or ask your English teacher.

- A. erreef
- B. fedednreSoccer Stadium
- C. tirerks
- D. kegarleeop
- E. busuittets
- F. foidfes
- G. olfu
- H. lkecat
- I. neatlyp
- J. lewloy dcra



1. erreef – referee
2. fedednre – defender
3. tirerks – striker
4. kegarleeop – goalkeeper
5. busuittets – substitute
6. foidfes – offside
7. olfu – foul
8. lkecat – tackle
9. neatlyp – penalty
10. lewloy dcra – yellow card

Answers: