



The World Cup

More than just football?

Every four years, one tournament stops the world — and it means far more than the score.



Listen to the article

Scan the QR code or visit the link.



Fans celebrate as the World Cup trophy is lifted in front of a packed stadium.

WARM-UP

Discuss the questions with a partner.

1. Do you watch the World Cup or other big sporting events? Who do you support?
2. Why do you think sport can bring people together?

Every four years, something remarkable happens. For one month, people who have never kicked a ball gather around screens in homes, cafés, and public squares, united by a single **tournament**. Strangers hug after a goal; entire nations hold their breath together. The World Cup is football, but it is also something much larger.

No other event draws an audience like it. Around half the planet watches some part of the competition, and more than a billion people may see a single final. Part of the appeal is the sheer **spectacle** — the color, the noise, the drama of a penalty shoot-out. But it is also the **rivalry** between nations that, for ninety minutes, matters more than almost anything else.

Hosting the World Cup is a huge undertaking. Countries spend billions of dollars building stadiums, hotels, and transport, hoping the world's attention will boost tourism and pride. Yet the results are mixed. Some new stadiums are used for years; others sit empty once the crowds go home. The **legacy** of hosting can be a gift or a costly burden.

Critics argue the tournament has become too commercial, and that the cost of **hosting** often falls on ordinary people. Supporters reply that few things unite the world so powerfully — that for a few weeks, borders seem to matter a little less.

For one month every four years, the whole world seems to watch the same thing. Why does that still matter?

VOCABULARY

A. Match the words (1–5) with their meanings (A–E).

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. spectacle ____ | A. strong competition between two sides |
| 2. tournament ____ | B. something left behind that lasts |
| 3. rivalry ____ | C. a competition with many teams or games |
| 4. host ____ | D. to hold and organize an event |
| 5. legacy ____ | E. an impressive public show or sight |

TRUE OR FALSE

Read the statements and circle T (True) or F (False).

- | | | |
|---|----------|----------|
| 1. About half the planet watches some part of the World Cup. | T | F |
| 2. Every new World Cup stadium is used for many years afterwards. | T | F |
| 3. Hosting the World Cup costs billions of dollars. | T | F |
| 4. Some critics say the tournament has become too commercial. | T | F |
| 5. The article says the World Cup is only about football. | T | F |

DISCUSSION

- 1 Do you enjoy watching the World Cup or big sporting events? Why or why not?
- 2 Has a sporting event ever brought your country or family together?
- 3 Why do people feel such strong emotions about their national team?
- 4 Is spending billions to host the World Cup worth it? Why or why not?
- 5 Does the World Cup still bring the world together, or divide it?



01 CRITICAL THINKING

BEST SOLUTION

A country wants to host the next World Cup. What should be its **top priority**? Choose **ONE** option, explain your reasons, then compare with another pair.

- ☐ Build modern new stadiums
- ☐ Improve public transport
- ☐ Protect the environment
- ☐ Create local jobs
- ☐ Keep costs low for the country

THEN COMPARE Did the other pair choose the same? · Whose reasons were strongest? · Can you agree on one?

02 LANGUAGE IN CONTEXT

USE THE LANGUAGE

Complete each line so you can use it in the discussion.
Change the form if you need to.

host legacy tournament rivalry spectacle

- 1 The final was an amazing _____ that no one will forget.
- 2 There is a fierce _____ between the two teams.
- 3 Our country hopes to _____ the next World Cup.
- 4 A great event can leave a lasting _____.
- 5 A knockout _____ can be decided by a single goal.

04 WRITING

YOUR OPINION

Should countries spend billions of dollars to host the World Cup?

Write 150–200 words, using ideas and vocabulary from the article.

03 SPEAKING CHALLENGE

ROLE • TASK • PRESENT

In small groups, work through the three steps below.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ROLE | You are on your city's committee bidding to host the World Cup. |
| TASK | Agree on three reasons your city would be a great host. |
| PRESENT | Present your bid and explain why your city deserves it. |