

Reading and speaking

The world's most loved football team!

- 1 Football is the world's most popular game. Talk to a partner. Are you at all interested in it? Can you name the most famous football teams worldwide? Share your ideas with the class.
- 2 Look at the photos and headings. Do you agree that most people have heard of **Manchester United**?
- 3 Read the first part of the article. Complete these sentences with the correct information.
 - 1 Of the 1.6 billion football fans worldwide, _____ are fans of Manchester United.
 - 2 Manchester United is known by two nicknames: _____ and _____.
 - 3 When _____ travel abroad, they are often asked questions about the club.
- 4 Read *Man. U – a brief history*. Answer the questions.
 - 1 Who were the first players for the club?
 - 2 What happened 24 years after the club was first founded?
 - 3 What is the 'Theatre of dreams'?
 - 4 How did Matt Busby make the team more successful?
 - 5 Why did Matt have to create another team?
 - 6 Who was also a successful manager? Why?
 - 7 Why is Man. U the most valuable football brand worldwide?
 - 8 How do famous companies use Man. U to advertise themselves?
- 5 Work with your partner. Read *Why is the club so popular?* What are the four reasons given for the club's popularity?

Talking about you

- 6 Look at the chart. Are you an **A** or a **B**? How many **As** and **Bs** are there in your class? Form mixed groups.

Answer the questions and discuss them together.

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|---|
| A I like sport |
| What sports do you do like? <i>When? Where? How often? Who with?</i> Do you watch sport? <i>What? Where?</i> Do others in your family like sport? <i>Who? What?</i> |
| B I don't like sport |
| <i>Why?</i> Have you always disliked it? Do you ever watch sport? <i>What?</i> Do you do any form of exercise? <i>What?</i> Do people in your family like sport? <i>Who? What?</i> |

 **Watch** and learn more about about how football can change people's lives.



Love football or hate football – most people round the world have heard of **Manchester United**.

Football (or *soccer*, as it is called in the US) is the world's most popular sport, with 1.6 billion global fans. Recently, 54,000 of these fans, from 39 countries, were surveyed about their favourite football team, and **Manchester United** (or 'Man. U') was named the most popular club ever.

The club, nicknamed the 'Red Devils', has 659 million fans worldwide and their games are broadcast to over 1.15 billion homes. Barcelona, Real Madrid, and Bayern Munich were the next most popular.

Man. U fans can be found anywhere and everywhere, but the club is particularly popular throughout Asia, especially in India and China. Taxi drivers from Mauritius to Vietnam, learning that they have an English person in their cab, often respond with, 'Ah, English! Manchester United! Can you tell me ... ?' It's quite difficult to continue the conversation if you're not a football fan and know nothing about their favourite team.



'Glory, glory Man. United!'

MANCHESTER UNITED

'Number one club in the world's number one sport!'

MAN. U – A BRIEF HISTORY

- It was founded in 1878, and is one of the oldest football teams in the world. The first players all worked for a local railway company. It wasn't named Manchester United until 1902.
- In 1910, it moved to its now famous football ground, Old Trafford. The ground is often now nicknamed the 'Theatre of dreams'.
- In 1945, **Matt Busby** became manager and brought a lot of young players (known as 'Busby's Babes') into the team. This was a very successful move.
- 1958 was a dark year for the club. The plane bringing the team home from the European Cup crashed in the snow at Munich airport. Eight players were killed. Matt Busby survived, and eventually he created another great team.
- Alex Ferguson** was another very successful manager. During his 20 years at the club, from 1986, the club won 25 major trophies.
- Since 2015, Man. U has been considered the world's most valuable football brand. The team sells about 2 million shirts a year – more than Real Madrid and FC Barcelona put together. *Adidas*, *DHL*, *Uber*, and *Toshiba* are just a few of the companies that have made business deals with the club. Their logos often appear on the players' shirts.



Busby's Babes

WHY IS THE CLUB SO POPULAR?

Perhaps it's because, despite many ups and downs over the years, they've won a great many trophies, both national and international. Perhaps it's the number of talented players who have played for the team. These include, George Best, Eric Cantona, David Beckham, Rio Ferdinand, Cristiano Ronaldo, and Wayne Rooney. Perhaps it's because they have some very famous fans including Usain Bolt, Justin Timberlake, and Enrique Iglesias. Maybe it is because Old Trafford really is a theatre of dreams where players and fans can find fairy-tale glory and make dreams come true.



George Best

