

Football

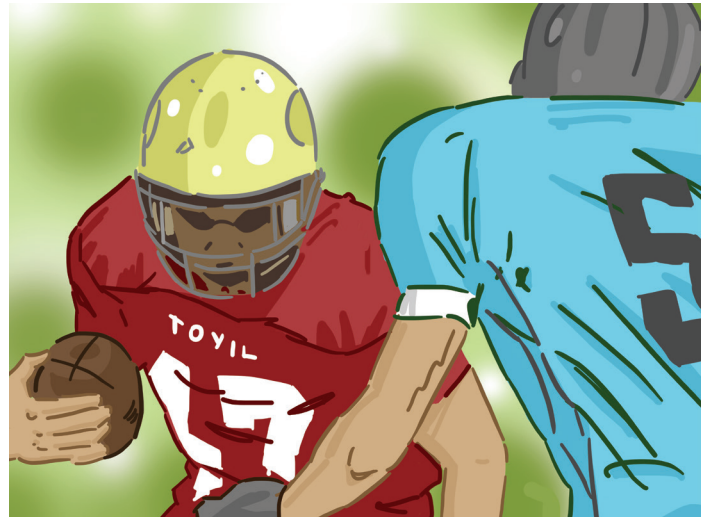
Quick Facts

Sport: football (American football)

Playing surface: _____

Points given for a touchdown: _____

Action verbs: _____



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is the difference between football and soccer?
2. What is the NFL?
3. What type of equipment do football players wear?

"Sure, the home field is an advantage—but so is having a lot of talent." —Dan Morino

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. object | a) the primary offensive player on a football team |
| _____ 2. outscore | b) a player on the defensive side of a football team who has a variety of jobs |
| _____ 3. offensive | c) to jump on a person and bring them to the ground |
| _____ 4. possession | d) to interrupt a play by catching a pass meant for the other team |
| _____ 5. quarterback | e) the main goal |
| _____ 6. wide receiver | f) the side that is attacking or trying to score |
| _____ 7. linebacker | g) to get more points than the other side |
| _____ 8. tackle | h) a football player whose main job is to catch a pass from the quarterback |
| _____ 9. intercept | i) shoes with spikes for grip |
| _____ 10. wired | j) having control/ownership |
| _____ 11. cleats | k) a competition between the top teams in a league |
| _____ 12. play-off | l) connected by wire to another person for communication purposes |

Reading

1. Football is a team sport with 11 players on each side. The **object** of the game is to throw, kick, or run the football down the field and **outscore** the other team. This sport is sometimes referred to as “American football” in order to distinguish it from “soccer,” which is known as “football” in most countries outside of the US.
2. Football is played on a long field that is divided in yard lines, with an end zone on each side of the field. A player scores a touchdown worth six points by bringing the ball across the goal line. Each end zone contains a set of field goal posts for scoring extra points.
3. The **offensive** team has four chances to gain a distance of ten yards. These chances are called “downs.” If the offense achieves this distance, it has four more chances to gain another ten yards. The goal is to get to the end zone to score a touchdown worth six points. If the team fails to gain ten yards in four downs, they give up **possession** of the ball and the other team becomes the offensive side.
4. There are a few key players on a football team. The **quarterback** (QB) has the most important position on the offensive team. This player makes decisions about each offensive play. Some quarterbacks wear **wired** helmets to receive instructions from the coach. Quarterbacks use special codes to call or change plays. The **wide receiver**’s job is to stay along the outside and catch the ball from the quarterback. **Linebackers** (LB) have a variety of duties on the defensive side. They line up behind the line of scrimmage. This is an imaginary line between the two teams at the beginning of a play. **Tackling**, covering, and **intercepting** are different ways that the defensive side stops the offensive side from scoring.
5. Football is a contact sport and requires protective equipment. All players must wear helmets and padding. Football players wear shoulder, knee, and thigh pads. They also wear mouthguards. Like in soccer, football players wear spiked shoes called “**cleats**” for grip.
6. The National Football League (NFL) is the top professional football league in the world. The NFL season runs from September to February each year. A final championship **play-off** game called the “Super Bowl” is held after 16 weeks of regular season play. The Super Bowl is typically the most watched show in the US each year.

Comprehension

Read the statements below. Write T if the statement is true. Write F if the statement is false and correct the information. Write NM if the fact is not mentioned.

- _____ 1. Soccer is called "football" in the US.
- _____ 2. A football field is divided into yard lines.
- _____ 3. A touchdown is a type of penalty in football.
- _____ 4. A linebacker's main job is to catch the passes from the quarterback.
- _____ 5. Most NFL football quarterbacks have wired helmets.
- _____ 6. The Super Bowl is the final game of the regular NFL season.

Vocabulary Review

A. Complete the Sentences

Choose the correct word from the vocabulary list on page 1 to complete the following sentences.

- 1. Is the _____ of the game to get the most touchdowns?
- 2. To be a winning football team, you need a star _____ .
- 3. Don't step on my feet! You're wearing _____ .
- 4. His helmet was _____ so that he could hear the coach's instructions.
- 5. The home team lost _____ of the ball due to an interception.

B. Odd One Out

Which word does not belong?

Name the category that the other three belong to.

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| 1. a) cleats
b) helmet
c) shoulder pads
d) tackle
_____ | 2. a) football
b) soccer
c) hockey
d) basketball
_____ | 3. a) tackle
b) intercept
c) score
d) block
_____ | 4. a) quarterback
b) referee
c) linebacker
d) wide receiver
_____ | 5. a) Super Bowl
b) World Cup
c) Stanley Cup
d) Linebacker
_____ |
|---|--|---|---|--|

Research

PIGSKIN

A football is sometimes referred to as a “pigskin.”
Do a little research about this interesting fact.
Share your findings with your class.

1. Why is a football sometimes referred to as a “pigskin”?
2. What are today’s footballs made of?
3. Why are footballs shaped the way they are?
4. What is the official football of the NFL?

Discussion

1. Which sport is more exciting to watch, football or soccer? Why?
2. Many football fans gamble. Do you think this is a waste of money or a fun hobby?
3. Plan an imaginary Super Bowl party with your class. What kind of food would be there? What would people wear? What would happen at halftime?

Critical Thinking

IN PAIRS OR SMALL GROUPS

Football players have a high risk of physical injury. Concussions (head injuries) are very common and can have long-term effects. Would this risk prevent you from allowing your young son to play football in high school?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read about American football. The lesson includes a reading, comprehension check, vocabulary review, and discussion questions. It also includes a research task about the “pigskin” itself.

LEVEL: Intermediate – High-Intermediate

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: football, american football, NFL, US, Canada, sport, athlete, ball

Quick Facts

Playing surface: football field

Points given for touchdown: six

Action verbs: tackle, run, intercept, catch, throw, rush, pass

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Individual answers. Discuss the quote.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. e | 3. f | 5. a | 7. b | 9. d | 11. i |
| 2. g | 4. j | 6. h | 8. c | 10. l | 12. k |

Comprehension

- F – Soccer is called “football” in countries outside of the US.
- T
- F – A touchdown is a score in football.
- F – A wide receiver’s main job is to catch the passes from the quarterback.
- NM – Some quarterbacks have them, but we don’t know about most.
- F – The Super Bowl is the final game of the NFL play-off season.

Vocabulary Review

A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1. object | 3. cleats | 5. possession |
| 2. quarterback | 4. wired | |

B. ODD ONE OUT

- d) tackle, football equipment
- c) hockey, ball sports
- c) score, defensive plays
- b) referee, football players
- d) linebacker, play-off competitions

Research

Optional Internet task.

Discussion

Discuss as a class or in groups. Answers will vary.

Critical Thinking

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Answers will vary.

SPELLING NOTES:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Offense*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Offence*. Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.