



THE ORIGINS OF SOCCER

1. What do you know about the origins of soccer? Make a list of interesting facts and share them with your classmates.

2. Read the text below and choose the alternative that best conveys its main idea.

- Soccer is the most beloved sport in the world.
- Soccer's origins go back many centuries, but our modern and popular version started in England.
- The World Cup has gathered soccer fans since 1930.

For more than a century, soccer has been one of the most popular sports in the world, followed by passionate fans that would do the most unthinkable acts of madness for their teams.

However, it seems that people have enjoyed kicking a ball for much longer than that. The earliest form of a game similar to today's soccer for which there is scientific **evidence** was an exercise from a military manual dating back to the second and third centuries BC (255-206 BC) in the Tsin Dynasty in China. It was called Tsu' Chu and it consisted of kicking a leather ball filled with feathers and hair through an opening, measuring only 30-40cm in width, into a small net fixed onto long bamboo canes. According to one variation of this exercise, players could use their feet, chest, back and shoulders while trying to withstand the attacks of his opponents. Use of the hands was not permitted. Other forms of games **resembling** soccer have also been played by the Romans, Greeks, and Japanese long before the British started our contemporary game in the mid 1800s.

It all began in 1863 in England, when rugby football and association football **branched off** on their different courses and the Football Association in England was formed - becoming the sport's first governing body.



From that point on soccer **flourished** in Britain, with the Football Association Cup being introduced 12 years later and the foundation of the Football League in 1888. At the same time soccer clubs began to spread throughout Europe, with Denmark, Belgium and Switzerland all having Association football clubs by 1880. By the turn of the 20th century many European countries had formed their own soccer leagues and competed in international games between **rivaling** nations.

In 1904, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) was founded and in 1930 the first soccer World Cup **was held** in Uruguay. Since then, the event is held every four years and is **hosted** by countries all over the world.

Sources: <http://worldsoccer.about.com/od/Soccer-History/a/Who-Invented-Soccer.htm>
<http://www.fifa.com/classicfootball/history/the-game/Britain-home-of-football.html>
<http://www.fifa.com/classicfootball/history/the-game/origins.html>

3. Read the text again and correct the sentences below according to the information provided.

a) Soccer was the most popular sport in the world in the last century.

b) There is evidence that the Chinese played a similar version to soccer in the mid-1800s.

c) Soccer became more popular in Britain after the foundation of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA).

4. Look back at the text to find the following words in context and check the best synonym for each of them.

a) The word *evidence* in line 6 probably means:

- () clarity
- () highlight
- () proof

b) The word *resembling* in line 12 probably means:

- () remembering
- () starting
- () similar to



c) The expression *branch off* in line 16 probably means:

- () separate
- () break
- () unite

d) The word *flourished* in line 18 probably means:

- () remained
- () expanded
- () developed

e) The word *rivaling* in line 23 probably means:

- () expecting
- () fighting
- () competing

f) The expression *was held* in line 18 probably means:

- () took place
- () started
- () celebrated

5. Discuss the questions below with your classmates:

- a) What other games resemble soccer?
- b) Which soccer teams are your team's main rivals?
- c) Where was the last World Cup held? Which country will host it next?
- d) Would you like participate in a World Cup? Why (not)?
- e) Do you know anyone who has done something crazy for their soccer team?
What have they done?