

# The mind of a sports fan

## Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2–B1 and above)

## Comment

This eLesson is about being a team-sports fan and the notion of 'fandom'. Students are asked to think about why people become a fan and it may be of particular interest in this World Cup period. The last paragraph of the text is more complicated linguistically and conceptually.

## How to use the lesson

- 1 Before giving students the worksheet, show them a picture or video clip of some football fans, by doing an image search with the key words 'football fans'. Elicit the word *fan* and ask students if any of them are fans of a particular team. Ask them relevant questions to raise interest. If appropriate for your group, put them in pairs to discuss, eg *What are your team colours? Why did you start? When did you start supporting them? What do you do to support your team?*
- 2 Elicit the distinction between *fan* and *spectator*. Then put students in threes to discuss the points in exercise one. Ensure that students do not read the text. Monitor and pick up on any points of interest, whether topical or possibly linguistic.
- 3 Students read the text and see if they discussed similar points (exercise 2). Avoid taking feedback here, except to pick up on any differences between their own ideas (exercise 1) and the text.
- 4 Students read the text more closely to respond to the comprehension questions. Refer them to the Glossary before they start. Let them compare answers in pairs, if appropriate, before feedback.
- 5 Students complete the vocabulary exercise (exercise 4) without looking at the text. Then they read to check. Ask early finishers to substitute the whole phrase or part of the phrase with a (near) synonym, to demonstrate that they have understood the meaning, eg *on top of = as well as*. Students might also find it interesting to compare with their first language, eg do they say *from head to toe* or *be / feel part of a group?*
- 6 Exercise 5 is likely to appeal to some students more than others, but it could serve as a memorable and colourful change of focus. If students do not wish to draw a supporter, you could bring a picture of a fan from a magazine or copy one from the Internet. Encourage them to think of different parts of their body and to be funny, eg *throat* (sore from shouting), *knees* (sore from jumping), *heart* (beating fast). Ask students to think of at least six symptoms. Then let groups go around and look at other groups' posters.
- 7 To round off the lesson, choose one of the following tasks: EITHER use the opportunity to brainstorm further sports lexis, eg *stadium* (n), *team player* (n), *spectator* (n), *score* (n), *sponsor* (n), *draw* (n), *referee* (n). Be sure to include other sports words, not just football-related, depending on your students' interests. OR get students to finish the following four sentence starters, for later discussion:
  - Most sports fans are male because ...
  - Although tickets are expensive, it's worth it because ...
  - Sometimes fans become violent because ...
  - Club teams should (not) be allowed to buy foreign players because ...

## Reading eLesson

### Answer key

1 Students' own answers.

2 Wording of answers may vary.

- 1 Because of the Winter Olympics and the World Cup.
- 2 A fan may dress in their team colours, paint their face and shout and sing noisily. They may also show dislike of the opposite team.
- 3 Fans existed in Roman times, at the chariot races.
- 4 To give oneself an identity; to show belonging; it provides an interest, even a reason for being.
- 5 The text suggests that money and fame are key driving forces today behind players. (Students may disagree with this.)

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- 1 See (2) above.
- 2 It's strange because it is often considered acceptable to show dislike or hatred towards other people.
- 3 They attracted huge crowds and were sometimes followed by violence.
- 4 It can make people feel happy or depressed, depending on the result.
- 5 Being a fan is comparable to being in love because you don't see or ignore all the negative aspects of a team or a player, eg the fact that they are paid so much money.  
It's comparable to being a child because it lets you believe in something and be part of a group who all love the same thing, rather like the relationship between a child and a parent.

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- 1 on **top** of
- 2 **interesting** phenomenon
- 3 turn **nasty**
- 4 from head to **toe**
- 5 part of a **group**
- 6 feel **high**
- 7 in the **old** days

5 Students' own answers.

### Related websites

The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.

<http://www.athleticsinsight.com/Vol5Iss2/FanDevelopment.htm>

[http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/06/0620\\_050620\\_sportsriots.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2005/06/0620_050620_sportsriots.html) (the psychology of a fan)

<http://moreintelligentlife.com/content/ideas/tim-de-lisle/how-did-sport-get-so-big> (the growth of popularity in sport)

[http://www.mariamilani.com/ancient\\_rome/Ancient\\_Roman\\_Chariot\\_Races.htm](http://www.mariamilani.com/ancient_rome/Ancient_Roman_Chariot_Races.htm) (fandom in Roman times)