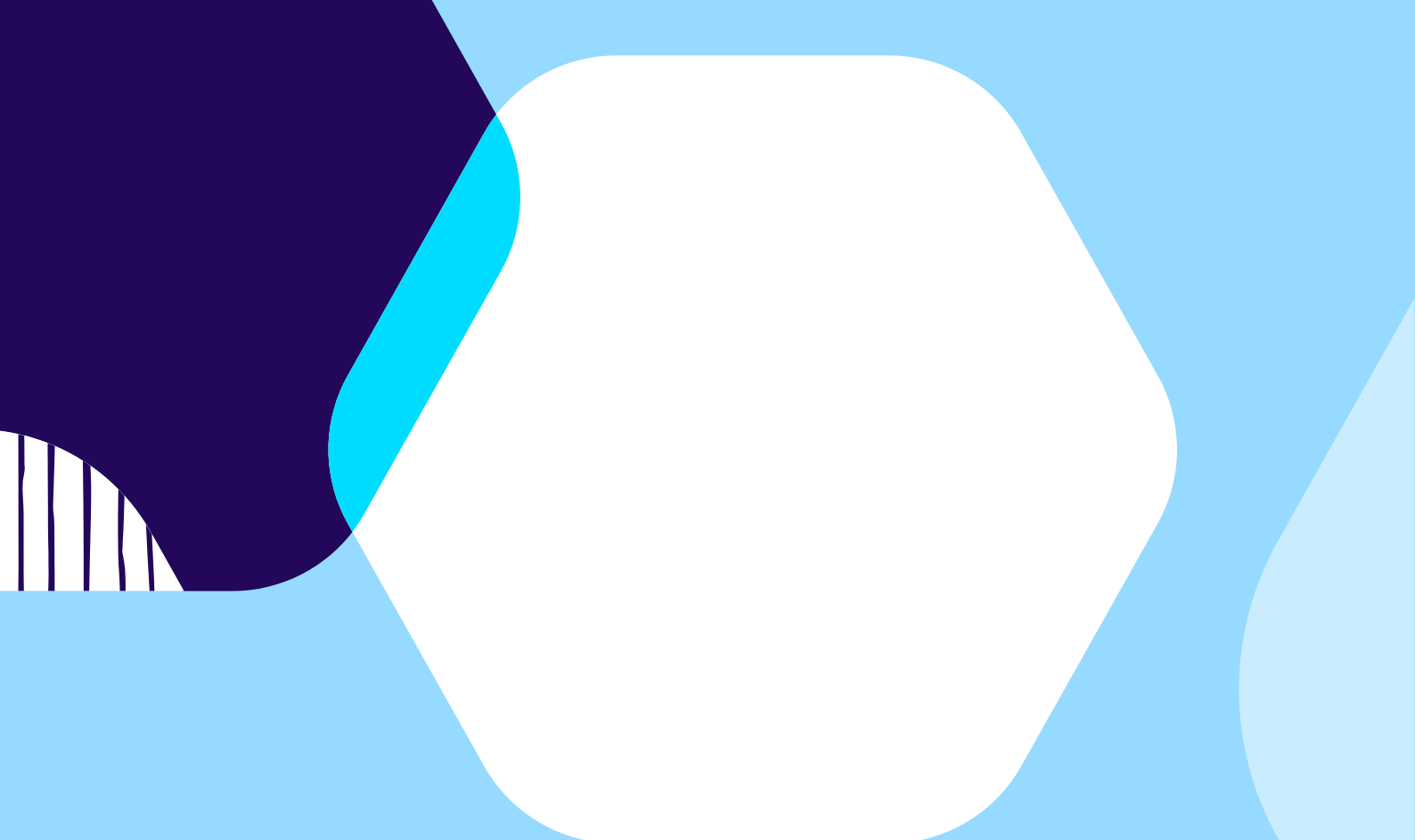


# How can I use football to teach English?

Show notes





**In this podcast series from the British Council, we try and provide solutions to some of the key questions being asked by English teachers around the world.**

**Each episode explores a specific topic through interviews, a focus on recent developments or reports on British Council initiatives in English language teaching. Practical show notes, classroom activities and transcripts are available to download for each episode.**

## Episode overview

It's the first episode of Series 2 of Teaching English with the British Council, and we've got world cup fever. We're looking at how teachers can use football to teach English – as well as other languages – effectively. We interview the founders of Langaugecaster and Multilingua FC, who provide a range of resources and materials to help students interested in football improve their English language skills. We also hear from the British Council's own Premier Skills programme, which has used football as a way to promote social, language and skills development for over 15 years.

## In this episode



**Students are asking and comparing football expressions in English with expressions in their own language.**

**Football is a massive narrative, its telling stories all the time ... you can actually follow the good, the bad, the ugly, the heartache, you know, there's all kinds of things.**

**I do think it's really good and it's important for you to take advantage of this love for the game and you can use it during your lessons.**

**You just kind of take this idea of football away and say 'here's an example of how language operates.**

**It's an opportunity to talk about issues which are difficult sometimes to talk about in the classroom, but you're almost sort of protected in a way because you're doing it through the medium of football.**



## Detailed notes

Additional information about particularly interesting, relevant, or challenging terms are given in the table below.

Phrase used	Explanation and further information
<b>Field report</b>	
British Council Premier Skills programme	According to <a href="#">the programme website</a> , the programme began in 2007, in partnership with the Premier League, 6,000 teachers have received training in the use of the Premier Skills English materials, with 6.5 million views of the materials online. Premier Skills English helps teachers and learners of English with free, compelling learning materials, drawing on football-based content from the most exciting football league in the world.
Grass roots	This phrase is used to refer to the 'ordinary' or 'normal' people in a society or an organisation, especially a political party.
Mogadishu	Mogadishu is the capital and most populous city of Somalia. The city has served as an important port connecting traders across the Indian Ocean for millennia.
São Paulo	São Paulo is the most populous city in Brazil, and is the capital of the state of São Paulo, the most populous and wealthiest Brazilian state, located in the country's Southeast Region.
Ronaldo	Cristiano Ronaldo is a Portuguese professional footballer who plays as a forward and captains the Portugal national team.
Marcus Rashford	Marcus Rashford is an English professional footballer who plays as a forward for Premier League club Manchester United and the England national team.
Mo Salah	Mo Salah is an Egyptian professional footballer who plays as a forward for Premier League club Liverpool and captains the Egypt national team.
Harry Kane	Harry Kane is an English professional footballer who plays as a striker for Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur and captains the England national team.

Angry Albert and the kids	Episode 1 of "Angry Albert" can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
Idioms	A group of words established by usage as having a meaning which cannot be predicted by the individual words (e.g. <i>over the moon</i> = happy; <i>break a leg</i> – good luck).
Dialects	A particular form of a language which is peculiar to a specific region or social group.
Scouser	'Scouser' is a name given to people living in the city of Liverpool in the UK. 'Scouse' is the particular dialect spoken by many in the area.
The Premier Skills English Podcast	Click <a href="#">here</a> for a link to an episode of this podcast. You can find other episodes by searching the Premier Skills website.
Webcomics	Click <a href="#">here</a> for a link to one of the webcomics. You can find other editions by searching the Premier Skills website.
<b>Interview with Damian Fitzpatrick</b>	
Japanese World Cup of 2002	The 2002 Men's Football World Cup took place in Japan and Korea, and was won by Brazil, who beat Germany 2-0 in the final. You can learn more about the tournament <a href="#">here</a> .
It's massive, even if you don't like football, you're aware of football.	According to <a href="#">Nielsen</a> , a global leader in audience insights, data and analytic, football has "massive global appeal and fan interest. In fact, more than 40% of people 16 or older in major population centers around the world consider themselves interested or very interested in following football, more so than any other sport."
Languagecaster	Languagecaster is a website set up by Damian which aims to "help students interested in football improve their English language skills. Football fans can practise with lots of free language resources, including football-language podcasts and our huge football-language glossary." You can visit it at <a href="https://languagecaster.com/">https://languagecaster.com/</a>
Here's some listening. We tried to make it as authentic as possible, people talking about the game.	Authentic listening consists of materials which are natural and 'unscripted'. As Damian says in this case, "It wasn't structured, it wasn't written out". An interesting article around this topic can be found <a href="#">here</a> .



Top-down listening	Top-down processing of language happens when someone uses background information to predict the meaning of language they are going to listen to or read. You can read more about the distinction between top-down and bottom-up listening in <a href="#">this British Council article</a> .
Top bins	See the languagecaster entry for this phrase <a href="#">here</a> .
The place where the owl sleeps	You can find out more about this phrase and others from around the world <a href="#">here</a> .
Multilingua FC	You can hear from the founder of <a href="#">Multilingua FC</a> later in this podcast. Their motto is “English through football”, although they also use their channel to promote and teach other languages.
Target language	Target language means the ‘goal’ language which students are trying to learn.
Using first language as scaffolding to access the target language	According to Neil Mercer, an effective teacher provides the kind of intellectual support which enables learners to make intellectual achievements they would never accomplish alone. According to this article in <a href="#">Edutopia</a> (which also lists several useful scaffolding strategies), scaffolding is breaking up the learning into chunks and providing a tool, or structure, with each chunk.
A more natural way	The ‘natural approach’ is a method of second language learning that focuses on communication skills and language exposure before rules and grammar, similar to how you learn your first language.
So social issues, like racism in football	Football authorities around the world are becoming increasingly active in trying to combat racism, and other forms of discrimination, in football. In the UK, the <a href="#">Kick It Out</a> campaign is leading this fight.
The Qatar World Cup	The Qatar World Cup was taking place at the time of recording. More details about this edition of the tournament can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
Difficult issues or taboo issues	We look at this topic in Episode 2 of <i>Teaching English with the British Council</i> .
Qatar's position towards things like women's rights and sexuality	You can read more about this issue in <a href="#">this report</a> by the Human Rights Watch and <a href="#">this report</a> by Amnesty International.
Football cliché	If you are interested in this topic, you might be interested

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in [this podcast](#) by The Athletic.

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A TV commentator from Ireland called Michael Robinson

You can read more about Michael Robinson [here](#). Further information about this story can be read in [this Guardian article](#).

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Language prescriptivists

Prescriptivism is the attitude or belief that one variety of a language is superior to others and should be promoted as such. It is also known as 'purism'. One prescriptivist belief is that language is governed by grammatical rules, which should be followed at all times as this is 'correct' (for example you should not end a sentence with a preposition). Descriptivists, on the other hand, focuses on how the language is actually used and spoken.

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## Discussion

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Oasis

[Oasis](#) are an indie rock band from Manchester, UK, who formed in 1991. They are one of the biggest bands of the 1990s.

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Blind football

Find out more at <https://blindfootball.sport/>

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Homeless World Cup

As their website (<https://www.homelessworldcup.org/>) states, the Homeless World Cup is a global network which brings together more than 70 grassroots organisations that are using football to tackle homelessness and social isolation. They provide a focus for – and a celebration of – their year-round activity with the Homeless World Cup, their landmark international street football tournament.

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Linkin Park

[Linkin Park](#) are an American rock band who formed in 1996.

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## Using this podcast for lessons or training

- You can download a transcript of the episode from the podcast homepage. To help you and your learners with preparation and language analysis, all words at the B2, C1 and C2 CEFR level have been highlighted.
- The British Council have produced an 'activity pack' for this episode, which contains activities which you can use in your classroom. The activities focus on speaking, listening, grammar and language. They are available in both pdf and in editable PowerPoint format, in case you wish to edit them to make them more relevant for your specific classroom.







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