

FOOTBALL VIOLENCE

1. Do you like football? Do you watch matches? Where?
2. Have you ever experienced or seen football violence on TV? What happened?
3. Why do football fans fight? Are they real fans?

Read the following text and answer the questions below it.

Since its beginnings in the 13th century, the game of football has been closely linked with violence. In Medieval times, football matches involved hundreds of players and functioned as **pitched battles** between young representatives of rival towns and villages. The games were often used as opportunities to settle personal arguments, land disputes or **feuds**. These violent rituals that originated in England became the **roots** of modern football. Over time, football and its principles **underwent** radical changes and reformations so the game became more **refined** and civilised as it was introduced to continental Europe in the 1900's. Quickly, football which was once a favoured **pastime** of the British aristocracy spread throughout other European countries. With the **advent** of television and the mass media, football games developed into a most desired source of entertainment and a **venue** for football supporters who **grasped** at the opportunity to stage their violent shows live on the TV screen. In the 60's, the term 'football hooligans' was **coined** in England and the phenomenon reached other countries in Europe ten years later.

Football hooliganism which was once the 'British Disease' has been a major concern throughout the world ever since. Violent disturbances at football matches have been witnessed all over the globe and have **triggered** growing frustration about the inability to **curb** the anti-social behaviour of a minority of football fans. Presently, violence of some kind appears to be almost universal and an inseparable component of the game. Since the 70's, the **spread** of football subcultures and the patterns of their aggressive behaviour have been **omnipresent** although its forms and **acuteness** are not equal in every country. The extent of football-related violence is usually attributed to various social, economic, political, cultural and historical factors. Whereas social-class differences were a major constituent in England, in Scotland and Northern Ireland religious aspects played the key role in football **riots**.

There are basic cross-national similarities in forms of football hooliganism. The phenomenon starts from sporadic violence characterised by offences directed at referees and players. Then, it transforms into open violence between opposing groups of fans as well as against police and guards inside the stadium. The final development **consists in** savage **encounters** between groups of fans outside the stadium. This one involves pitched battles between rival groups in the streets, devastation of public **facilities**, theft, acts of vandalism and **clashes** with police forces. At this stage of football violence, hooliganism and football become literally disconnected. The violence turns into ritual **warfare** with little or no association with cheering or supporting.

In most European countries, football-related violence is an internal problem with the majority of incidents occurring at club-level matches. Clubs tend to have one main 'enemy' and **hostile** relations expressed towards the supporters of one or two other teams. The rest are usually considered neutral rivals and each club will have friendly relations with the fans of at least one other team. Rival fans typically **suspend** their hostilities when supporting their national team in international games. However, the **core** of troublemakers were found to concentrate in groups with no **allegiance** to any team. Therefore, they are not associated with specific clubs and characterised as passionate supporters. Such groups identify themselves separately and use matches only as venues for confrontations with other rival groups. Their strategy is to charge at their enemies to drive them away from their viewing area and **capture** as much of their **gear** as possible including flags, scarves, caps etc. They employ vicious violence and fight severely until the police step in. Sometimes, the police forces intervene too late. **Fatalities** occur from time to time. They usually result from **stabbing** or deadly wounds.

A great deal of blame for football violence is put on the mass media which is used by hooligans to score their **mindless** performance. The more coverage a group gets in TV news, the better its position in the rivalry ranking. Alcohol abuse, although recently under strict control, racism, and 'letting off steam' arguments are also provided as the possible source of football violence. Whatever the causes are, football hooliganism is undoubtedly a thoughtless, primitive and cruel **spin-off** from the game that, ironically, is supposed to promote the idea of fair-play.

1. What are possible **implications** for football teams whose fans turn violent?
2. What should clubs do to **eradicate** football violence at matches?
3. What punishment should violent fans be given?
4. Are acts of hooliganism restricted to football matches?
5. What kind of people make football fans?

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Match the words with their definitions

1	allegiance	a	an integral part or component of something
2	constituent	b	a hobby or enjoyable activity
3	coverage	c	an unexpected meeting; a confrontation or fight
4	disturbance	d	a set of equipment or tools
5	encounter	e	support or loyalty to one's country, leader or beliefs
6	fatality	f	unexpected but useful benefit, result or by-product
7	gear	g	a violent behaviour of a crowd in a public place
8	pastime	h	a place where sports or cultural events are held
9	spin-off	i	a violent death
10	venue	j	the attention given to something in mass media

Insert the verbs in the correct phrases

attribute capture consist in eradicate grasp
originate support suspend undergo trigger

- The processes that the professor talked about were much too difficult to for the younger students, and that's why most of them were bored with the lecture.
- I love to watch football games, but I don't any specific team.
- The actress's great popularity is not so much to her skillful performance as to her attractive appearance.
- Some people believe that a person's intelligence is based on the natural inborn features. But I say it the proper decisions that a person makes in his or her life.
- The military tradition of saluting from Medieval times when knights getting ready for a fight lowered their helmet visors with a hand.
- The controversial statement that the prime minister made has a wave of critical responses from the opposition parties.
- The police say they are just one step from the dangerous criminal who escaped from prison last night.
- We have had to the research because our funds have run out.
- To hooliganism, more effective legal procedures and stricter punishment must be administered.
- After the accident, the racing driver a series of plastic surgeries that helped reconstruct his face.