

Springboard^{into} Comprehension 5

Main Idea Bukit Timah Nature Reserve
 The Nelson Mandela Story

Compare and Contrast Soccer v Ballet

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Information Report

SOCCER v Ballet



Written by Jonny Webster

SOCCER v Ballet

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Introduction

Soccer and ballet may not look like they have that much in common, but you may be surprised. Both were developed over hundreds of years. Both require amazing skill and dedicated training. The very best performers become superstars, admired by thousands of people. Yet, one is a dance with people performing beautiful moves on a stage, and the other is a sport with people in sweaty jerseys and shorts running across a grassy field. However, a closer look at the history, basics, training, and career paths of ballet and soccer will show other interesting things the two have in common.

Portuguese soccer star
Cristiano Ronaldo



Darcey Bussell performing
with the Royal Ballet of
London, United Kingdom



SOCCER

THE HISTORY OF SOCCER

The history of soccer is long and interesting. Ball games have existed for thousands of years, from ancient China to early Mexico. The ball game that later became soccer, or football as it is called in many parts of the world, probably began in England in medieval times. English medieval football had an unlimited number of players, sometimes hundreds! Any part of the body could be used. Because it had few rules, full-scale fights were common and so were injuries. The goal was to get an inflated pig's bladder to hit a marker post at the opposing end of a village or field. Once the players achieved this goal, the game was over.



An illustration showing a game of football
in the streets of London around 1314



The modern game of soccer only took shape in the nineteenth century. In 1863, 11 English clubs formed the Football Association (FA). The FA decided on some common rules. One rule was that players were not allowed to carry the ball in their hands. Some clubs did not like this rule. They went off by themselves and invented the game of rugby. The word *soccer* comes from this time. It comes from an abbreviated form of the word *association*. People used it to differentiate between association football and rugby football.

The very first official international soccer match was in 1872, between Scotland and England. In 1904, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) was formed. This is French for *International Football Association*.

In the twentieth century, some variations of the basic game became popular. An indoor version of soccer is called futsal. With only five players on each team, it is a very fast game. There is also beach soccer. The classic game, however, has remained virtually the same since the FA formed in 1863. People have sometimes tried to make changes. However, the FA and FIFA have always rejected major changes.



Illustrations showing the first international soccer match in 1872



Playing on sand in beach soccer is difficult because the ball does not roll very far.

Today, soccer games are still played on an outdoor soccer field, called a pitch. Soccer is now the most popular team ball game in the world. Young and old alike play it in almost every country. Every four years, national teams compete in the World Cup. In 2006, every tenth person on the planet tuned in to watch the World Cup final on television!



Spain's winning goal in the 1950 World Cup



When Brazil won the World Cup for the third time in 1970, they got to keep this trophy.



The World Cup trophy

Italian fans celebrate Italy's 2006 World Cup win.



BASICS OF THE GAME

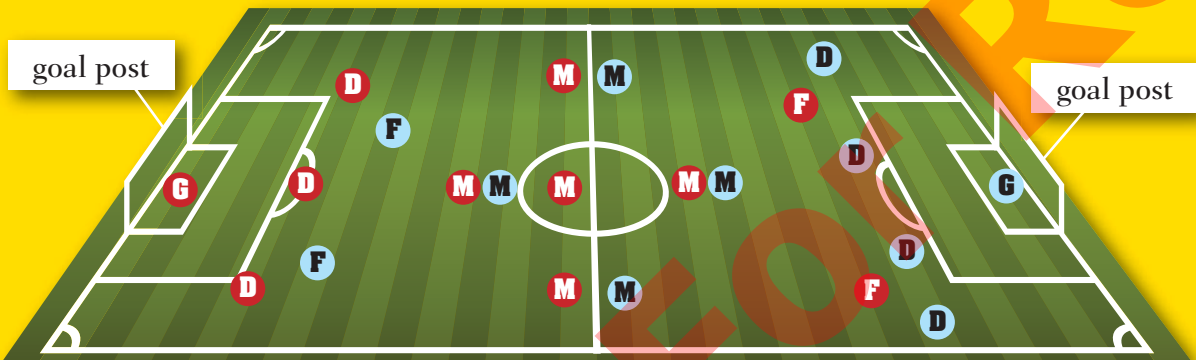
The basic rules of modern-day soccer are fairly simple. Each player has a specific position to play. The goalkeeper will stay in the area in front of the goal as the last line of defence. Players who remain at the back, close to the goal, are **defenders**. Defenders try to tackle or intercept the ball before the opposition can shoot at the goal. The players who move the ball into an attacking position and help defend when necessary are **midfielders**. Midfielders often pass the ball on to the players who play at the front of the team, the **forwards**. Forwards are also known as strikers. In the top teams, they are usually the superstars of the sport. For all positions, speed, fitness, and skill are very important.



Wayne Rooney, striker for Manchester United in the UK

Official matches last for two 45-minute halves, with a 15-minute break. Each team has 11 players on the pitch, including the goalkeeper. The goalie is the only player who can handle the ball when it is in the goal area in front of the goal. The games are extremely physical and a high level of fitness is required. A team scores a goal any time the whole of the ball crosses the opposing goal line between the goalposts.

SOCCER POSITIONS



Key

● Team A	G = Goalkeeper	M = Midfielders
● Team B	F = Forwards	D = Defenders



A goalkeeper diving for the ball