

Understanding ideas ▼

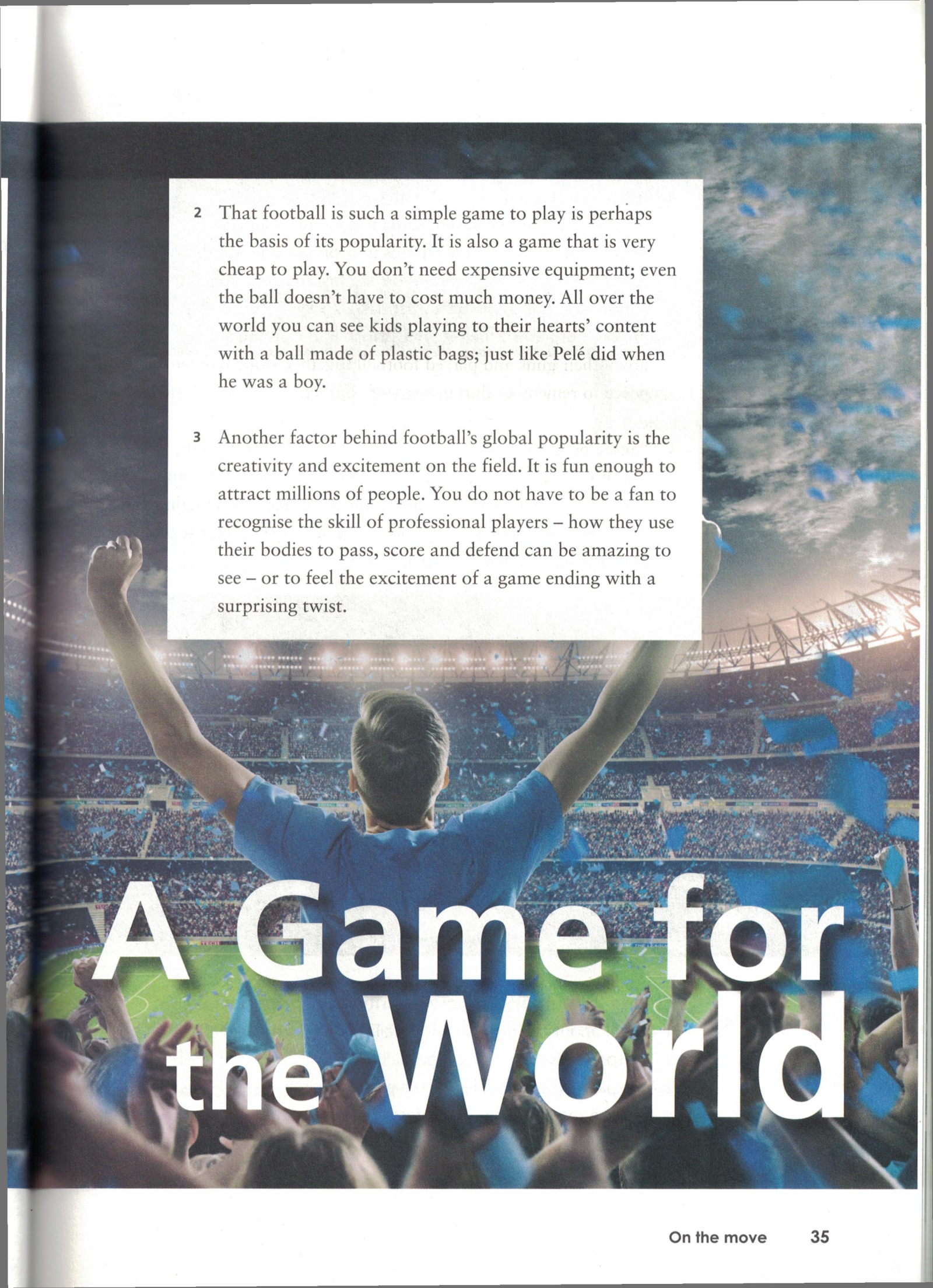
- 1 Talk about what you think these things represent in a football game.



- 2 Read the passage and find out where modern football started.

- 1 These days, football is one of the most popular sports in the world. Given that Neil Armstrong wanted to take a football to the Moon, we could even say that it is also the most popular sport out of this world! The history of the game goes back over two thousand years to Ancient China. It was then known as *cuju* (kick ball), a game using a ball of animal skins with hair inside. Goals were hung in the air. Football as we know it today started in Great Britain, where the game was given new rules.

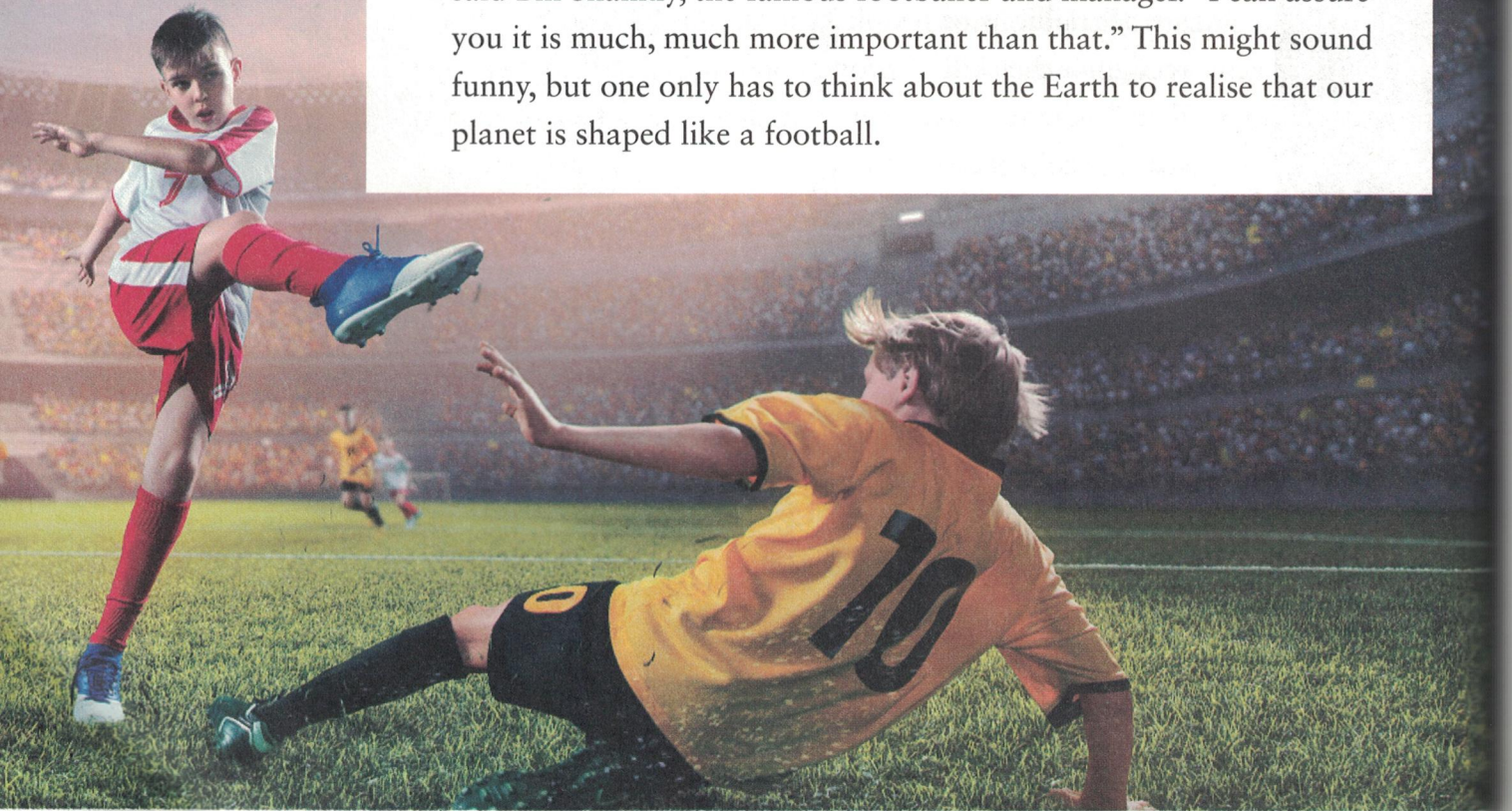


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- A person in a blue shirt is seen from behind, with their arms raised in a celebratory gesture. They are standing in a large stadium filled with a massive crowd of people. The air is thick with falling blue confetti. The stadium lights are on, and the atmosphere appears to be one of a major event or victory celebration.
- 2 That football is such a simple game to play is perhaps the basis of its popularity. It is also a game that is very cheap to play. You don't need expensive equipment; even the ball doesn't have to cost much money. All over the world you can see kids playing to their hearts' content with a ball made of plastic bags; just like Pelé did when he was a boy.
- 3 Another factor behind football's global popularity is the creativity and excitement on the field. It is fun enough to attract millions of people. You do not have to be a fan to recognise the skill of professional players – how they use their bodies to pass, score and defend can be amazing to see – or to feel the excitement of a game ending with a surprising twist.

A Game for the World

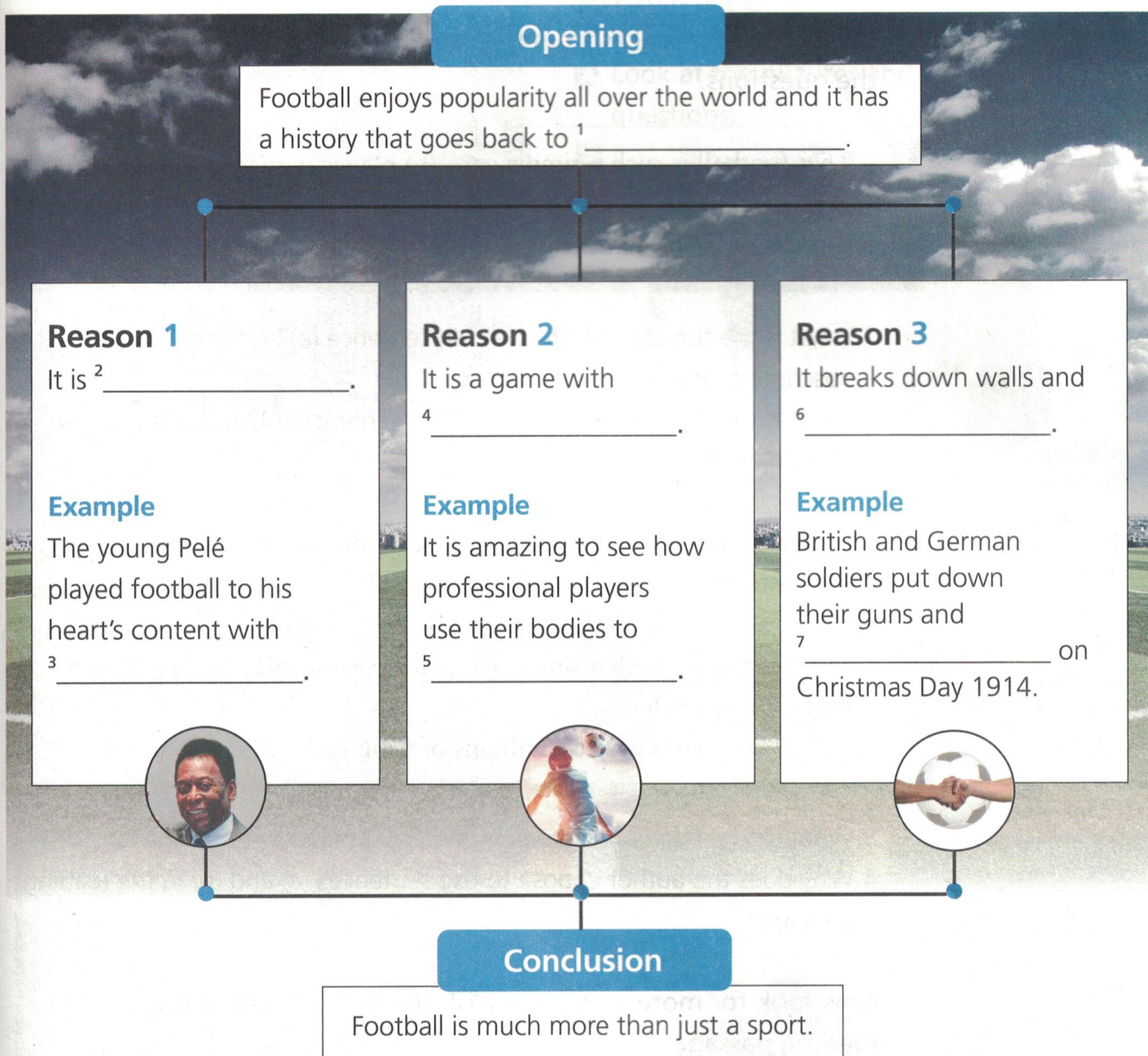


- 4 What's more, football has become one of the best ways for people to communicate: it does not require words, but everyone understands it. It breaks down walls and brings people together on and off the field. Take, for example, the famous football game on Christmas Day 1914. World War I had broken out months before, but British and German soldiers put down their guns and played football together – one moment of peace to remember during years of conflict.
- 5 “Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, ...” said Bill Shankly, the famous footballer and manager. “I can assure you it is much, much more important than that.” This might sound funny, but one only has to think about the Earth to realise that our planet is shaped like a football.



- 3 Choose the author's purpose in writing the passage.
- 1 To talk about the history of football.
 - 2 To express his / her love of football.
 - 3 To explain why football is such a popular game.
 - 4 To prove that he / she is a professional football fan.

4 Complete the chart with expressions from the passage.



- 1 What is your understanding of the last sentence of the passage?
- 2 What other sports are as popular as football in China? What makes them so popular?

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