
Manchester United

WORKSHEET A

Many English football teams have the word United in their name, but by far the most famous is from the northern city of Manchester and plays in red shirts and white shorts. When football fans refer to Manchester United just as 'United', as they often do, other fans always know who they mean.

It's possible that United have more fans than any other football team in the world. Their stadium, Old Trafford, holds around 75,000 people and is full for almost every match. It's also true that tens of millions of people around the world watch their matches on TV, and that when they play friendlies thousands of miles away in Asia or Africa (as they have done in recent years in July or August, before the English football season starts) the crowds are always very big.

The club was founded back in 1878 and has had a successful history. It has won the English championship eighteen times (the same number as Liverpool, their biggest rivals) and the European Champions' League (previously the European Cup) three times.

A well-known tragedy in United's history was when many of their best players died in a plane crash in Munich, Germany, in 1958. It seemed the club might not recover, but ten years later, in 1968, they became the first English team to win the European Cup. United's best players in their great team of the late 1960s included Bobby Charlton (probably the most famous English footballer of the 1960s) and George Best (who some say was the best player who never played in a World Cup – the reason was that he was from Northern Ireland, a country that never qualified for the World Cup during his career).

United were not so good in the 1970s and 80s but have been very successful again since the 1990s under their Scottish manager Alex Ferguson. In the 1990s the best players included Eric Cantona, a Frenchman who was very popular with the fans, and David Beckham, who even people who hate football have heard of.

United's best player at the moment is perhaps the 24-year-old English forward Wayne Rooney. He is so good that some fans think England have a chance of winning the 2010 World Cup if he plays, but no chance if he gets injured.

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WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

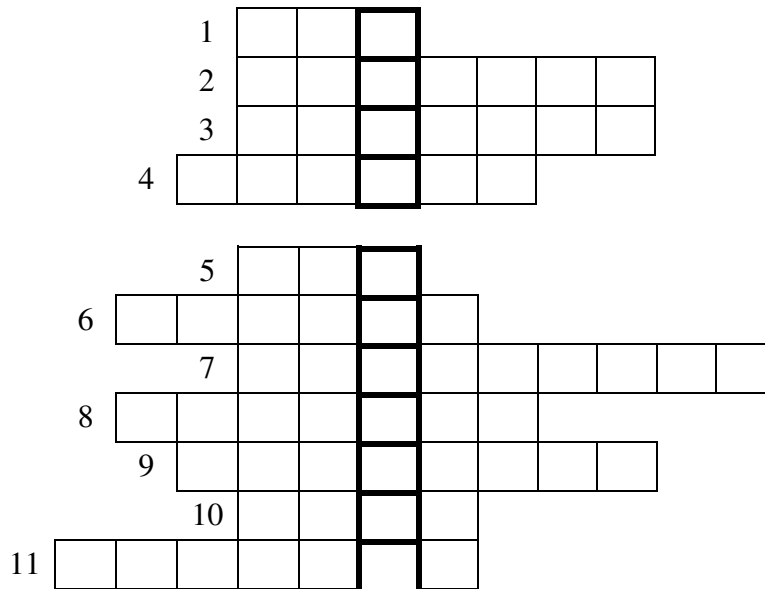
Match the words (1-14) from the text on Worksheet A with the definitions (A-N).

1 rival	A game
2 found	B an accident that happens when a moving vehicle hits something
3 tragedy	C the years of a person's life when they are working
4 injured	D a person, team or business that competes with another
5 match	E in or from the north of a country
6 qualify	F to start an organization, company, club, etc
7 crash	G coach; someone who trains a sports team
8 forward	H a very sad event that causes people to suffer or die
9 recover	I a period of the year when a particular sport is played
10 career	J to reach a particular stage of a competition by doing well at an earlier stage
11 manager	K a game that is not part of a competition and is therefore probably less serious or important
12 northern	L a player in a game such a football or hockey whose job is to attack the other team and score goals
13 season	M to get better or stronger after a difficult period or experience
14 friendly	N hurt in an accident or an attack

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WORKSHEET C

Complete the crossword below. If all the words are correct, the name of the current Manchester United captain will read from top to bottom.



1. _____ crowds have watched Manchester United play friendlies in Asia and Africa.
2. United's _____ is called Old Trafford.
3. The 1958 plane crash happened in _____.
4. Wayne Rooney is a very good _____.
5. United _____ the European Cup for the first time in 1968.
6. Eric Cantona and David Beckham _____ for United in the 1990s.
7. _____ have won the English championship eighteen times.
8. George Best was not _____.
9. Many _____ of people watch United's matches on TV.
10. Old Trafford can _____ very large crowds.
11. United was _____ in the nineteenth century.