

The Maracanã Stadium by Moundir Al Amrani

Age: Teenagers / Adults
Level: Pre-intermediate
Time: 1 hour 15 minutes
Objective: to practice speaking skills by discussing events related to the stadium; to improve listening skills; to learn new vocabulary; to improve reading and comprehension; to practice writing a short presentation
Key skills: reading, listening
Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student; recordings 1 and 2 downloaded from www.onestopenglish.com

Procedure

- Use the speaking activity at the beginning of the lesson as a lead-in/warm-up to introduce learners to the theme of the lesson. Students discuss the questions in Exercise 1 in pairs.
- Students try to do Exercise 2 before they listen to the audio. Give them two or three minutes to do this. After this, play the recording and ask students to check their answers. Depending on the size of the class and the quality of the equipment used, you may need to play the audio more than once. If there are any words used that are new to some of the students, help them explain the vocabulary to each other, but do not give them definitions unless they are unable to do this.

Key:

- allowed
- 1000th
- crowd
- refurbished
- capacity
- retractable

- In exercise 3, students work with a partner to decide whether the statements given are true or false. Walk round the class as they work to motivate the students to use English. After this, ask students to read the text silently to check their answers. When they have finished reading the text, check the answers as a class. Encourage students to defend their answers, by asking them to justify why they have marked a statement as true or false.

Key:

- T
 - F
 - F
 - F
 - T
 - T
- After checking the answers, ask one or two students to read the text aloud. This is good practice for pronunciation. Depending on the size of your class, ask each student to read one paragraph, to ensure practice for the maximum number of learners.
 - Give the students five minutes to read the text again in Exercise 4. This activity helps you check students' comprehension. When students have finished answering the questions, check their answers by asking them for feedback. Ask the other students for corrections, if necessary, before providing the right answer.

Key:

- the Brazilian journalist Mário Filho in 1966
 - a selection of players from Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paolo
 - more than 200,000 based on estimates; 173,000 based on official reports
 - a term to describe the humiliation of the Brazilians on losing to the Uruguayans at the 1950 World Cup final
 - they had beaten Sweden 7–1 and Spain 6–1 to get to the final and were confident that they would beat their Uruguayan neighbours
 - Pelé scored his 1000th goal there in 1969 and Zico scored his last goal there in 1989.
 - a stand collapsed and killed three supporters
 - it reduced its capacity to just over 82,000
 - seven games including the final
 - a judge issued an order to call off the match because the facility did not comply with safety standards
- Give students some time to take a look at Exercise 5. Students try to guess what each piece of information refers to before they listen to the audio recording in the next exercise.
 - Play the audio. The challenge in Exercise 6 is that students need to listen for specific information in order to complete the form. You may decide to play the audio more than once, depending on the size

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of the class and the quality of the acoustics in the classroom. Check the answers as a class. If there are any mistakes, ask the other students to provide the correct answers. Do not give the answers yourself unless needed.

Key:

Name of stadium: Camp Nou

Location: Barcelona, Spain

Official opening date: 24 September 1957

Team(s): FC Barcelona; Catalan national team

Capacity: 98,787

Access: tramway / metro / bus

Main facilities: presidential grandstand; parking; memorabilia shop; mini pitches for training; VIP lounges; press area; catering

Famous events: 1982 FIFA World Cup; 1992 Summer Olympics

- By this stage of the lesson, students have already become familiar with the new vocabulary and should be able to use it. In Exercise 7, students choose a famous stadium and complete the form. If they have access to the internet, they can do some research online to find the information they need. If there is no internet access in the classroom, or they do not have a favourite stadium, they can give information about the stadium of their dreams instead.
- Students now tell their classmates about the stadium they have researched or imagined. You may wish to ask them, before they make their presentations, to write up their findings into a paragraph they can read aloud. Alternatively, if their level allows, you could ask them to present it from memory, only reading from their notes if they need to check some information.

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Recording 1: The Maracanã

Construction work on the Maracanã began in 1948 and continued until 1965. Although it was still under construction, FIFA allowed the Maracanã to host matches at the World Cup in 1950, including the World Cup final. Since then, the Maracanã has hosted numerous events that have made it a historic temple of football, not only to Brazilians but to the rest of the world as well. Historically speaking, the Maracanã broke the record for the world's largest football crowd with an estimated number of 200,000 people attending the 1950 World Cup final between Brazil and Uruguay. It was also the venue of Pelé's 1000th goal in 1969.

In preparation for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, the Maracanã was completely refurbished. Although it no longer holds 200,000 spectators, the Maracanã's new capacity of 78,000 seats makes the experience more comfortable and enjoyable for the crowd. The view of the pitch from the stands is wonderful and supporters are close to the action. The stadium now has new access ramps and retractable seats. The changing rooms have also had their share of renovation, along with the toilets and the restaurants. There is also an upgraded media area with the latest technology and equipment.

Recording 2: The Camp Nou

One of the world's most famous football stadiums is the Camp Nou in Barcelona, Spain, home of local team FC Barcelona and the Catalan national team. Construction work on Camp Nou began on 28 March 1954 and the stadium officially opened on 24 September 1957. The overall capacity of the stadium has changed over the years but it currently holds 98,787 seated spectators.

The stadium is a masterpiece of architecture and design. It features a presidential grandstand, a memorabilia shop, VIP lounges, catering services and a press area, in addition to parking spaces and mini pitches for training. The stadium also houses the FC Barcelona Museum, the second most visited museum in Catalonia.

Camp Nou's grandeur and class made it the logical choice to host world-class events such as the 1982 World Cup and the 1992 Summer Olympics. It's no surprise that the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) rated it a five-star stadium.

Camp Nou is now one of Catalonia's most recognizable landmarks and a must-see tourist attraction. You can access Camp Nou by tram, metro or bus. You will need to buy a ticket to take a tour of this masterpiece but you can be sure you'll get your money's worth.

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1. Discuss these questions with a partner.

- What is the capacity of the biggest football stadium in your country?
- What do you know about its history?
- Has it ever hosted an important sports event?
- What is the Maracanã?
- Say the names of any famous Brazilian players you know.
- What did you hear about Brazil's ability to host the 2014 World Cup finals?

2. Try to complete the sentences below with the words given. Then, listen to the information about the Maracanã and check your answers.

*1000th
refurbished*

*retractable
allowed*

*crowd
capacity*

- Although the Maracanã was still being built at the time, FIFA _____ it to host matches at the 1950 World Cup finals.
- In 1969, Pelé scored his _____ goal at the Maracanã.
- The Maracanã broke the record for hosting the largest football _____ – almost 200,000 spectators.
- The Maracanã was _____ to host the 2014 World Cup.
- The Maracanã's new _____ of 78,000 seats makes the experience more comfortable for its visitors.
- Using _____ seats makes it possible to increase the stadium's capacity.

3. Work with a partner. Decide whether these statements are true (T) or false (F). Read the text and check your answers.

- The Maracanã was built to commemorate the hosting of the FIFA World Cup finals.
- The Maracanã was inaugurated during the 1950 World Cup tournament.
- Official reports state that 200,000 spectators attended the opening match.
- Brazil won the 1950 World Cup.
- The Maracanã Stadium is a reminder of Brazil's historic loss in the World Cup finals.
- The Maracanã is still used for international matches.

The Maracanã Stadium

As every football fan knows, it is a great honour for your country to be chosen to host the World Cup. In 1950, Brazil won the right to host the FIFA World Cup tournament and the best way to celebrate and commemorate this honour was to build a stadium in Rio de Janeiro that would be the world's biggest soccer stadium. The stadium,

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popularly known as the Maracanã or the 'Estádio do Maracanã,' was renamed the 'Estádio Jornalista Mário Filho' after the Brazilian journalist Mário Filho, in 1966.

The stadium officially opened in June 1950 with a friendly match between a selection of players from Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, eight days before the FIFA World Cup opening match between Brazil and Mexico on 24 June, 1950. An estimated 200,000 people attended the match, although official reports limit the number to 173,000. With such large crowds and given the fact that the spectators were standing, one can imagine the noise of the cheers.

If you have experienced the thrill of your national team coming close to winning the World Cup, you will understand the disappointment the Brazilian fans felt at the final in 1950. Brazil lost 2–1 in the World Cup final against Uruguay. The match took place in the Maracanã and this has turned the stadium into an unwelcome reminder of a national tragedy, known as the Maracanãzo. After beating Sweden 7–1 and Spain 6–1, the Brazilians were confident that they would beat their southern neighbours. But Uruguay proved too much for the Brazilians after managing to come back from one–nil down to win 2–1. This came as a shock to the Brazilian crowd of around 220,000.

We may all, at some point, have experienced the defeat of our national team at home but surely only a few have a lasting monument to commemorate the defeat. And so the stadium that was built to celebrate Brazil's awaited triumph in the finals had instead become a constant reminder to all Brazilians of their failure. We all have stories to tell about historic matches involving our favourite teams but few are as dramatic as the story of the Maracanãzo.

However, the stadium also saw the creation of a number of good memories. Pelé scored his 1000th goal there in 1969 and Zico scored his last goal in the Maracanã Stadium in 1989. The huge capacity of the stadium and its architecture have made it one of the world's most famous tourist attractions.

Since the 1950 World Cup, the giant stadium has been the venue for the home games of four Brazilian teams: Botafogo, Flamengo, Fluminense and Vasco da Gama. But, on 29 July, 1992, the stadium suffered a fatal disaster after the collapse of a stand led to the deaths of three supporters. This tragic event resulted in the stadium being turned into an all-seated venue, which reduced its overall capacity to a little over 82,000.

As Brazil was getting ready to host the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2016, the stadium underwent intensive refurbishment and revamping. The stadium now looks more elegant, with yellow, blue and white seats that contrast with the green of the pitch. In the 2014 World Cup finals, the Maracanã hosted seven games, including the final on 13 July, more than any other stadium in the competition.

The Maracanã's journey has not been trouble-free. There were a series of setbacks during construction and refurbishment works. The construction works were completed some four months later than the original deadline and the stadium was under threat of closure due to safety concerns. This almost led to the cancellation of Brazil's friendly fixture with England in May 2013 when a judge issued an order to call off the match because the facility did not comply with safety standards. The situation was resolved, however, when the Brazilian authorities submitted paperwork that testified to the stadium's safety. This event, among others, had shed doubt over the country's ability to organize the World Cup finals and the Olympic Games but the Brazilian authorities kept issuing guarantees and reassurances that everything would be just fine. So the World Cup Finals went ahead as planned. Once again though, Brazil did not win the tournament.

4. Read the text again and answer these questions.

- Who was the Maracanã renamed after and when?
- Who were the first people to play a match at the Maracanã?
- How many people attended the match between Brazil and Mexico?
- What is the Maracanãzo?
- Why did the loss against Uruguay come as a shock to the Brazilian fans?
- What good memories does the stadium hold?

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- g. What happened on 29 July, 1992?
 - h. How did turning the Maracanã into an all-seater affect its capacity?
 - i. How many games did the Maracanã host in the 2014 World Cup finals?
 - j. Why was Brazil's match against England almost called off in May 2013?
5. You are going to listen to a passage about the Camp Nou stadium. Before you listen, discuss with a partner what you think the following information refers to.

98,787	1957	the Catalan national team
a memorabilia shop	1992	the Summer Olympics
VIP lounges	a press area	the 1982 FIFA World Cup
	Barcelona	

6. Listen to the recording and complete the form below.

Name of stadium: Camp Nou

Location: _____

Official opening date: _____

Team(s): _____

Capacity: _____

Access: _____

Main facilities: _____

Famous events: _____

7. Choose a famous stadium in your country or any other country. Research the stadium online, then complete the form below.

Name of stadium: _____

Location: _____

Official opening date: _____

Team(s): _____

Capacity: _____

Access: _____

Main facilities: _____

Famous events: _____

Using the information you collected, tell your classmates about the stadium.