

TeachingEnglish

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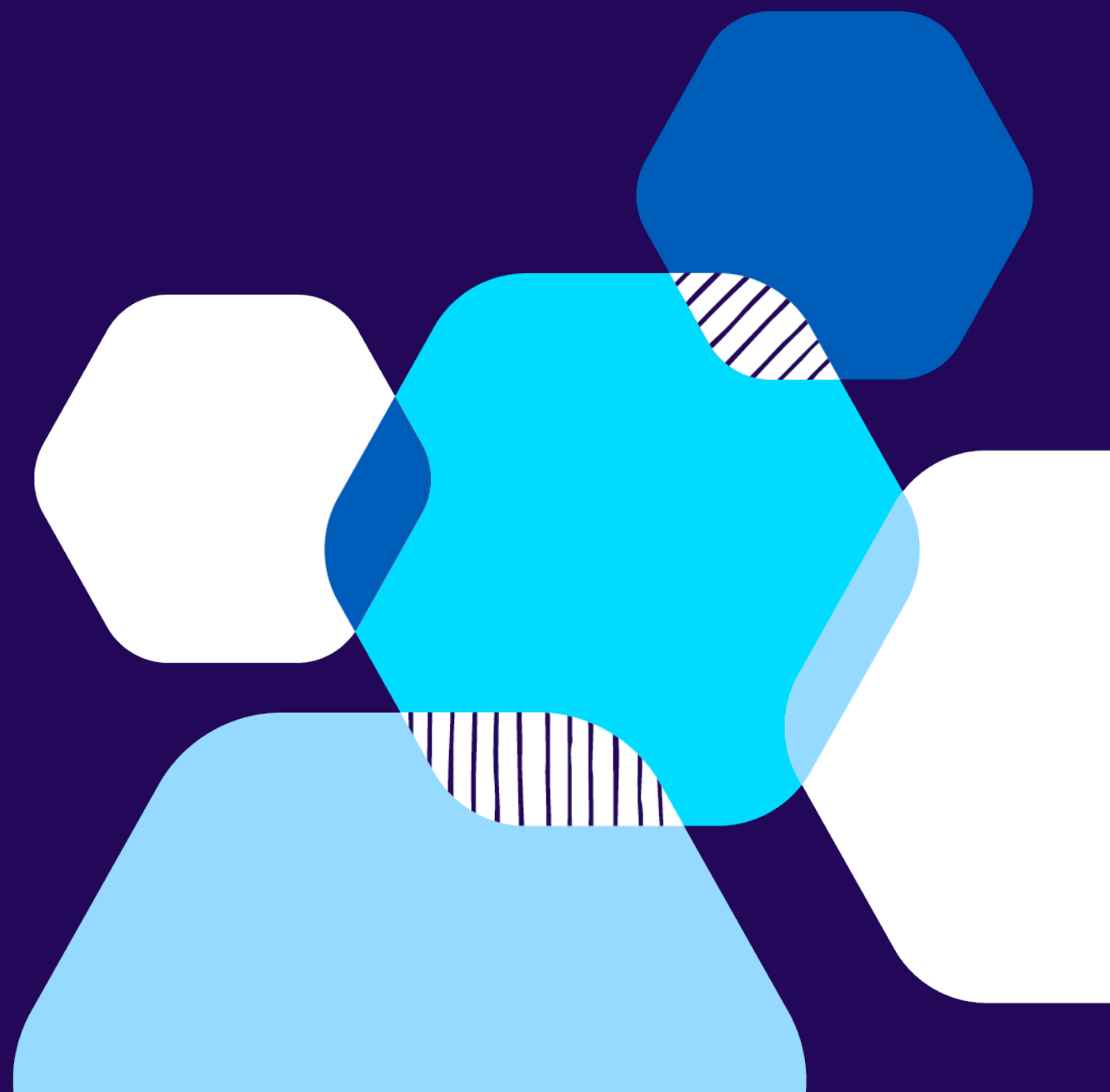
# Football and the English language

December 2022

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# 1. Speaking task

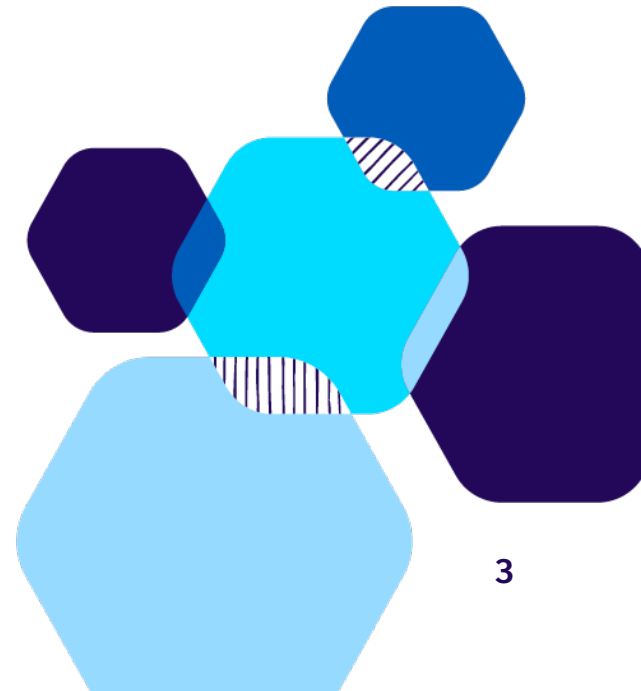


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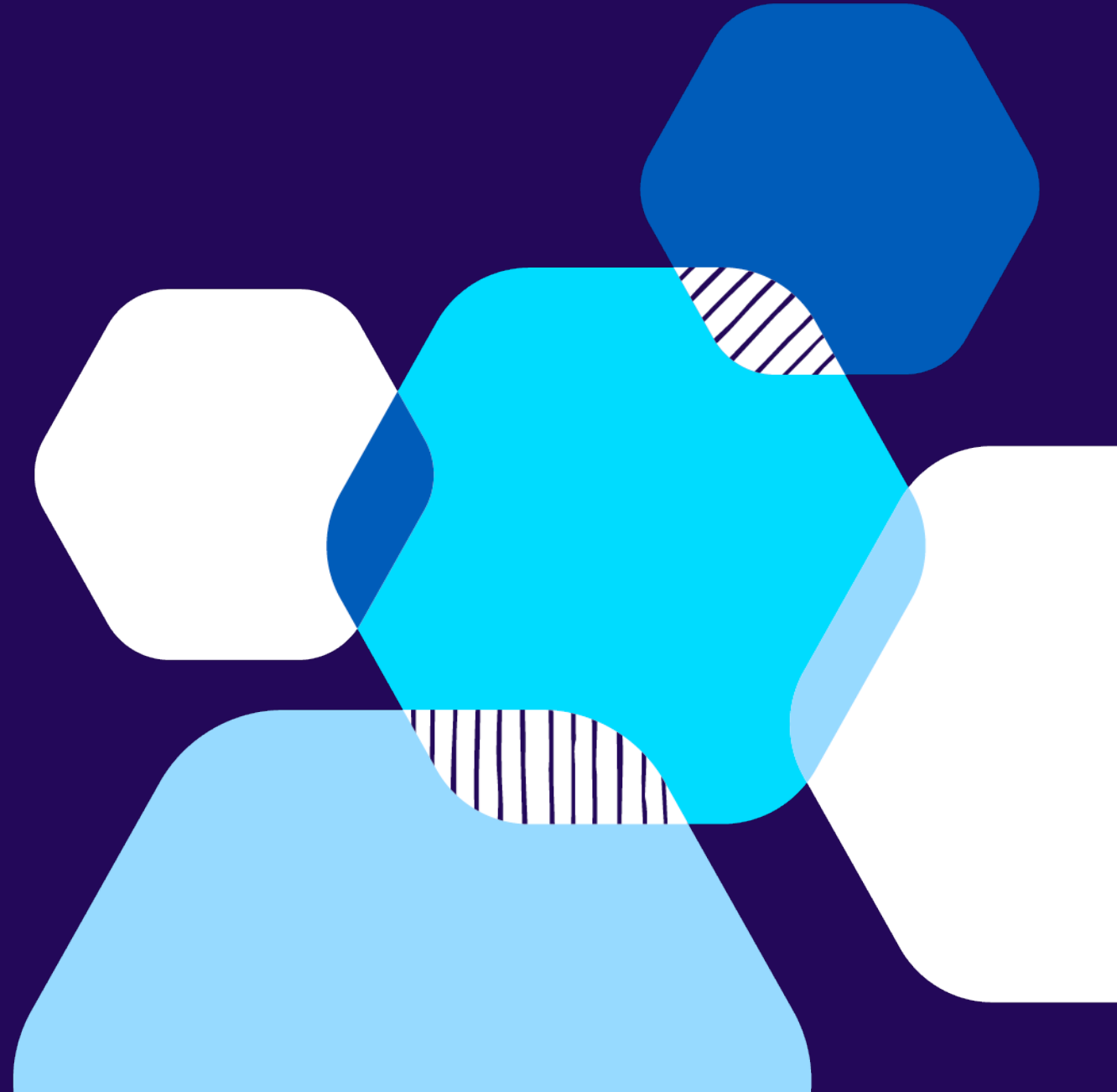
# 1. Speaking task

**Discuss the following questions in small groups.**

- Do you like football? Do you watch it, or play it?
- How do you feel when you watch a game of football? (your answer can be positive, neutral or negative!)
- How many club teams around the world do you know? Write as many as you can in one minute.
- What football-related words or phrases do you know?
- Why do you think football is the most popular sport in the world?



## 2. Grammar task

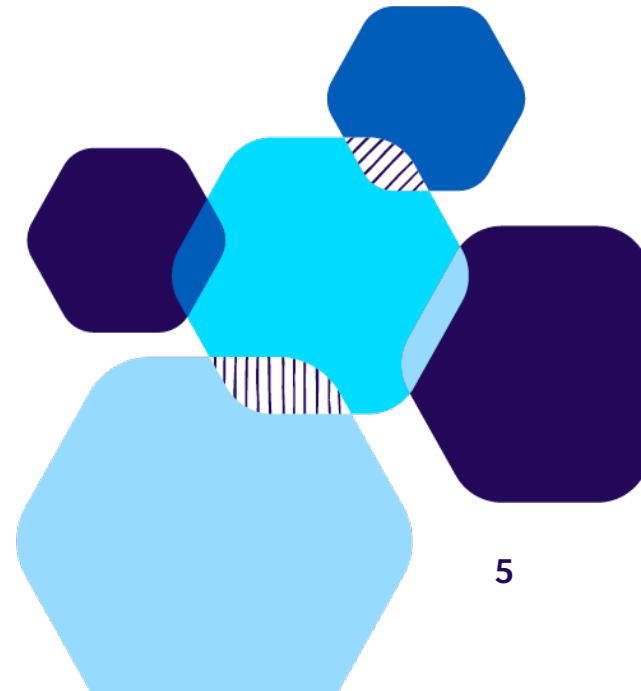


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## 2. Grammar task

**Rearrange the words of the following questions. When you have done this, guess the answer.**

1. of football long how game a is?
2. football how the play world many across people?
3. television when first the game shown on was?
4. scored quickest is the what goal ever?
5. country has world men's the won cup most times which?
6. which won women's country the world 2019 cup?
7. football what Canada the do USA and call?
8. did much most the world's player expensive cost how?

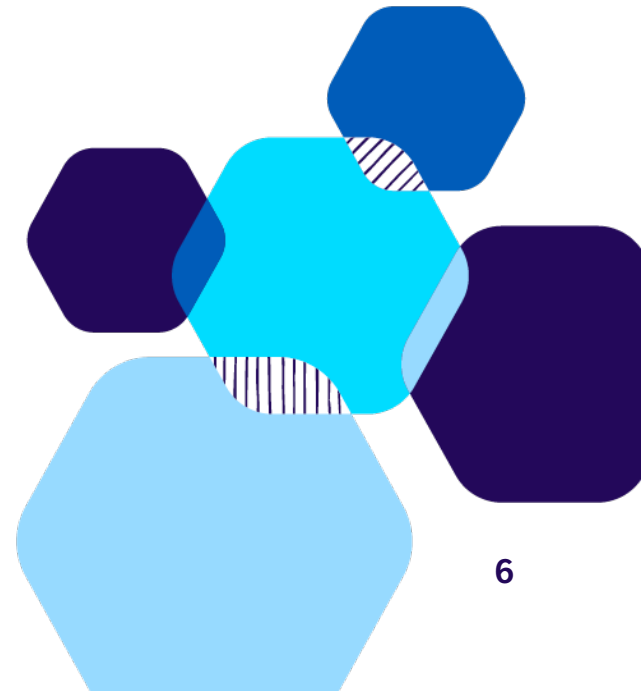


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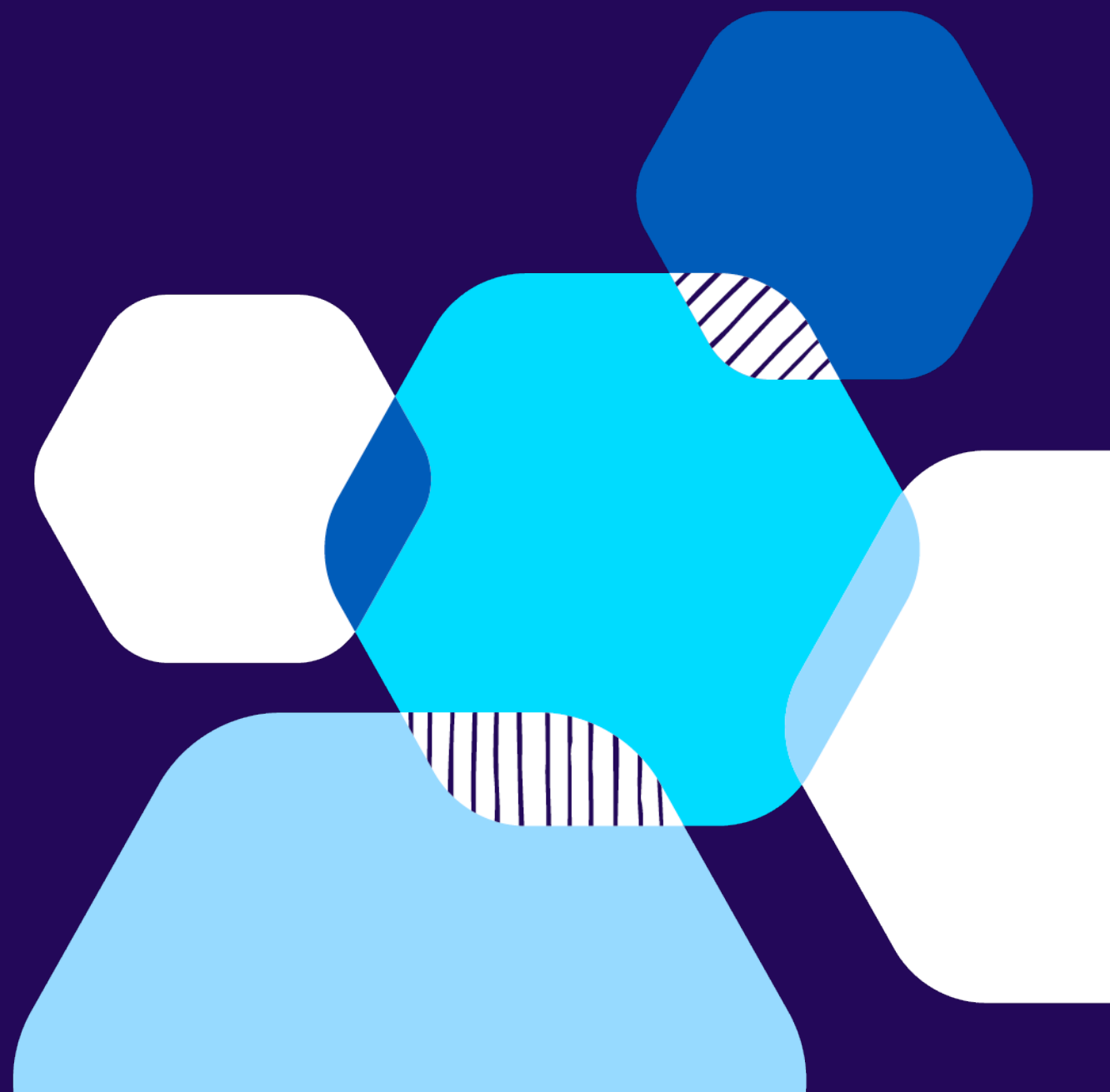
## 2. Grammar task

**Rearrange the words of the following questions. When you have done this, guess the answer.**

1. How long is a game of football?
2. How many people play football across the world?
3. When was the first game shown on television?
4. What is the quickest goal ever scored?
5. Which country has won the men's world cup most times?
6. Which country won the 2019 women's world cup?
7. What do the USA and Canada call football?
8. How much did the world's most expensive player cost?



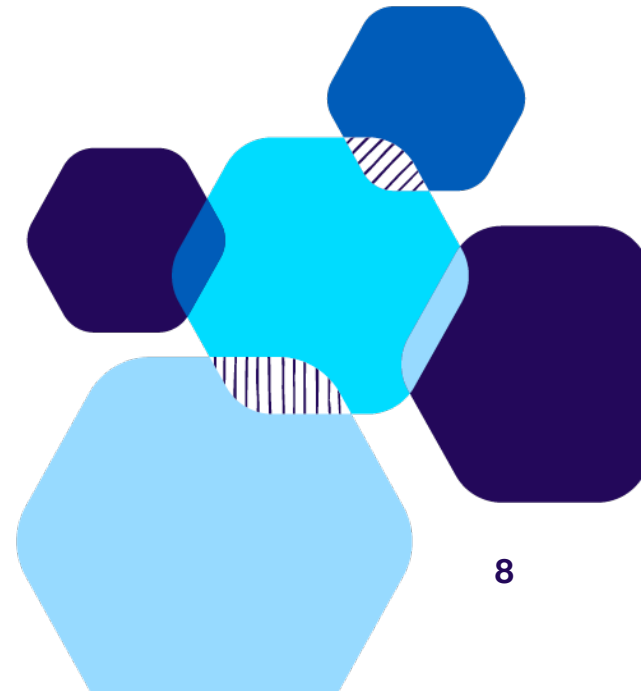
# 3. Language task



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# What do you think these football related phrases mean?

1. To hit the ground running
2. To be axed
3. To chase shadows
4. To end in tears
5. To come off the bench
6. To be below par
7. To get off to a flier
8. To cause an upset
9. To add some steel
10. To win by the skin of your teeth

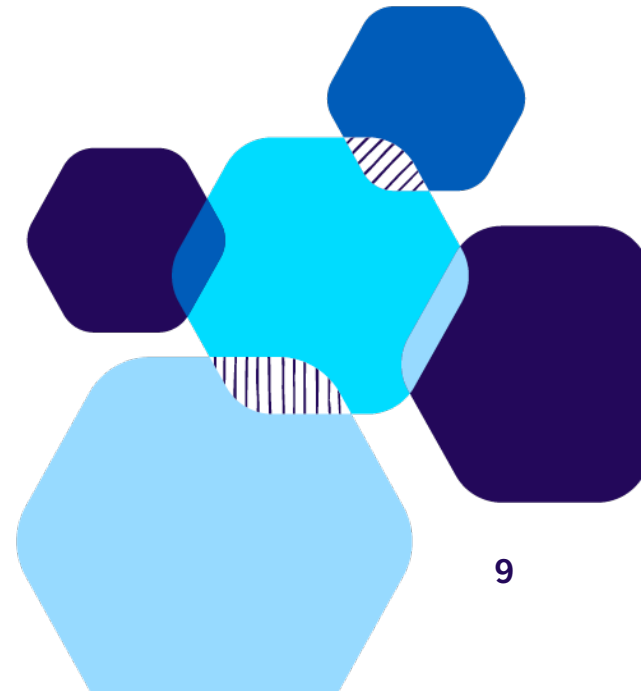




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# Check your understanding by reading the phrases in context

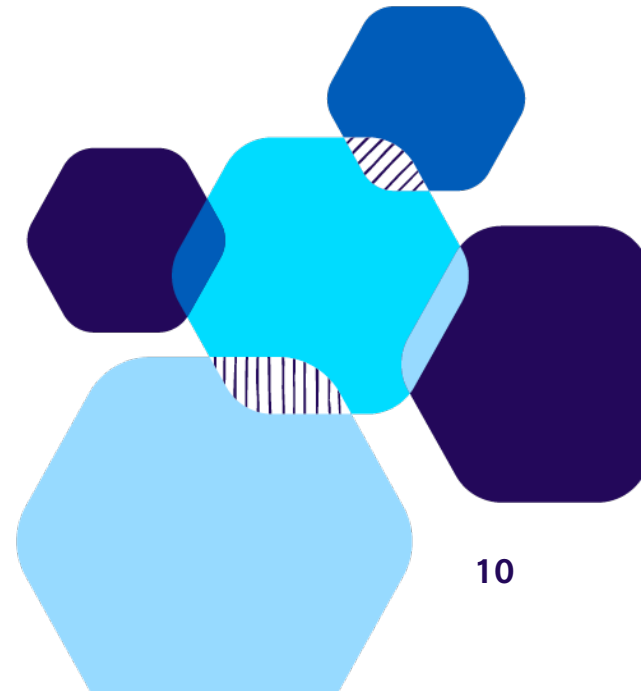
1. We started brilliantly. We hit the ground running from kick off.
2. My team have been below par all season. We've lost seven out of ten.
3. I couldn't get anywhere near their striker. I was chasing shadows all game.
4. We caused a huge upset by beating the league leaders.
5. He is a really aggressive player. He will add some steel to our midfield.
6. It ended in tears. We conceded a goal in the last minute.
7. We played much better when Manuel came off the bench and replaced Hugo.
8. Paula scored a penalty with the last kick of the match. We won by the skin of our teeth.
9. 3-0 up after just ten minutes! We got off to a flier!
10. The manager was axed after losing six games in a row.



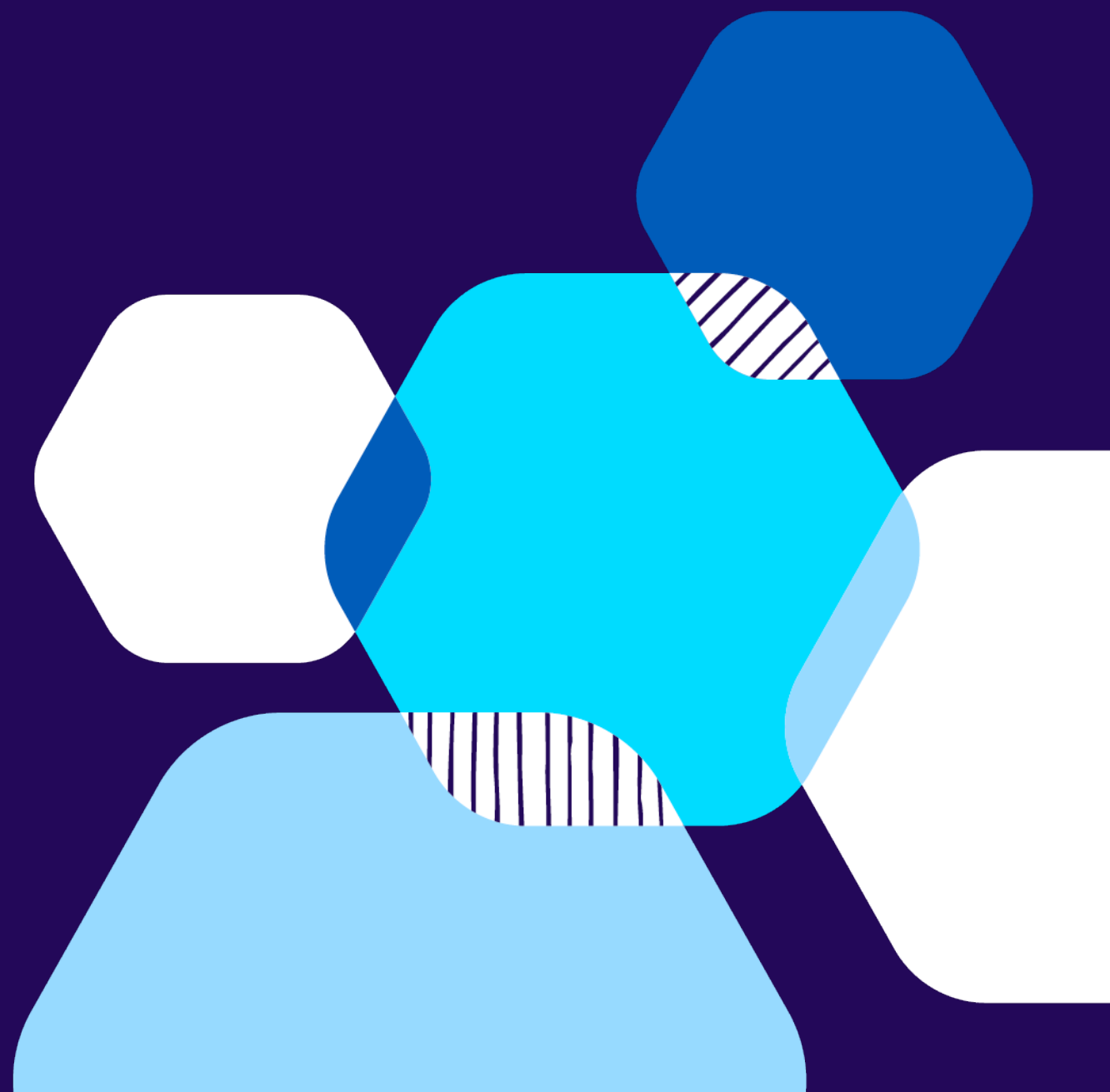
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# Practise these phrases in a conversation

1. To hit the ground running
2. To be axed
3. To chase shadows
4. To end in tears
5. To come off the bench
6. To be below par
7. To get off to a flier
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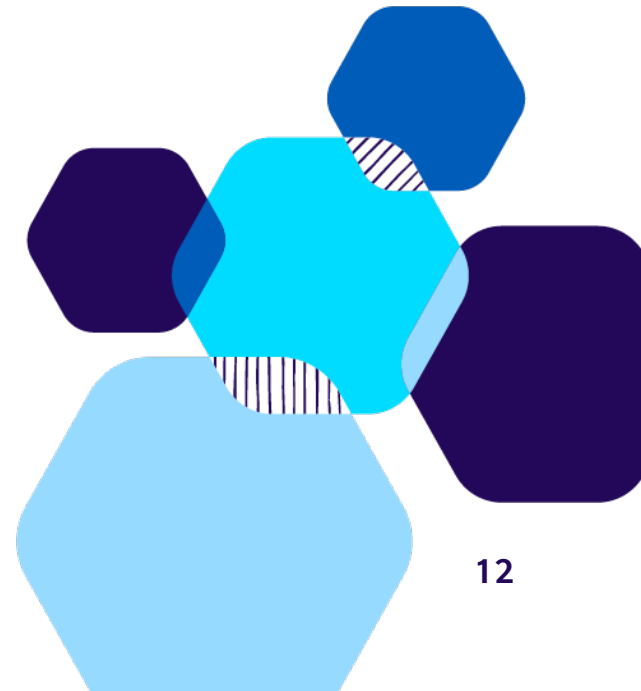
# 4. Listening task



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**What do you think this phrase means? It is commonly-used as a football cliché**

“Six of one and half a dozen of the other.”



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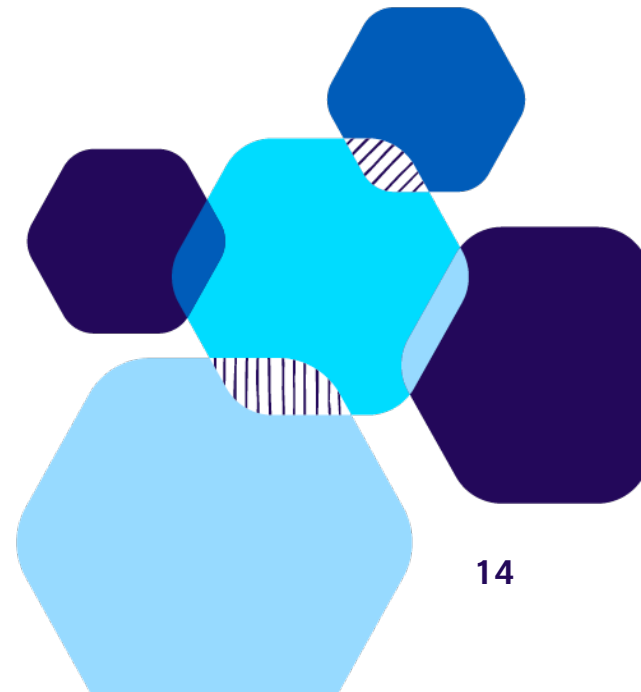
# Listen to the following extract from the podcast, where this phrase is mentioned. Answer these questions.

1. Why, according to Damian, do some people laugh at football clichés?
2. What does Damian think of Michael Robinson?
3. How did everyone react when they hear the Spanish 'phrase seis de uno, media docena del otro'?
4. Chris uses the phrase 'language prescriptivists'. What does this mean?

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**Damian:** Well people laugh at the idea of a football cliché, you know, these expressions or sayings that they're so overused, that they lose their original impact or they're tired or whatever. But I think they're used in football quite a lot because it's almost part of the, because of the language of it, the discourse of football, we expect it be there, it's also quite an emotional game. But I remember I was working in Spain at the time, and I was watching a game live and there was a TV commentator from Ireland called Michael Robinson, who was wonderful, wonderful. And he, his Spanish language when he started, wasn't very good but he really, really tried to get his ideas across and at one stage - he became wonderfully fluid later on of course - once they asked Michael Robinson and said 'Michael Michael, was that a penalty? Was that a penalty?' and he said in Spanish: *Mmm seis de uno, media docena del otro*. And myself and my friend who was like in English they were like: did he just translate 'six of one and half a dozen of the other' literally into Spanish? And there were people in the bar watching with us going *qué? What has he just said?* And this phrase is now part of Spanish football and to me it's just fantastic. So I love those kinds of things that kind of cross languages and become part of the football discourse as well. So six of one and half a dozen of the other.

**Chris:** That's brilliant. And it's one in the eye for language prescriptivists who say language should never change and it stays the same. Here is a case in point where someone who's creating new forms and then enters into the mainstream discourse.



# Football and the English language

