

Learn English through Football Podcast: 2018 World Cup Preview - Groups A and B

June 13th 2018

Only two days until the 2018 World Cup kicks off in Russia and so on today's football-language podcast we take a look at two of the groups in the tournament: Groups A and B. We will also be looking at our [World Cup predictions competition](#) - there is still time to join! For this audio report there is a transcript and a worksheet, great for learners and teachers of English, which can be freely accessed here. If you have questions or comments, email us at: admin@languagecaster.com (Damian=DF).

Task 1: Pre-task - Quiz

Answer the following questions with your colleagues about Groups A and B from the 2018 World Cup.

- Place the following teams in order of their FIFA ranking.
 - Morocco
 - Russia
 - Egypt
 - Spain
 - Iran
 - Portugal
 - Uruguay
 - Saudi Arabia

Task 2: Listening – Main Idea

Listen to the report and fill in the table with appropriate information

Team	Nickname	FIFA Ranking	Other information

Task 3: Listening for vocabulary

Listen to the first part of the report (Group A) and complete the sentences below with an appropriate word or phrase.

1. '...There have been _____ editions of the World Cup and on ____ occasions the host nation has reached the last four...'
2. '...with some even suggesting that they _____ emulate South Africa's 'achievement' of being the only host nation _____ make it out of the qualifying group. ...'
3. '...This means that Russia may make _____ the group, particularly if they defeat ...'
4. '...appearances to their name. _____ Russia, they are confident of doing well in this tournament and with a strong defence...'
5. '...but will be targeting at least _____ points from their last games in the group when he returns to the team to give themselves a chance of progressing to _____.'

Task 4: Understanding references

Listen to the second part of the report (Group B) and decide what the words in **bold** refer to.

1. 'On paper this group seems fairly straightforward with the two European sides...'
2. 'Their first game is against Spain and this could be a crucial one for the Portuguese...'
3. '...and if they qualify may even go further in the tournament as they might fancy ...'
4. 'They are a much better side than two years ago...'
5. '...so it will be interesting to see how the team reacts to that appointment '

Task 5: Discussion

Look at the questions below and discuss them with your colleagues.

1. Which teams did the narrator think would qualify from both groups? Do you agree or disagree with him?
2. How well/not so well do you think Russia will host the World Cup?
3. How well/not so well would your own country host the World Cup? What kinds of challenges would your country face in order to do this?

ANSWERS

2018 World Cup Preview - Groups A and B

June 13th 2018

Task 1: Pre-task - Quiz

Answer the following questions with your colleagues about Groups A and B from the 2018 World Cup.

2. Place the following teams in order of their FIFA ranking.

Portugal (4th)

Spain (10th)

Uruguay (14th)

Iran (37th)

Morocco (41st)

Egypt (45th)

Saudi Arabia (67th)

Russia (70th)

Task 2: Listening – Main Idea

Listen to the report and fill in the table with appropriate information

Team	Nickname	FIFA Ranking	Other information
Russia	N/A	70	Very pessimistic but weakest group. Play opening game vs Saudi Arabia
Uruguay	N/A	14th	Powerhouse/traditional/many last four appearances/Suarez/Cavani/ should come top of group/optimistic
Saudi Arabia	The Green Falcons	67th	Finished above Australia in qualifiers/outsidiers/opening game vs Russia
Egypt	The Pharoahs	45th	Confident/Mo Salah/face Uruguay in opening/Salah returns for final two games
Portugal	N/A	4th	Euro champs (2016)/Ronaldo/maybe further?/opening game vs Spain
Spain	<i>La Selección</i>	10th	Many people's favourites/better than 2 and 4 years ago/Lopetegui – manager / new manager of Madrid

Iran	N/A	37th	Tough, defensive side/Topped S Korea in qualifiers/Queiroz manager /quietly confident
Morocco	Atlas Lions	41st	Dark horse/defensive record very good – 6 games without conceding/opening game vs Iran (narrator will go to this game)

Task 3: Listening for vocabulary

Listen to the first part of the report (Group A) and complete the sentences below with an appropriate word or phrase.

6. ‘...There have been **21** editions of the World Cup and on **13** occasions the host nation has reached the last four...’

7. ‘...with some even suggesting that they **could** emulate South Africa's 'achievement' of being the only host nation **not to** make it out of the qualifying group. ...’

8. ‘...This means that Russia may make **it out of** the group, particularly if they defeat ...’

9. ‘...appearances to their name. **Unlike** Russia, they are confident of doing well in this tournament and with a strong defence...’

10. ‘...but will be targeting at least **four** points from their last **two** games in the group when he returns to the team to give themselves a chance of progressing to **the last 16**.

Task 4: Understanding references

Listen to the second part of the report (Group B) and decide what the words in **bold** refer to.

1. 'On paper **this group** seems fairly straightforward with **the two European sides...**'
 - i. **Group B**
 - ii. **Spain and Portugal**
2. '**Their** first game is against Spain and **this** could be a crucial **one** for the Portuguese...'
 - i. **Portugal**
 - ii. **The first game**
 - iii. **The first game**
3. '...and if **they qualify** may even go further in the tournament as **they** might fancy ...'
 - i. **Morocco**
 - ii. **Morocco**
4. '**They** are a much better side than two years ago...'
 - i. **Spain**
5. '...so it will be interesting to see how **the team** reacts to **that appointment**'
 - i. **Spain**
 - ii. **Lopetegui going to Spain**

Task 5: Discussion

Look at the questions below and discuss them with your colleagues.

1. Which teams did the narrator think would qualify from both groups?
Spain/Portugal Do you agree or disagree with him?
2. How well/not so well do you think Russia will host the World Cup?
3. How well/not so well would your own country host the World Cup? What kinds of challenges would your country face in order to do this?

TRANSCRIPT

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Transcript of the show (13th June 2018)

Introduction

DF: You are listening to [languagecaster.com's football-language podcast](#). Hello everyone and welcome everyone to the podcast for all those interested in improving their English skills and who love [the beautiful game](#) of football. My name is Damian and on this audio report - only two days to go until the World Cup starts - we take a look at the first two groups in the World Cup: Group A and Group B. For this audio report we have a transcript and a worksheet, both of which are great for learners and teachers of English and which can be freely accessed here.

Stinger: You are listening to Languagecaster.com (in German).

Group A

- Russia (70th)
- Saudi Arabia (67th)
- Uruguay (14th)
- Egypt (45th)

There have been 21 editions of the World Cup and on 13 occasions the [host nation](#) has reached [the last four](#), with six of those teams actually winning the title. This time, however, only the most fervent Russian optimists would support the host's chances of progressing to the [semi-final](#) of this year's tournament with some even suggesting that they could emulate South Africa's 'achievement' of being the only host nation not to make it out of the qualifying group. The good news for the hosts is that Group A is the weakest group in the tournament based on [FIFA rankings](#) though of course Russia have not played a competitive match for a long time. This means that Russia may make it out of the group, particularly if they defeat outsiders Saudi Arabia in the opening game. The 'Green Falcons' did qualify above Australia in their Asian qualifying group but will need to take something from this opening game to stand any chance of making it to the last 16.

Uruguay are one of the World Cup [powerhouses](#) - they have a strong World Cup tradition - with two titles and a host of last-four appearances to their name. Unlike Russia, they are confident of doing well in this tournament and with a strong defence, a young attacking midfield and Luis Suárez and Edinson Cavani up front they should [have too much for](#) their opponents in Group A and go on [to top the group](#).

The fourth team in Group A is Egypt and the Pharaohs will also be confident of making it through the group stage mostly because of their star striker Mo Salah.

They [will face](#) Uruguay in their opening game without the [injured](#) Salah but will be targeting at least four points from their last two games in the group when he returns to the team to give themselves a chance of progressing to the last 16.

Prediction: Uruguay and Russia

Group B

- Spain (10th)
- Portugal (4th)
- Morocco (41st)
- Iran (37th)

[On paper](#) this group seems fairly straightforward with the two European sides, Spain and Portugal, hotly [tipped](#) to make it through to the next round. Portugal are, of course, the European Champions after their win in France in 2016 and with Ronaldo in their team their fans may dream of going even further this time round. Their first game is against Spain and this could be a crucial one for the Portuguese because if they lose they may come under pressure from the 'Atlas Lions' of Morocco. The Moroccan side have a very strong defence in fact, they did not [concede](#) in their six group matches in the African qualifying section and will be a tough side to beat. Their first game is against Iran - a game, incidentally, I am going to be at in Saint Petersburg - and they will be hoping for a good start to then put the Portuguese side under pressure five days later. Morocco could be [a dark horse](#) in this group and if they [qualify](#) may even go further in the tournament as they might fancy their chances against Russia, Egypt or even Uruguay in the next round.

The Iranians are also a tough defensive side, conceding only twice in ten Asian group qualifying matches and they [topped](#) their group well ahead of South Korea and under manager Carlos Queiroz will be quietly confident of [causing an upset](#). Spain are many people's favourites to win the tournament outright and they should qualify from the group without too many problems. They are a much better side than two years ago when they [crashed out to](#) Italy in the last 16 and four years ago when the then holders [were dumped out](#) at the [group stage](#) in the Brazil World Cup. Their coach Lopetegui incredibly has never tasted defeat as manager of *La Selección* and he has brought in new players to add to the experience from 2010. He is off to Real Madrid after the World Cup so it will be interesting to see how the team reacts to that appointment.

Predictions: Spain and Portugal

Let us know what your predictions for these two groups are by coming along to our site at Languagecaster.com and leaving a message. Tomorrow we will have previews for Group C and Group D and you will be able to access transcripts and worksheets for that audio report by clicking on [the Patreon button](#) to subscribe to access this and all our other previous material. Thank you.

2018 World Cup Predictions

You can play in our 2018 [World Cup predictions competition](#) - come along to the site and pick your results, while you can also sign up to a daily newsletter to keep up to date with all the scores.

Remember that you can contact us or follow us via our email at admin@languagecaster.com, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) - drop us a line and let us know what you think of the show, send in any football language from around the world or ask a question about some football language. Bye bye.

Check out our [glossary of footballing phrases here](#)