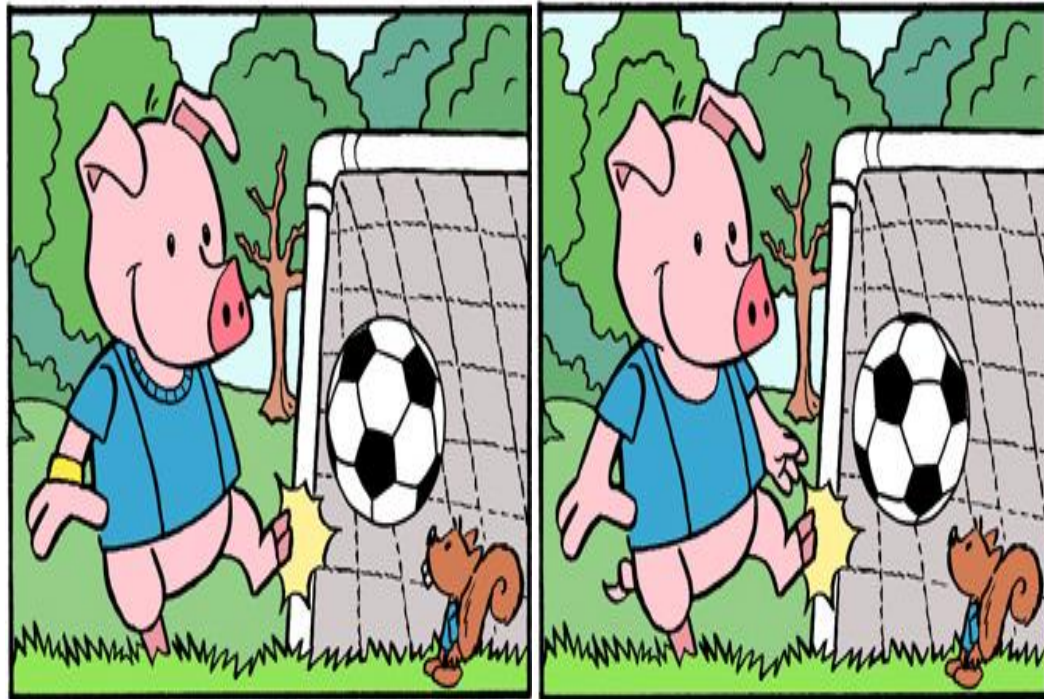


We have reached¹ December. The year seems to have gone by so quickly. And the world cup is here. It feels so strange to be watching the world cup in the winter, but I understand why it was necessary. Qatar becomes incredibly hot in the summer. The soccer balls would melt if they tried to play soccer in August. I love watching the games and, of course, I support England. I get excited if they score goals, but not as excited as my wife gets. Every time Japan score a goal she screams² so loudly that the cat runs and hides under the bed. Unfortunately³, most of the games are on in the middle of the night, so she wakes me and my daughter up!



7 differences

Last week:



Something interesting: soccer

1. The word "soccer" was invented in 1863. The word soccer came from Association Football⁴. association = soc = soccer.
2. The first sport that was similar to modern soccer was cuju, played in China in 200BC. The ball was filled with feathers.
3. In England, games like soccer were played since 800AD. In the 1860s the game was mostly played between private schools⁵. They needed to standardize⁶ the rules so in 1863 they started the Football Association which had a rule book and teams.
4. The top three richest sports franchises⁷ in the world are soccer teams.

Japan beats Germany

Last Wednesday, Japan played Germany in their world cup group match. The groups are drawn randomly⁸ and Japan have been placed in a very difficult group. They are paired with Germany, Spain, and Costa Rica. In the FIFA rankings, Spain are 7th, Germany are 11th, Japan are 24th, and Costa Rica are 31st. Most people thought that Japan would beat Costa Rica, but they would definitely lose to Germany and Spain. And yet, last week, the unimaginable⁹ happened. Japan managed to beat Germany 2-1. It was only their first game of the world cup and the competition still has a long way to go, but people were so surprised and overawed that it is as though Japan has won the whole world cup! At the end of the match, people stormed the pitch¹⁰, the same way they would in the final. I am writing this last Thursday, and, hopefully, Japan will also have beaten Costa Rica by the time you read this. If they do, and if Spain beat Germany, Japan will go through to the next round! Who knows, they might even get through to the final. A Japan - England final



would be wonderful to watch, although it would be difficult for me because I would want both teams to win. Still, it would be a fun game. With the effort Japan put into their game against Germany, who knows how far they will be able to go. To the final!!!!



- 1.reach になった
- 2.scream 叫ぶ
- 3.unfortunately 残念ながら
- 4.Association football サッカー協会
- 5.private school 私立学校
- 6.standardize 規格化する
- 7.franchise フランチャイズ
- 8.draw randomly 無作為に抽出される
- 9.unimaginable 予想外
- 10.storm the pitch 客がグラウンドに出る



World record

A Japanese record this week and it is actually from last year. Tamori, whose real name is Kazuyoshi Morita, got the world record for being the host of the longest-running¹ live TV music show presented by the same person. He has hosted Music Station every week since it started in 1985. That is a total of 1,400 episodes. He holds another world record as well. In 2014, he received the world record for the highest number of variety shows hosted² by the same presenter. He had hosted 8,054 episodes of Waratte itomo. He has also hosted a lot of other programs and I don't know how he has the time to do it. He is 77 years old now and some people might think he will start to slow down, but he doesn't seem to be yet.



Friends and good manners will carry you where money won't go.
-Margaret Walker.

A capital city – Doha

Let's look at Doha, the capital city of Qatar today. The world cup is happening there, so it is in the news a lot. Qatar has only been a country since 1868 but people have lived in the area for 50,000 years. It was a part of Mesopotamia³ and many artifacts⁴ have been found there. It became famous for pearls by the 8th century AD and an important trading port⁵. In 1783, it was part of Bahrain, but people fought for independence and it was recognized as a separate country in 1868. It became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1871 and was taken over by the British in 1916. Britain promised to protect Qatar from other countries. However, in 1935, oil was discovered in the Persian Gulf and Britain took more control over the country. Qatar finally gained complete independence in 1971. Doha was founded in 1820 and officially became the capital of Qatar in 1971. Thanks to oil, Qatar has a very high GDP per capita⁶ and Doha is a very rich city. The GDP per capita is the fourth highest in the world. This is because Qatar has a lot of money and a small population. However, this doesn't mean that everybody is rich. There is a lot of inequality⁷. Only 15% of the population are Qatari. The rest are expatriates⁸ and a very high number of immigrant⁹ workers. Doha is a beautiful city, but a very expensive city.



- 1.longest-running 一番長く放送されている
- 2.host MC する
- 3.Mesopotamia メソポタミア
- 4.artifact 古代の人造物
- 5.trading port 貿易港
- 6.GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita 1人当たりの国内総生産
- 7.inequality 不平等
- 8.expatriate 外国移住する人
- 9.immigrant 移民者