For Hayden – who actually likes football
– James Campbell

For Jack, the biggest football fan and
Liverpool supporter I know.
– Rob Jones

BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP, UK
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

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First published in Great Britain 2022 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB: 9781526627995 eBook: 9781526627988

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Printed and bound in Great Britain by CPI (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY



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THE FUNNY LIFE OF FOOTBALL



JAMES CAMPBELL

ROB JONES

BLOOMSBURY
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY



Read this before you dare go any further ...

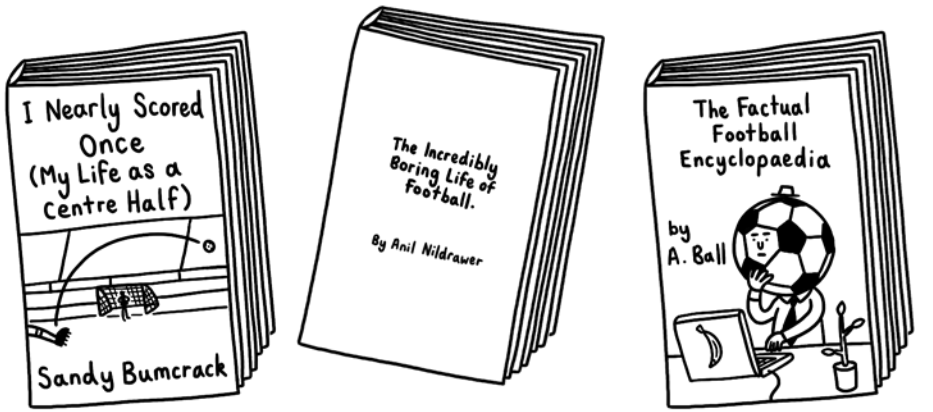


WHAT SORT OF BOOK IS THIS?

This is not a fact book as such. You won't find much practical information in here.

If you're looking for **proper** statistics and stuff about football then immediately put this book on the penalty spot and **kick it so hard** that it flies over the crossbar and you have to spend the rest of the year hiding from your fans and apologising on social media.

If it's sensible and accurate information you really want, I can recommend the following books:



This book is for four types of people:

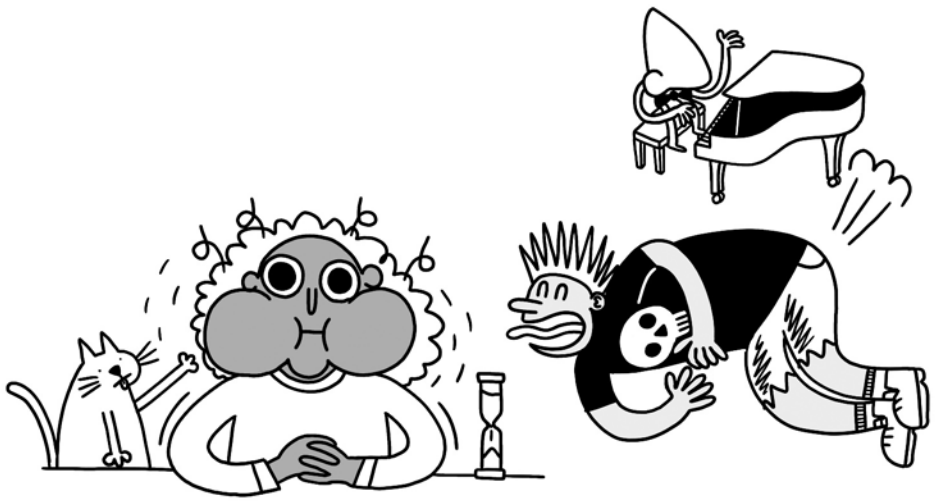
1. People who really like **playing** football. You've got a football top with your name on the back. You own more than one pair of shin pads and **you know how to do a Rainbow Flick with a grapefruit.**



2. People who love **watching** football but never actually play. You are perfectly happy on the sofa watching football, **occasionally** sitting forward if there's a free kick. You like being in a stadium, eating terrible pies and singing songs and saying 'Oooooh' along with everyone else.

3. People who really **hate** football. You **can't think of anything worse** than running around a muddy field chasing a bouncy round thing while people cheer and yell rude words at you. Or worse, **watching other people** play football when you could be doing something useful like learn to play the piano with your nose. This book will help you look at football in a new way.

4. People who have no **interest whatsoever in football.** You've never played it, watched it, thought about it. Maybe you've **never even heard of it.** But you like **laughing** and **giggling** so much that you'll suffer an attack of fart-chuckling and release so much bum-gas that your cat will go cross-eyed and fall over.



Not normal

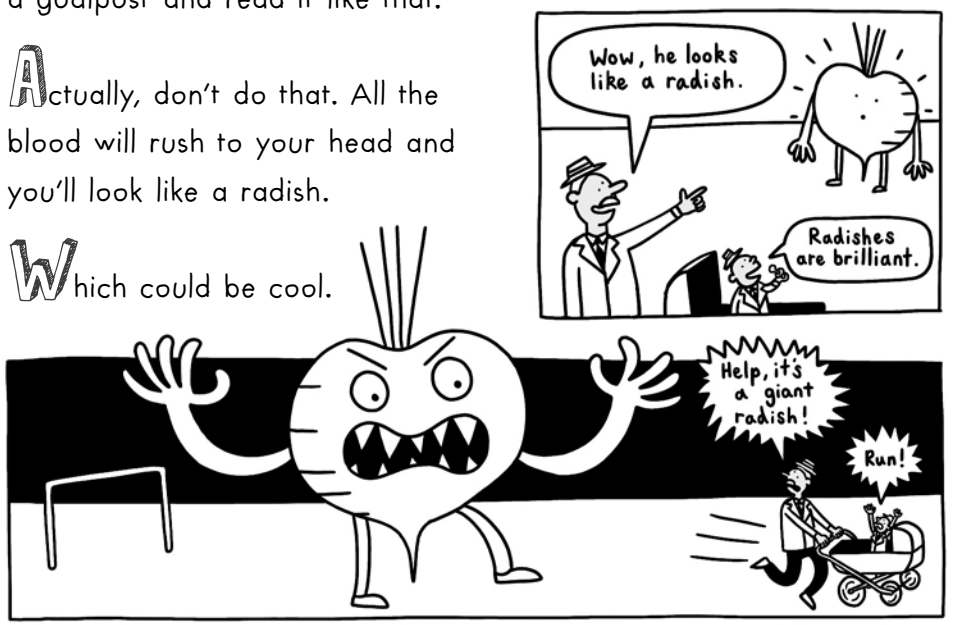
This is **not a normal book.** You can read it in **any order you like.** You haven't even got to the beginning yet! This book is full of **signposts** which send you to other pages. If you see something you like the look of, follow the signpost and see where it takes you.

Read a couple of random pages. **Read the book backwards.** Forwards. Sideways.

Take the book to the park, **hang upside down** from a goalpost and read it like that.

Actually, don't do that. All the blood will rush to your head and you'll look like a radish.

Which could be cool.



Warning about facts and statistics

Occasionally, this book will give you some **actual facts and statistics.**

For example, the footballer who has scored the **most** goals in a single World Cup was a French player called Just Fontaine. In 1960, he scored thirteen goals in one tournament.

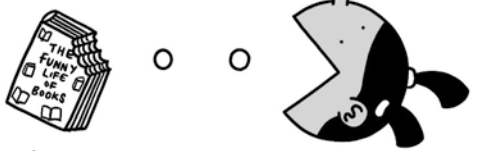
But, in a few years' time will this still be the record, or will someone else have scored more goals in World Cups that **haven't happened** yet?

You have to be **careful** with facts. Facts change all the time. By the time your own children read this book, half of the facts will be **wrong.** However, all of the fictional things will still be true until the universe cracks and the centre spot at Wembley Stadium splits open to reveal a portal to another dimension!

Beginning page

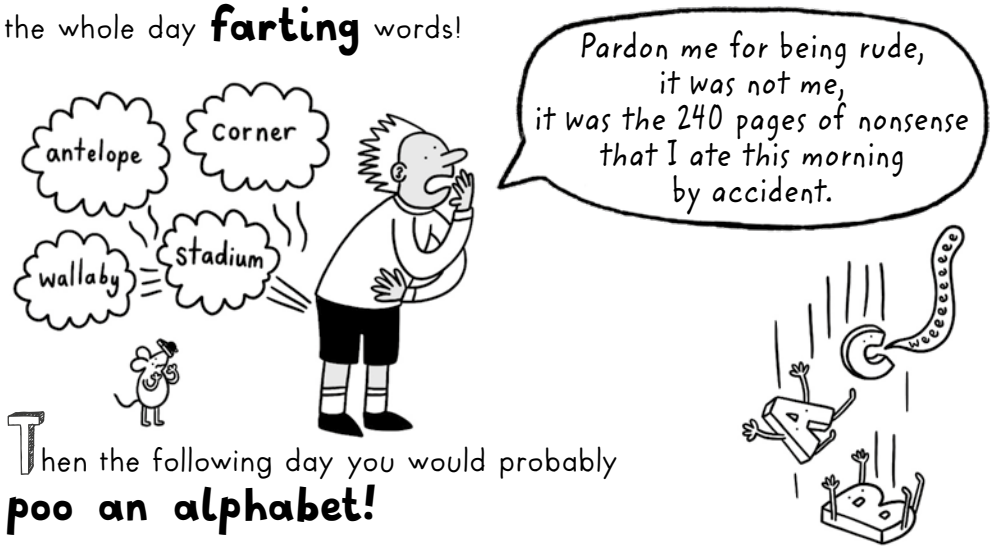
Congratulations on making it to the beginning of the book. Not everyone makes it this far. Some people just read the first one or two pages and then get so hungry that they accidentally eat the book without thinking about it.

Do not eat books!



People are always saying that books are good for you, but they do not mean **in your tummy.**

For a start, you'd get indigestion and spend the whole day **farting** words!

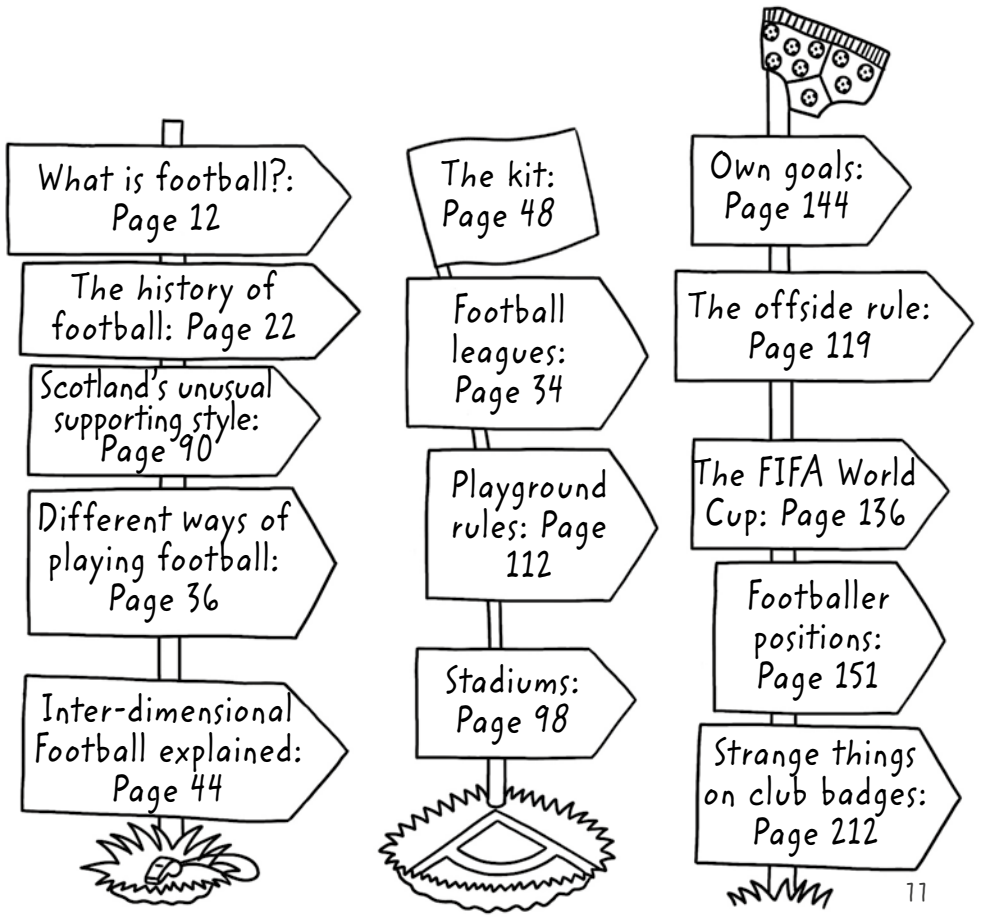


Then the following day you would probably **poo an alphabet!**

Do not eat books! (Please.)

You'd have to wipe your bum with an eraser!

Anyway. This is the beginning of the book. Choose a signpost of something you're interested in and turn to that page.



What is football?

Football is usually played with a ball but can be played using an empty fizzy drink can, a tennis ball, an inflated pig's bladder or two fruit bowls stuck together with strawberry jam.

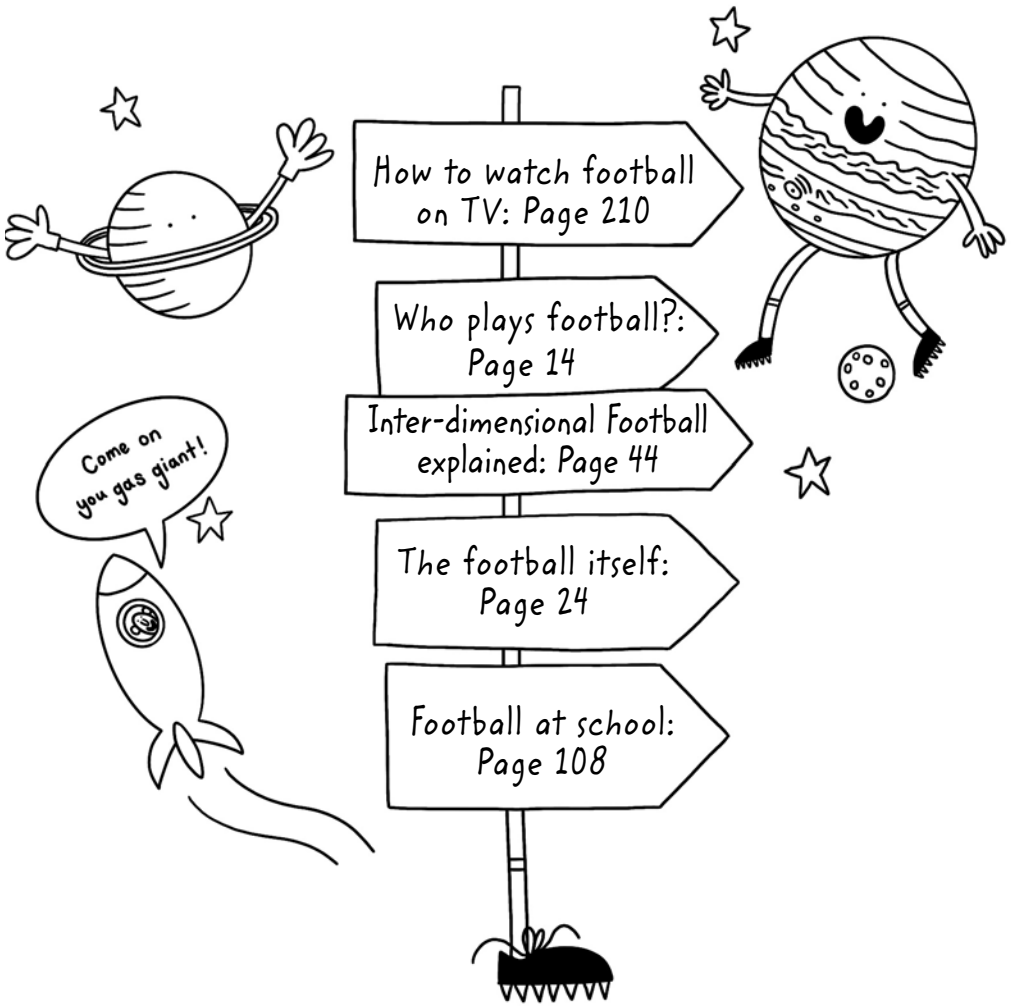
Millions of people around the world play football. For some it's their **actual job.** Others do it at school and they are forced to do it because it is the **law.** For most people, however, it is something they do in their spare time to **keep fit,** have **fun** and have something to **talk about** with their friends.

One of my relatives loves football so much that he doesn't talk about **anything else.** If football didn't exist, I think he would probably be completely silent.

Maybe monks who have taken a vow of silence are just seriously into football but have never heard of it.

You can also spend a lot of time watching other people play football. On the TV or in real life. Lots of people follow a particular team. Sometimes it's the team that plays where they live and sometimes it's a team that is on the other side of the world.

Or even on a **different planet!** (The Jupiter Inter-Moon League is particularly well supported by people from the East Midlands for some reason).



Who plays football?

Pretty much anyone can play football, apart from tiny babies.

I suppose you could just put a football in the middle of a parent-and-baby group at the library and watch them all roll around **not** kicking the ball. Until some annoying grown-up actually puts the ball in front of a baby and makes it kick like some sort of vomitty puppet, but this would probably turn into the most boring thing in the world after approximately five seconds so you would have to yell **'Bumpackets!'** across the library. And then the lady who runs the parent-and-baby group would tut really loudly, all the parents would stare at you like you've just licked the door handle in a doctor's waiting room and you'd have to leave the library forever.

That's what happened to me.

When I was a librarian.



Most people start playing football properly when they are about five or six. At this age you can try to kick the ball towards a goal, accidentally stand on top of the ball and fall on your bottom really quickly. These are some of the **first skills** you will need.



As you get bigger, you will learn to kick the ball properly, dribble, shoot and walk around the field yelling at your friends. You will yell things like:

