

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026

USA · CANADA · MEXICO | June 11 – July 19, 2026

THE **S.T.E.A.M.** LEARNING GUIDE FOR ALL **48 NATIONS**



48 Countries



12 Groups



STEAM Facts



Tournament
Data



Word Search
Puzzles

ALL 12 GROUPS – FIFA WORLD CUP 2026™

Teams
48

Matches
104

Groups
12

Cities
16

Days
39

Hosts
3

GROUP A

Mexico
 South Africa
 South Korea
 Czechia

GROUP B

Canada
 Bosnia and Herzegovina
 Qatar
 Switzerland

GROUP C

Brazil
 Morocco
 Haiti
 Scotland

GROUP D

United States
 Paraguay
 Australia
 Türkiye

GROUP E

Germany
 Ecuador
 Ivory Coast
 Curaçao

GROUP F

Netherlands
 Japan
 Sweden
 Tunisia

GROUP G

Spain
 Cabo Verde
 Saudi Arabia
 Uruguay

GROUP H

Spain
 Cabo Verde
 Saudi Arabia
 Uruguay

GROUP I

France
 Senegal
 Iraq
 Norway

GROUP J

Argentina
 Algeria
 Austria
 Jordan

GROUP G

England
 Croatia
 Ghana
 Panama

GROUP H

Italy
 Costa Rica
 Nigeria
 Ukraine

GROUP K

Portugal
 Congo DR
 Uzbekistan
 Colombia

GROUP J

Argentina
 Algeria
 Austria
 Jordan

GROUP K

Portugal
 Congo DR
 Uzbekistan
 Colombia

GROUP L

England
 Croatia
 Ghana
 Panama

48 Countries

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FORMAT:

GroupStage (72 matches, June 11–27): Top 2 per group + 8 best 3rd-place teams → Round of 32

Knockouts: Round of 32 → Round of 16 → Quarter-finals → Semi-finals → Final (MetLife Stadium, NJ, July 19)

Opening match: Mexico vs South Africa at Estadio Azteca, Mexico City (June 11, 2026)



SCIENCE

Mexico is home to over 68 living Indigenous languages — the Western Hemisphere's greatest linguistic diversity — reflecting thousands of years of separate cultural and biological evolution. The monarch butterfly migrates 4,500 km to overwinter exclusively in Mexican forests, a feat intensively studied by migration biologists.

TECHNOLOGY

Liga MX introduced VAR technology in 2019, using 4 dedicated camera operators per match. The national team's GPS tracking system, run with Oracle, monitors 1,000+ data points per player per minute during training. Mexico City's altitude (2,240 m) reduces air pressure by ~20%, altering ball flight physics measurably.

ENGINEERING

Estadio Azteca (87,523 seats) features a hyperbolic-paraboloid concrete roof that drains rainwater efficiently across its vast span. Sitting at 2,240 m altitude, its unique atmosphere means visiting players consume ~20% less oxygen per breath. Azteca is the only stadium to host three World Cup opening matches (1970, 1986, 2026).

ARTS & CULTURE

Mexico's muralist tradition — Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, Siqueiros — produced some of the 20th century's most politically powerful public art covering thousands of square metres of government building walls. Frida Kahlo's self-portraits are among the most studied artworks in the world.

MATH & STATS

Mexico has appeared in 17 World Cups — the most of any CONCACAF nation. Record: W37 D14 L25 in 76 matches, scoring 143 goals (avg 1.88/game). Azteca has hosted 2 World Cup finals (1970 Brazil vs Italy, 1986 Argentina vs West Germany) — the only stadium to do so.



SOUTH AFRICA

Group A · FIFA World Cup 2026™ · STEAM Country Profile

GROUP

A

SCIENCE

South Africa's Blombos Cave (Western Cape) contains ochre-processed tools dated 77,000 years old — evidence of symbolic thinking 30,000 years earlier than previously believed. The Khoisan people carry one of humanity's oldest Y-chromosome lineages, tracing an unbroken genetic line back over 70,000 years.

TECHNOLOGY

The MeerKAT radio telescope in the Karoo desert comprises 64 dishes imaging radio waves from galaxies billions of light-years away. South African engineers designed its advanced signal-correlation system. SAFA uses Hudl Sportscode AI analysis for all national team sessions.

ENGINEERING

FNB Stadium (Soccer City, Johannesburg) was designed to resemble a traditional African calabash gourd. Its 94,736-seat bowl uses a diagrid steel frame and PTFE fabric roof — one of Africa's largest tensile roof structures. It hosted the 2010 World Cup Final — the first FIFA Final on African soil.

ARTS & CULTURE

South Africa's Ndebele people create geometric mural art using bold primary colours applied to house walls — studied by mathematicians for their precise symmetry and fractal-like repetition. The Cape Malay tradition brought by Indonesian and Malaysian slaves has produced a unique fusion cuisine and architectural style unique to Cape Town.

MATH & STATS

South Africa (Bafana Bafana) last appeared at a World Cup in 2010 as hosts — a 16-year absence. Their 2026 CAF qualifying record: W6 D2 L2, goal difference +11. The 2010 World Cup (which SA hosted) was the first held in Africa; all 10 stadiums were built or extensively renovated in under 3 years.



■ SCIENCE

South Korea leads the world in CRISPR gene-editing research output per capita. Korean scientists discovered a novel antibacterial protein in kimchi fermentation studied for antibiotic-resistant infection treatment. Korea also developed the world's first commercial 5G network (2019) with millimetre-wave frequencies enabling 20 Gbps data speeds.

■ TECHNOLOGY

Samsung and SK Hynix produce over 60% of global DRAM memory chips. The national team's GPS monitoring integrates Samsung biometric wearables tracking heart-rate variability and sprint recovery using Korean-developed AI algorithms. Son Heung-min's positional data from Tottenham is shared with the KFA coaching staff.

■ ENGINEERING

Seoul World Cup Stadium (66,806) uses a cable-stayed membrane roof inspired by traditional Korean kite (kkachi) shapes. Its 52,000 solar panels generate 100% of stadium electricity — the first net-zero football ground in Asia. The stadium uses seismic isolation bearings to absorb earthquake forces of up to 0.3g.

■ ARTS & CULTURE

K-pop and Korean cinema ('Parasite' — first non-English film to win Best Picture at the Oscars) represent the 'Hallyu' cultural wave worth \$10+ billion annually. Korean manhwa (comics) and webtoons are read by 100M+ global users weekly. Traditional hanji paper-making dates 1,600 years, using mulberry bark beaten into ultra-thin sheets.

■ MATH & STATS

South Korea has qualified for 11 consecutive World Cups — Asia's longest active streak. Their 2002 semi-final run required: W4 D2 L0 in 7 matches, beating Poland, Portugal, Spain (on pens), and Italy (1-0 AET). Son Heung-min has 37 international goals and shared the 2022 Premier League Golden Boot with Salah at 23 goals each.



SCIENCE

Gregor Mendel—the Augustinian monk who discovered the laws of inheritance through pea-plant experiments in Brno (1856–63) — founded modern genetics. All DNA science, from sequencing to CRISPR, traces its mathematical foundations to Czech soil. Bohemia's rock strata helped James Hutton (visiting German geologists) confirm Earth's ancient age.

TECHNOLOGY

Czech company Avast (now NortonLifeLock) protects 435 million devices globally. JetBrains (Prague) produces IntelliJ IDEA — used by 11 million programmers worldwide. Czechia has the highest beer consumption per capita on Earth (143 litres/person/year), supporting a fermentation science industry that has driven yeast genomics research.

ENGINEERING

The Prhonice Park near Prague (UNESCO Heritage) is a masterpiece of landscape engineering: 250 hectares of designed water features and cascades managing rainfall through natural filtration — predating modern sustainable drainage by 150 years. Prague's medieval astronomical clock (Orloj, 1410) is the world's oldest working astronomical clock.

ARTS & CULTURE

Franz Kafka (Prague) produced 'The Metamorphosis' and 'The Trial' — two of the 20th century's most influential literary works. Czech Bohemian crystal (Moser, Růckl) has been prized since the 14th century. The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (Prague, founded 1896) is one of Europe's top five orchestras by critical ranking.

MATH & STATS

Czechia (as Czechoslovakia) reached two World Cup finals: 1934 and 1962. As independent Czechia: 3 World Cup appearances (1994, 2006, 2026). Patrik Schick's 45-metre lob vs Scotland at Euro 2020 had an estimated ball velocity of 83 km/h and a trajectory arc of 18 metres — voted goal of the tournament.



■ SCIENCE

Canada produces 71% of the world's maple syrup through a biologically remarkable process: sugar maple trees convert stored starch to sucrose in spring and generate positive stem pressure at temperatures above 0°C — a unique plant hydraulics phenomenon studied by plant physiologists. Canada also has 20% of the world's fresh water.

■ TECHNOLOGY

Canadarm — the robotic arm developed by MD Robotics for NASA's Space Shuttle — is one of robotics history's most important engineering achievements. SportsLogiq (Montreal) developed AI pose-estimation that tracks every player on a pitch from a single fixed camera — now used by the Canadian Premier League.

■ ENGINEERING

BC Place (Vancouver, 54,500) features North America's first retractable air-supported roof: a transparent ETFE cushion system spanning 190 metres, held taut by 950 km of steel cable and controlled by pneumatic pressure differentials. BMO Field (Toronto) hosted the 2015 Women's World Cup Final.

■ ARTS & CULTURE

Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Drake, and The Weeknd represent Canada's extraordinary cross-genre music output. The Group of Seven landscape painters (1920s) created a distinctly Canadian visual identity by portraying the untamed wilderness in bold post-impressionist style — now Canada's most internationally recognised art.

■ MATH & STATS

Canada topped the 2022 CONCACAF qualifying table — above USA and Mexico — scoring 41 goals in 16 matches (2.56 per game). Alphonso Davies has been clocked at 36.5 km/h in a Champions League match — the fastest official speed ever recorded in that competition. As hosts, all 3 group games are on Canadian soil.



■ SCIENCE

Bosnia's Dinaric karst landscape hosts endemic fish species found nowhere else on Earth — including the Huchen (Danube salmon) growing to 1.5 m. Karst geology (soluble limestone dissolving into cave systems) creates Europe's most dramatic underground ecosystems. The Hutovo Blato wetland is one of Europe's largest natural fish reserves.

■ TECHNOLOGY

The Sarajevo Brewery (founded 1864) still supplies Sarajevo's drinking water through a natural mountain spring system — one of Europe's oldest continuously operating urban water utilities. Bosnia's diaspora in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland provides a natural technology-transfer pipeline for football analytics and sports science.

■ ENGINEERING

Stari Most ('Old Bridge') in Mostar — built 1566, destroyed 1993, rebuilt stone by stone by 2004 — is a masterpiece of Ottoman engineering. The arch uses precise geometry of limestone voussoirs that distribute load without mortar joints to the abutments — a structural technique studied in civil engineering courses worldwide.

■ ARTS & CULTURE

Bosnia's Sevdalinka music — a hauntingly beautiful urban genre blending Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Sephardic Jewish musical traditions — is one of the Balkans' most emotionally layered art forms, recently added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Meša Selimovi's novel 'Death and the Dervish' is considered one of Yugoslav literature's greatest works.

■ MATH & STATS

Bosnia qualified for 2026 by defeating Italy 1-1 (AET), winning 4-1 on penalties in the UEFA Playoff Path A Final (March 31, 2026). This was Italy's third consecutive World Cup absence — a remarkable statistical anomaly for a 4-time World Cup winner. Bosnia's squad average age at qualification: 26.4 years.



SCIENCE

Qatar produces 99% of its drinking water through desalination using multi-stage flash evaporation — consuming 120 MWh per million litres. This technology, refined in Qatar, is now exported across water-stressed regions. Qatar's desert ecology research has documented 27 endemic insect species adapted to extreme heat-humidity cycles.

TECHNOLOGY

The 2022 World Cup introduced semi-automated offside technology (SAOT) first deployed in Qatar: 12 cameras per stadium tracked 29 data points on each player's body 50 times per second, enabling offside decisions in under 60 seconds. Qatar Sports Investments owns PSG — linking the national team to elite European sports science.

ENGINEERING

Lusail Stadium (89,000) maintains 20°C inside via 230,000 floor nozzles while outside exceeds 42°C. Al Bayt Stadium's 'Bedouin tent' exterior uses PTFE canvas engineered to survive 45-knot desert winds. The 2022 stadium construction programme delivered 8 new or renovated venues in under 12 years — an unprecedented timeline.

ARTS & CULTURE

Qatar's Museum of Islamic Art (Doha, designed by I.M. Pei, 2008) houses 1,400 years of Islamic calligraphy, textiles, and metalwork. The Museum of Islamic Art's geometric dome design echoes an ablution fountain from Cairo's Ibn Tulun Mosque — the oldest surviving mosque in Egypt. Qatari calligraphy is a UNESCO art form.

MATH & STATS

Qatar won the 2019 AFC Asian Cup: Almoez Ali scored 9 goals — a record for a single Asian Cup edition (previous record: 8 in 1996). At 2022 World Cup as hosts: P3 W0 D0 L3, GF1 GA7. Odds of being eliminated as host before all other host nations in history: essentially 0% (it had never happened before).



SCIENCE

CERN (French-Swiss border, Geneva) is the world's largest particle physics laboratory. Swiss and international scientists discovered the Higgs boson there in 2012 — confirming the field that gives all matter its mass. The World Wide Web was invented at CERN by Tim Berners-Lee in 1989. Switzerland has the highest R&D spending as a % of GDP in Europe.

TECHNOLOGY

Switzerland has the highest density of Nobel Prize winners per capita and is home to the world's most precise watchmaking industry (700+ firms, \$25B exports annually). Swiss watchmaking relies on tolerances measured in microns. FIFA has been headquartered in Zurich since 1932 — making Switzerland the administrative centre of world football.

ENGINEERING

The Gotthard Base Tunnel (2016) at 57.1 km is the world's longest railway tunnel, passing 2,300 m beneath the Alps. The Swiss Federal Railways runs on time to within 3.9 minutes average annual delay — Europe's most punctual major network. Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam was co-designed by Swiss architects.

ARTS & CULTURE

Swiss architect Le Corbusier (born in La Chaux-de-Fonds) designed the UN Headquarters (New York) and the Chandigarh urban plan (India). Swiss artist Paul Klee and Alberto Giacometti are 20th-century art canon figures. The Swiss Alps inspired Romantic landscape painting across all of Europe.

MATH & STATS

Switzerland has reached the Round of 16 in five consecutive World Cups (2006–2022) — consistent tournament performers without breakthrough. Their famous comeback vs France at Euro 2021: trailed 1-3, levelled 3-3, won 5-4 on penalties. Granit Xhaka has 130+ caps for Switzerland — a national record.



SCIENCE

Brazil's Amazon contains an estimated 390 billion trees across 40,000 plant species and 3,000 freshwater fish — approximately 10% of all Earth's species in one ecosystem. Brazilian biologists have described over 7,000 previously unknown species in the past decade. The piranha's bite force (30× its body weight) is studied in biomechanics.

TECHNOLOGY

Embraer is the world's 3rd-largest commercial aircraft manufacturer. Nubank (São Paulo) is the world's largest digital bank (100M+ customers). The CBF uses AI scouting software monitoring 15,000+ grassroots clubs simultaneously — an unmatched talent pipeline that feeds Brazil's extraordinary player production rate.

ENGINEERING

The Maracanã (Rio), originally built for the 1950 World Cup to hold 200,000 people, was the world's largest stadium by capacity for decades. Its 2014 renovation reduced capacity to 78,838 but added a steel ring roof and a fully retractable playing surface. Oscar Niemeyer's Maracanã restoration merged heritage with modern structural engineering.

ARTS & CULTURE

Brazil's cultural exports are globally dominant: samba, bossa nova, capoeira, and carnival. Oscar Niemeyer's Brasília buildings (1960) are the most important works of Modernist architecture in the Southern Hemisphere. Pelé's 1,281 career goals remain the Guinness World Record for any professional footballer.

MATH & STATS

Brazil is the only country in every World Cup (all 22 editions since 1930). Five titles: 1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002. Record: W76 D19 L22, 237 goals (all-time record). Their most famous loss: 7-1 to Germany in the 2014 semi-final on home soil — the highest-scoring semi-final in tournament history. Neymar: 79 international goals, Brazil's all-time record.



MOROCCO

Group C · FIFA World Cup 2026™ · STEAM Country Profile

GROUP

C

SCIENCE

Morocco contains the world's oldest Homo sapiens fossils: skulls from Jebel Irhoud dated 315,000 years (Science journal, 2017), pushing back our species' origin by 100,000 years. Morocco is also the world's largest phosphate producer — phosphate rock is the primary source of the phosphorus essential for all agriculture globally.

TECHNOLOGY

The Noor Ouarzazate solar complex covers 37 km² of Sahara and generates 580 MW — the world's largest concentrated solar power (CSP) plant. Morocco is building the Grand Stade Hassan II (115,000 capacity, under construction) with a zellij-tilework-inspired structural roof. Morocco co-hosts the 2030 World Cup with Spain and Portugal.

ENGINEERING

The Grand Stade Hassan II will be the world's largest stadium when complete. Its roof design uses Islamic geometric patterns requiring advanced structural steel fabrication. Morocco's High Speed Rail (Al Boraq, Casablanca–Tangier, launched 2018) was Africa's first high-speed train, reaching 320 km/h across 200 km.

ARTS & CULTURE

Morocco's artistic heritage includes Amazigh (Berber) weaving, Fès blue-and-white pottery, and tadelakt plaster — a lime-based waterproof coating polished with egg white and black soap, used continuously for 1,000+ years. The ancient medina of Fès is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with 9,400 streets laid out over 1,200 years.

MATH & STATS

Morocco's 2022 World Cup: first African/Arab team to reach the semi-finals. Stats: W4 D2 L1 across 7 matches, only 3 goals conceded — fewest by any semi-finalist. Pre-tournament odds of reaching a semi-final: 150/1 (~0.7%). Their 2026 squad, average age 26, enters as Africa's top-ranked team.



SCIENCE

Haiti's tropical ecosystems contain 600+ endemic species despite just 2% forest cover remaining — a biodiversity density studied as a model of survival under extreme deforestation. The island of Hispaniola has the Caribbean's highest amphibian species count, with new frog species still being described from remaining cloud forest.

TECHNOLOGY

Haiti's telecom infrastructure is mobile-first: 60%+ of financial transactions use mobile money. After the 2010 earthquake, mobile data mapping (Ushahidi platform) coordinated rescue operations in real time — becoming a model for disaster response technology globally. Haiti's diaspora tech community in Miami and Montreal funds digital innovation.

ENGINEERING

The Citadelle Laferrière fortress (built 1805–1820 atop a mountain in northern Haiti) is one of the Americas' most remarkable military engineering feats — constructed by 20,000 formerly enslaved workers using mathematical triangulation to position cannon-range walls without any modern instrumentation.

ARTS & CULTURE

Haiti's vèvè ceremonial art — intricate geometric symbols drawn in cornmeal during Vodou ceremonies — influenced artists from Jean-Michel Basquiat to contemporary installation artists. Haitian naive painting (Hector Hyppolite, Philomé Obin) is internationally collected. The iron market architecture of Port-au-Prince (1889) was originally built in Hamburg for Cairo.

MATH & STATS

Haiti's two World Cup appearances span 52 years: 1974 and 2026. In 1974, Emmanuel Sanon's goal vs Italy ended Italy's record of 1,143 consecutive scoreless minutes — equivalent to 12.7 nil-to-nil matches. Haiti's qualifying campaign for 2026 included victories over Jamaica, Cuba, and Guatemala.



SCIENCE

Scotland's Enlightenment produced: James Watt (steam engine — powered the Industrial Revolution), Joseph Black (discovered latent heat and CO₂), James Hutton (father of geology — proved Earth is billions of years old by studying Scottish rocks at Siccar Point, 1788), and John Logie Baird (invented television, 1926).

TECHNOLOGY

Scotland's tech sector includes Skyscanner (Edinburgh, acquired for £1.4B) and Rockstar North (creators of Grand Theft Auto — the highest-grossing entertainment product in history at \$8B). The Scottish FA's National Performance Centre (Oriam, Edinburgh) uses altitude simulation chambers and cryotherapy pools for national team preparation.

ENGINEERING

The Forth Bridge (1890) is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a masterpiece of cantilever truss engineering spanning 1,710 m using 54,000 tonnes of steel — the first major structure built entirely in steel. It became the benchmark for steel construction globally. Hampden Park (Glasgow) was the world's largest stadium 1937–1950.

ARTS & CULTURE

Robert Burns (Auld Lang Syne — sung at midnight in 150+ countries every New Year), Sir Walter Scott (inventor of the historical novel), and Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes — the most-adapted fictional character in TV and film history) are Scotland's literary triumvirate. Traditional Highland pipe music is recognised by UNESCO.

MATH & STATS

Scotland played in the first-ever international football match (vs England, 0-0, 1872). Their World Cup record: 8 appearances, never advancing beyond the group stage. Yet they were eliminated on goal difference three times (1974, 1978, 1982) without losing a match — the most mathematically unlucky sequence in World Cup history.



SCIENCE

The USA leads the world in Nobel Prize winners (400+), scientific publications, and pharmaceutical R&D (\$600B annually). NASA, NOAA, and NIH collectively employ 100,000+ research scientists. The Human Genome Project — mapping all 3 billion base pairs of DNA — was led by American scientists at NIH and Celera Genomics.

TECHNOLOGY

Silicon Valley has produced Apple, Google, Meta, Amazon, and Microsoft — the five most valuable companies ever. US Soccer partnered with Google Cloud for AI match analysis at 2026, processing 1.4 million data points per match. Wembley equivalent: MetLife Stadium uses facial recognition entry and AR wayfinding.

ENGINEERING

MetLife Stadium (East Rutherford, NJ, 82,500 seats, \$1.6B) hosts the 2026 World Cup Final. SoFi Stadium (Los Angeles, \$5.5B) has the world's largest double-sided video screen at 120 m wide. AT&T Stadium (Dallas, 80,000) — the world's largest domed stadium when built (2009) — hosts group-stage matches.

ARTS & CULTURE

America's cultural exports define global entertainment: Hollywood (\$50B annual revenue), Broadway, jazz, hip-hop, and rock. The Smithsonian Institution is the world's largest museum complex (19 museums, 154 million objects). Abstract Expressionism (Pollock, de Kooning, Rothko) redefined 20th-century painting and made New York the world's art capital.

MATH & STATS

The USA's best World Cup is 3rd place at the inaugural 1930 tournament. Most famous result: beating England 1-0 in 1950 — one of football's greatest upsets. At USA 1994 co-hosting: 3.587 million attendees across 52 games — an average of 68,991 per game, a record that still stands. Christian Pulisic: first American to win the UEFA Champions League (Chelsea, 2021).



SCIENCE

Paraguay's unique bilingual ecosystem — where Guaraní (an Indigenous language) and Spanish coexist with 90% of the population speaking both — provides linguists with rare data on language preservation, code-switching, and bilingual brain development in a majority national population. No other country has comparable data.

TECHNOLOGY

The Itaipú Dam on the Paraguay-Brazil border was the world's largest hydroelectric plant for 25 years (operational 1984). Its 20 turbines generate 14,000 MW — 86% of Paraguay's electricity and 15% of Brazil's. The dam required more steel than 380 Eiffel Towers and took 16 years to build with 40,000 workers.

ENGINEERING

The Itaipú dam reservoir, at 1,350 km², required the relocation of 40,000 people and submerged the Guaira Falls — previously the world's highest-volume waterfall (13x Niagara). The Friendship Bridge (Ponte da Amizade, 1965) connecting Paraguay to Brazil was Latin America's longest bridge at opening.

ARTS & CULTURE

Paraguay's ñandutí lace — intricate circular spiderweb-patterned textile made with fine thread in Itauguá — is one of South America's most distinctive artisan traditions, recognised by UNESCO. Paraguay's harp tradition (arpa paraguaya) produces a distinctive sound unique in global music, fusing Indigenous and Spanish influences.

MATH & STATS

Paraguay's 2010 World Cup: drew all 3 group games (W0 D3 L0) yet advanced to the quarter-finals. Goalkeeper José Luis Chilavert scored 8 international goals from set pieces — a world record for a goalkeeper position. Paraguay has appeared in 9 World Cups: W8 D12 L17 — notable for their disproportionately high number of draws.



SCIENCE

Australia contains 84% of its mammal species found nowhere else, including the platypus — the only mammal that detects prey through electroreception (sensing electrical fields generated by muscle movement). Australian palaeontologists discovered Diprotodon fossils — a 3-tonne wombat-like giant that roamed until 40,000 years ago.

TECHNOLOGY

Catapult Sports (Melbourne, 2006) is the world's leading sports performance analytics company — used by 3,000+ elite teams globally. Their GPS vest technology, originally developed for Australian Rules Football, now tracks Socceroos players' sprint distance, acceleration, and heart-rate zones 20 times per second.

ENGINEERING

The Sydney Opera House (1973) by Jørn Utzon solved a historically unprecedented structural problem: interlocking shell vaults of varying curvature. The solution — 'spherical geometry' (all shells derived from a single 75.2-m-radius sphere) — was discovered in 1961 after years of failed computational approaches.

ARTS & CULTURE

Australia's Indigenous dot painting tradition — developed in Papunya (Western Australia) in 1971 — uses detailed dot patterns to encode Songline maps, Dreaming stories, and sacred knowledge. Works by Emily Kame Kngwarreye have sold for over \$2 million. Indigenous rock art in the Pilbara region dates to 40,000 years ago.

MATH & STATS

Australia beat Zambia 31-0 in 1981 — the largest winning margin in international football history. At Qatar 2022 they reached the Round of 16 having defeated Denmark 1-0 — a result given roughly 15% probability by pre-match models. Their total World Cup record: W7 D4 L16, 45 goals scored, 68 conceded.



SCIENCE

Turkey has extraordinary geological diversity: the Cappadocia region's 'fairy chimneys' (volcanic tuff eroded by differential weathering) are studied by volcanologists. Turkey sits at three tectonic plate boundaries — the 2023 Kahramanmara earthquake (7.8 magnitude) killed 50,000 people and generated 15 metres of surface fault displacement.

TECHNOLOGY

Turkish unicorns: Getir (instant grocery delivery, valued at \$11.8B) and Peak Games (mobile gaming, sold to Zynga for \$1.8B). The TOGG electric vehicle (produced in Bursa from 2023) uses Turkish-developed battery cells — the first domestic EV programme in the Middle East. Istanbul's Marmaray rail tunnel (2013) runs 55 m beneath the Bosphorus.

ENGINEERING

The Bosphorus Bridge (1973) and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge (1988) carry road traffic between Europe and Asia across the 700-metre-wide Bosphorus Strait. The third Bosphorus Bridge (Yavuz Sultan Selim, 2016) is the world's widest suspension bridge at 59 m roadway width and carries both road and rail traffic.

ARTS & CULTURE

Turkish calligraphy (hat) and tile-work (znik ceramics) are among the Islamic world's greatest art forms. The Blue Mosque's 20,000 hand-painted Iznik tiles required 7 years to produce. Orhan Pamuk (Nobel Prize Literature 2006) brought Istanbul's layered civilisational identity to global literary attention.

MATH & STATS

Türkiye's best World Cup: 3rd place in 2002. Hakan Ükür scored the fastest goal in World Cup history: 11 seconds vs South Korea in the 3rd-place playoff. Arda Güler became Real Madrid's youngest La Liga goalscorer at 18 years, 213 days. Türkiye qualified for 2026 via UEFA Playoff C, defeating Kosovo 1-0 (Kerem Aktürkolu, 53').



SCIENCE

German science has produced more Nobel laureates than any nation except the USA: Einstein (relativity), Planck (quantum theory), Heisenberg (uncertainty principle), and Röntgen (X-rays — Nobel Prize 1901, the first physics prize ever awarded) were all German. The Max Planck Society operates 86 research institutes globally.

TECHNOLOGY

The Bundesliga is the world's most technologically advanced football league: AWS AI generates real-time 'pressing pressure' and 'average position' data during live broadcasts. Intel True View (360° freeze-frame replay) was first deployed at Allianz Arena in 2017. Germany invented MP3 audio compression (Fraunhofer Institute, Erlangen, 1989).

ENGINEERING

Allianz Arena (Munich, 75,000) has 2,874 individually programmable ETFE foil cushions — the first stadium with a coloured illuminated facade. Each cushion is 0.2 mm thick yet supports 230 kg/m² snow load. Designed by Herzog & de Meuron, the stadium opened in 2005 and cost €340 million to build.

ARTS & CULTURE

Germany's Bauhaus school (1919–1933) fundamentally changed architecture, graphic design, and industrial design worldwide. Beethoven, Bach, Brahms, Wagner, and Handel define classical music. Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press (Mainz, c.1440) — enabling mass literacy and transforming human civilisation.

MATH & STATS

Germany has won 4 World Cups (1954, 1974, 1990, 2014) — 2nd most in history. They hold the record for most World Cup semi-final appearances: 13. Miroslav Klose's 16 World Cup goals is the all-time record. Their 7-1 defeat of Brazil in 2014's semi-final in Belo Horizonte remains the most dramatic single result in 80 years of World Cup history.



SCIENCE

Ecuador's Galápagos Islands gave Charles Darwin the empirical evidence for evolution by natural selection (1835 visit, published 1859 in 'On the Origin of Species'). The 13 finch species — each uniquely adapted to its island's food source — remain the most studied example of adaptive radiation in evolutionary biology.

TECHNOLOGY

Ecuador trains at altitude in Quito (2,856 m) and Ambato (2,577 m) — oxygen availability is 27% lower than at sea level. Ecuadorian players develop higher haematocrit (red blood cell concentration), giving a measurable cardiovascular advantage. Visiting European teams report 15–20% lower high-intensity sprint output at altitude.

ENGINEERING

Estadio Rodrigo Paz Delgado in Quito (41,575 seats) sits at 2,856 m altitude — the world's second-highest major international football stadium. Ecuador has leveraged 'altitude engineering' systematically, winning 73% of home CONMEBOL qualifying matches since 2002. The stadium's location near the equator means UV radiation is also significantly higher.

ARTS & CULTURE

Ecuador's Otavalo textile market — the largest Indigenous crafts market in South America — produces handwoven alpaca tapestries using pre-Inca backstrap loom techniques. Ecuador exports 800 million rose stems annually — grown at high altitude for intense colour and long vase life, making Ecuador the world's largest rose exporter.

MATH & STATS

Ecuador opened the 2022 World Cup with a 2-0 win over hosts Qatar. Enner Valencia scored both goals, bringing his World Cup tally to 3. Ecuador's altitude home record in CONMEBOL qualifying: P38 W28 D7 L3 (73.7% win rate). They have appeared in 4 World Cups: W5 D5 L8, 14 goals scored.



SCIENCE

Ivory Coast produces 40% of the world's cocoa. Scientists at Abidjan's research stations are developing heat-resistant cacao cultivars using genomic selection — creating varieties tolerant of temperatures 3–5°C above current levels, with global food security implications as climate change threatens the cacao belt.

TECHNOLOGY

Félix Houphouët-Boigny University is sequencing the genomes of all native cacao cultivars — creating the world's most comprehensive cacao gene bank to protect against blight and climate loss. The FIF (Ivorian football federation) uses French GPS monitoring through diaspora coaching partnerships across Ligue 1.

ENGINEERING

The Stade Olympique Alassane Ouattara (60,000, built for 2023 AFCON) features a sweeping curved white roof engineered to handle Abidjan's tropical rainfall intensity (up to 200 mm/hour) without pooling on the cantilever. The Port of Abidjan — West Africa's largest — handles 25 million tonnes of goods annually through a lagoon-engineering system.

Ivorian Coupé-Décalé dance music has spread across Francophone Africa and Europe. Painter Frédéric Bruly Bouabré created the 'Alphabet of Bété' — a written script for a previously unwritten language — while also producing thousands of small illustrated drawings examining Ivorian cosmology.

MATH & STATS

Ivory Coast have qualified for 5 World Cups. Didier Drogba scored 65 international goals — the Ivorian record. In 2006 they drew 2-2 with Argentina in one of that World Cup's best matches. Drogba's 2005 post-match ceasefire appeal is estimated by historians to have directly contributed to a 3-month pause in the Ivorian civil war.



SCIENCE

Curaçao's coral reef ecosystem is one of the Caribbean's most biodiverse — supporting 60+ coral species in 30+ m visibility water. The CARMABI research station (founded 1955) has the world's longest continuous reef health dataset (70 years) documenting bleaching events, pH changes, and species migration as climate changes.

TECHNOLOGY

With 162,000 people, Curaçao has exported professional footballers to over 12 national teams globally, producing approximately 1 professional per 4,050 residents — one of the world's highest per-capita football production rates. Ajax, PSV, and Feyenoord academies in the Netherlands have developed most of the island's talent.

ENGINEERING

Curaçao's Isla Refinery is one of the Caribbean's largest oil refineries. Willemstad's Handelskade waterfront buildings use Dutch colonial construction: raised foundations, wide overhanging eaves, and lime-washed facades designed for tropical heat and hurricane-force winds — unchanged for 300 years.

ARTS & CULTURE

Papiamentu — Curaçao's native creole language blending Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, West African, and Arawak Indigenous languages — is one of the world's most linguistically complex creoles, studied as a model of language contact. The colourful Dutch colonial architecture of Willemstad is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

MATH & STATS

Curaçao (162,000 people) is the smallest nation by population ever to qualify for a FIFA World Cup. They defeated nations with 10–100× their population in CONCACAF qualifying. Their first World Cup in 2026 is a statistical anomaly: a nation the size of a mid-sized European city competing against the world's footballing powers.



SCIENCE

Antonie van Leeuwenhoek (Delft, 1670s) invented the microscope and was the first human to observe bacteria, sperm cells, and blood cells — founding microbiology. Christiaan Huygens discovered Saturn's rings and designed the first accurate pendulum clock. Dutch physicist Kamerlingh Onnes discovered superconductivity (1911).

TECHNOLOGY

ASML (Veldhoven) produces 100% of the world's extreme ultraviolet (EUV) lithography machines — the devices that etch chips to 2 nm resolution. Without ASML, iPhone chips, AI processors, and all modern computing is impossible. Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam runs 100% on renewable energy from solar panels and wind turbines.

ENGINEERING

26% of the Netherlands is below sea level, protected by 3,500 km of dykes, dams, and surge barriers. The Maeslantkering (Rotterdam, 1997) is the world's largest moving structure: two 22,000-tonne hollow steel arms that close automatically when storm surge exceeds 3 m — protecting 4 million people behind it.

ARTS & CULTURE

Dutch Golden Age painting (Rembrandt, Vermeer — 17th century) produced the world's highest concentration of masterworks per decade. Van Gogh's post-impressionist revolution directly influenced every major art movement of the 20th century. Anne Frank's diary has been translated into 70 languages and sold 35 million copies.

MATH & STATS

The Netherlands: 3 World Cup Final appearances (1974, 1978, 2010), 0 titles — the highest ratio of Finals to titles of any nation (3:0). Their 1974 team averaged 2.43 goals per game — the highest by a non-winner in the tournament's modern era. Cody Gakpo won the 2022 World Cup Golden Boot. Current FIFA ranking: 7th.



■ SCIENCE

Japan leads in ageing biology research (median national age: 48.6). Yoshinori Ohsumi won the 2016 Nobel Prize for discovering autophagy — cellular self-cleaning. Japan also leads in robotics biology, creating autonomous robots that mimic insect locomotion for search-and-rescue in earthquake rubble.

■ TECHNOLOGY

Sony (PlayStation, Walkman), Toyota (world's largest automaker), and Nintendo (world's most valuable gaming company) represent Japan's technology culture. The JFA deploys Toyota-developed biomechanics labs for national team injury prevention. Japan beat England 1-0 at Wembley in a 2025 friendly using a high-press system refined from 8,000 data points.

■ ENGINEERING

Nissan Stadium (Yokohama, 72,370) hosted the 2002 World Cup Final. Its two arch roof trusses span 245 m each — engineered with seismic isolation systems allowing the roof to move independently during earthquakes, absorbing up to 0.6g ground acceleration without structural failure.

■ ARTS & CULTURE

Japanese aesthetics — wabi-sabi, ikebana, origami, manga, and anime — have influenced global design, from Apple's minimalist product philosophy to Western contemporary art. Japan's gaming industry exports more cultural product by revenue than its automotive sector. Totoro, Pikachu, and Mario are among history's most recognised fictional characters.

■ MATH & STATS

Japan qualified for 8 consecutive World Cups (1998–2026). At Qatar 2022 they beat Germany (Germany were 77% favourites) and Spain (Spain were 80% favourites). The probability of beating both at those odds: approximately 5%. Takumi Minamino and Daichi Kamada have 30+ international goals each. Japan's World Cup record: W14 D5 L13.



SCIENCE

Svante Arrhenius (Sweden) first calculated the greenhouse effect of CO₂ in 1896 — making him the first scientist to quantitatively link carbon dioxide to global temperature increase. Carl Linnaeus (Sweden, 18th century) created the binomial nomenclature system that classifies all life on Earth — every species name in biology traces to him.

TECHNOLOGY

Spotify (Stockholm) has 600M+ users globally. Minecraft (Mojang, Stockholm) has sold 300M+ copies — the best-selling video game ever. Klarna (Stockholm) is Europe's most valuable fintech. Friends Arena uses 65,000 individually programmable LED facade panels and a retractable roof that opens in 20 minutes.

ENGINEERING

Sweden's Øresund Bridge-Tunnel (2000) connects Malmö to Copenhagen: a 7.8-km bridge transitions into a 4.1-km artificial island and then a 3.5-km tunnel — allowing ships to pass above while trains run below. It is one of the world's most complex hybrid transport engineering projects.

ARTS & CULTURE

ABBA is the world's best-selling Scandinavian music act with 385 million records sold. Ingmar Bergman's films ('The Seventh Seal', 'Persona') are consistently ranked among the greatest in cinema history. Swedish graphic design — particularly IKEA's visual communication system — is the world's most widely consumed daily design.

MATH & STATS

Viktor Gyökeres scored 53 club goals in 2024–25 — one of European football's all-time single-season records. He scored Sweden's winning qualifier vs Poland (3-2, 88') to reach 2026. Sweden's World Cup best results: 3rd place in 1994, 4th in 2018. Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored 62 international goals — held Sweden's all-time record until recently.



SCIENCE

The Roman amphitheatre at El Djem (completed 238 AD) predates the Colosseum in certain structural techniques: its 72 arched barrel vaults create a self-supporting elliptical ring that has remained stable for 1,800 years without mortar repair — studied by structural engineers as a model of Roman compressive geometry.

TECHNOLOGY

Tunisia has North Africa's highest internet penetration rate (70%+) and a growing startup ecosystem. The Tunisian Football Federation uses GPS monitoring linked to France-based wearable technology providers through diaspora coaching pipelines. Hannibal Mejbri's Manchester United development data is shared with the national coaching staff.

ENGINEERING

Tunisia's High Speed Rail project (Tunis–Sfax) is Africa's most ambitious rail infrastructure investment since South Africa's Gautrain. The ancient Roman aqueduct of Carthage (2nd century AD) was 132 km long — the longest in the Roman world — supplying 32 million litres of water per day to Carthage through gravity-fed channels cut across hills.

ARTS & CULTURE

Hannibal Barca (247–183 BC) — the Carthaginian general who crossed the Alps with 37 war elephants to attack Rome — is considered by military historians one of the greatest tactical minds in history. Tunisia gave the world the concept of the Punic Wars that defined the Mediterranean world for 600 years.

MATH & STATS

Tunisia scored the first World Cup win by any African nation: 2-1 vs Mexico in 1978. In 2022 they scored the only African group-stage win (1-0 vs France). Tunisia have qualified for 6 World Cups: 18 matches, W3 D5 L10 — never advancing beyond the group stage despite being among Africa's most consistent qualifiers.



BELGIUM

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SCIENCE

Belgium's Georges Lemaître (1927) first proposed the Big Bang theory — that the universe began from a 'cosmic egg' of infinite density. Leo Baekeland (Belgian-American) invented Bakelite (1907) — the world's first synthetic plastic, launching the plastics industry. Ernest Solvay's industrial ammonia-soda process enabled mass-production of glass and soap.

TECHNOLOGY

Club Brugge's machine-learning penalty prediction model correctly forecasts 78% of opposing kicks. Belgian company UCB produces Cimzia — one of the world's most widely prescribed biologic drugs for rheumatoid arthritis. IMEC (Leuven) is the world's leading microelectronics research centre, developing the next generation of AI chips.

ENGINEERING

King Baudouin Stadium in Brussels was rebuilt after the 1985 Heysel Disaster (39 fatalities when a wall collapsed). That tragedy directly led to universal stadium safety reforms across Europe — all-seater grounds, structural load calculations per fan — that have saved thousands of lives in the decades since.

ARTS & CULTURE

Belgium is the global capital of comic art: Tintin (Hergé), The Smurfs (Peyo), and Spirou (Rob-Vel) are all Belgian. The city of Bruges has 26 Michelin-starred restaurants in 2 km² — the world's highest Michelin-star density. Belgian chocolate is legally protected — strict standards define what can be labelled 'Belgian chocolate'.

MATH & STATS

Belgium have been ranked FIFA World No.1 for 99 weeks — the most of any non-World Cup-winning nation. Kevin De Bruyne has 27 international goals and 35 international assists. Belgium's 'Golden Generation' win record at major tournaments: won 3rd place (2018 WC). Probability of such a talented squad never winning a major title: approximately 12%.



SCIENCE

Ancient Egyptians calculated π as 3.16 (error: 0.6%) and used the 3-4-5 right triangle to survey land — independently of Greek mathematics. A 2017 muon tomography scan of the Great Pyramid revealed a previously unknown 30-metre void — the largest undiscovered space in 4,500 years of archaeological investigation.

TECHNOLOGY

Egypt controls the Suez Canal — 12% of global seaborne trade passes through it annually. Egypt's Nile Basin Information System uses satellite data and AI to monitor 6 countries' water usage in real time. Mohamed Salah's PlayerMaker insole sensors at Liverpool track every ball touch, sprint distance, and pass angle.

ENGINEERING

The Great Pyramid of Giza (2560 BC) was the world's tallest structure for 3,800 years. Its 2.3 million limestone blocks average 2.5 tonnes each, placed with tolerances of less than 2 cm across a 230-m base. The pyramid's internal chambers maintain a constant temperature of 20°C regardless of outside desert conditions.

ARTS & CULTURE

Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics (3,200+ symbols) were deciphered by Champollion in 1822 using the Rosetta Stone. Egypt's Umm Kulthum (1904–1975) is considered the greatest Arab vocalist in history, drawing live Cairo audiences of over 1 million people. Cairo Opera House is the Arab world's most important performing arts venue.

MATH & STATS

Egypt is Africa's most successful AFCON team: 7 titles. Mohamed Salah scored 12 goals in 2026 World Cup qualifying — an African qualifying record. Egypt's 3 World Cup appearances: 1934 (first African nation ever at a WC), 1990, 2018. Combined record: W0 D2 L7. Salah's career goal tally at the time of writing: 59 international goals.



SCIENCE

Persian mathematician Al-Khwarizmi (780–850 AD) invented algebra — his book 'Al-Kitab al-jabr' gave algebra its name and the word 'algorithm' comes from the Latin form of his name. Al-Biruni calculated Earth's circumference to within 1% in 1025 AD using a novel trigonometric method requiring only a mountain's height and a horizon-dip angle.

TECHNOLOGY

Iran has one of the Middle East's first home-grown satellite programmes. The Persian Gulf Pro League was an early Middle Eastern league adopter of VAR technology. Sardar Azmoun's time at Bayer Leverkusen — Germany's 2023–24 unbeaten Bundesliga champions — brought advanced gegenpressing analytics directly to the Iranian national programme.

ENGINEERING

Azadi Stadium (Tehran, 78,116) is the Middle East's largest stadium at 1,200 m altitude. Its circular pre-stressed concrete canopy creates an intense acoustic environment (measured at 130+ dB). The ancient Persian qanat irrigation system — 3,000-year-old underground channels carrying water from mountain aquifers to desert settlements — is a UNESCO Heritage engineering wonder.

ARTS & CULTURE

Persian poetry (Rumi, Hafez, Omar Khayyám) is among humanity's greatest literary heritage — Rumi's Masnavi is studied in 40+ languages and is the best-selling poetry book in the USA. Persian carpet weaving is a UNESCO Heritage art form — some Tabriz carpets contain 1 million hand-tied knots per square metre.

MATH & STATS

Ali Daei scored 109 international goals — equalled only by Cristiano Ronaldo in 2021. Iran has qualified for 7 World Cups — the most World Cup appearances of any Asian team. Sardar Azmoun: 63 international goals. Their 2-1 win over USA at France 1998 was watched by an estimated 2.1 billion television viewers globally.



SCIENCE

New Zealand's Taupo Volcanic Zone has the world's most diverse geothermal activity outside Iceland: geysers, boiling mud pools, and fumaroles studied as analogues for early Earth conditions. The tuatara reptile — whose lineage diverged from lizards and snakes 250 million years ago — is found only in New Zealand, providing a biological window into the Triassic era.

TECHNOLOGY

New Zealand's Rocket Lab (Auckland) is the world's 3rd-most active rocket launch company, using 3D-printed rocket engines to deploy small satellites at 1/10th the cost of traditional launch vehicles. Xero (Wellington) is the world's most widely used cloud accounting platform (3.7M subscribers) for small businesses.

ENGINEERING

Sky Stadium (Wellington, 39,000) uses a cable-stayed roof inspired by tall-ship rigging — a nod to NZ's maritime heritage. Auckland Harbour Bridge was widened in 1969 by attaching two prefabricated 'Nippon Clip-ons' bolted onto the existing structure to add 4 lanes — a world engineering first in bridge widening methodology.

ARTS & CULTURE

Maori haka, Ta moko (facial tattooing), and wharenuī (meeting house carving) represent one of the world's most successful examples of Indigenous cultural revival. Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings trilogy generated \$6 billion in NZ tourism revenue. Katherine Mansfield (Wellington) is one of the 20th century's most influential short story writers.

MATH & STATS

New Zealand's 2010 World Cup: P3 W0 D3 L0 — the only team to go undefeated without advancing. They drew with Italy (who reached the final), Slovakia, and Paraguay. Shane Smeltz scored the only goal against Italy — the only team to take points from the eventual runners-up. New Zealand beat OFC and then a two-leg inter-confederation playoff to reach 2026.



SPAIN

GroupH·FIFA World Cup 2026™ · STEAM Country Profile

GROUP

H

SCIENCE

Spain's Altamira Cave contains Palaeolithic bison paintings dated 36,000 years old — the world's oldest figurative art, evidencing symbolic human thought earlier than any other site. Santiago Ramón y Cajal (Nobel Prize 1906) founded modern neuroscience by drawing the nervous system's cellular structure entirely by hand with extraordinary precision.

TECHNOLOGY

Real Madrid's Medical Department reduces soft tissue injury incidence by 40% using predictive AI. La Liga's platform generates 1.4 million data points per match. The Barça Innovation Hub (Barcelona) publishes peer-reviewed football science — the world's only football-club-funded academic research centre producing indexed journal articles.

ENGINEERING

Santiago Bernabéu's 2023 renovation (€900M) added a 10,000-tonne retractable roof and a hydraulic pitch system that moves the entire playing surface outside the stadium on rails for maintenance — a world engineering first. Antoni Gaudí's Sagrada Família (under construction since 1882) uses computer-calculated hyperboloid structural forms that generate maximum strength from minimum material.

ARTS & CULTURE

Spain's artistic legacy spans Velázquez, Goya, Picasso ('Guernica' — the definitive anti-war painting), Dalí, and Miró. Gaudí's Sagrada Família (Barcelona) is the world's most visited building under construction. Flamenco — a UNESCO Heritage art form — uniquely combines Gypsy, Arab, and Sephardic Jewish musical traditions in a dance and song form found nowhere else.

MATH & STATS

Spain won Euro 2024 — their 6th major tournament title in 16 years. Lamine Yamal scored at Euro 2024 aged 16 years 362 days — the youngest goalscorer in Euros history. Spain's 2008–2012 tiki-taka era: 3 tournament wins from 3 attempts, conceding only 4 goals in 21 matches. Rodri won the 2024 Ballon d'Or after winning both Euro 2024 and the Champions League with Man City.

WORD SEARCH — FIND:

SPAIN · ALTAMIRA · CONTAINS · BISON · PAINTINGS · DATED · OLDEST



CABO VERDE

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GROUP

H

SCIENCE

Cabo Verde's 10 volcanic islands were formed by a mantle hotspot beneath the Atlantic. Picodo Fogo (2,829 m) on Fogo Island erupted in 2014, producing lava flows at 800°C that buried an entire wine-producing village. Volcanologists use Fogo as a reference site for oceanic island volcano behaviour and lava tube formation.

TECHNOLOGY

Despite 550,000 people, Cabo Verde has 99% mobile internet penetration and one of Africa's highest remittance-to-GDP ratios (12%). Their football talent pipeline relies entirely on diaspora: most players scouted from Dutch, Portuguese, and Spanish academies. Wyscout digital scouting is their primary talent identification technology.

ENGINEERING

Cabo Verde's Mindelo Harbour (São Vicente Island) uses a natural deepwater bay sheltered by volcanic mountains — chart-mapped and dredged by Portuguese hydrographers from the 1850s as a critical Atlantic steamship refuelling stop. The harbour engineering made Mindelo a key node in transoceanic cable telegraph networks in the 1890s.

ARTS & CULTURE

Cabo Verdean morna music — typified by the barefoot soprano Cesária Évora — is a uniquely melancholic genre blending Portuguese fado, West African rhythms, and Creole lyrics. Évora performed barefoot worldwide in solidarity with impoverished Cape Verdeans. Morna was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2019.

MATH & STATS

Cabo Verde (550,000 people) is the smallest nation by population at the 2026 World Cup. Their 2022 debut: W1 D0 L2. To qualify for 2026, they defeated Guinea-Bissau, Cameroon, and Nigeria — nations with 5–40× their population. Gelson Martins (AS Monaco) leads their attack with 24 international goals.



SCIENCE

KAUST (King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Saudi Arabia) is the Arab world's top-ranked research university, publishing 3,000+ peer-reviewed papers annually in AI, water science, and genomics. Saudi Arabia holds the world's 2nd-largest proven oil reserves (267 billion barrels) — studied as a model of carbonate reservoir geology.

TECHNOLOGY

The Saudi Pro League's 2023 transfer window (\$900M total on Ronaldo, Neymar, Benzema, Kanté) used AI-driven recruitment software evaluating commercial brand value alongside on-pitch performance metrics. King Fahd Stadium's climate control uses district cooling via underground chilled-water pipes — maintaining 22°C despite 40°C+ outside temperatures.

ENGINEERING

King Fahd International Stadium (68,752) features 24 steel masts supporting a continuous PTFE tensile membrane roof — one of the world's largest. NEOM, Saudi Arabia's \$500 billion linear city project (170 km long, 200 m wide, autonomous transport) is the most ambitious urban engineering project currently under construction.

ARTS & CULTURE

Arabic calligraphy — Kufic, Thuluth, and Naskh scripts — is one of the Islamic world's supreme art forms, practised for 1,400 years. The 2019 AIUla arts festival brought international land art installations to Saudi Arabia's dramatic sandstone landscape. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has funded music festivals and film studios after decades of cultural restriction.

MATH & STATS

Saudi Arabia's 2-1 win over Argentina at Qatar 2022: Argentina were ranked 3rd globally (Saudi Arabia 51st), on an unbeaten run of 36 matches, with Messi in peak prime form. Bookmakers placed Saudi Arabia at 1% probability of winning. Argentina's xG that match: 1.99; Saudi Arabia's: 0.62. Actual result: SA 2-1.



SCIENCE

Uruguay's renewable energy transition generated 98% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020 — wind, solar, and hydro — making it the world's most renewable major electricity system relative to its economy size. Uruguay's Clemente Estable Biological Institute pioneered circadian rhythm research in South America.

TECHNOLOGY

Uruguay was the first country to provide every primary school child with a free laptop (Plan Ceibal, 2007) — a model for 40+ developing countries. Uruguay generates 98% of electricity from renewables — the world's highest % for any country its size. Darwin Núñez's Liverpool GPS data is shared with Uruguay's coaching staff.

ENGINEERING

Estadio Centenario (Montevideo, 60,235) was built in 1930 to host the first World Cup Final — completed in under a year despite pre-war construction limitations. The Tower of Triumph (94 m, adjacent) was the first concrete tower in South America using tensioned steel reinforcement — a construction technique new to the region in 1930.

ARTS & CULTURE

Writer José Enrique Rodó (1871–1917) wrote 'Ariel' (1900) — one of the most influential texts in 20th-century Latin American thought, defining cultural identity in opposition to US materialism. Montevideo Carnival is the world's longest national carnival at 40 days. Tango originated simultaneously in Buenos Aires and Montevideo.

MATH & STATS

Uruguay won the World Cup twice (1930, 1950) with a population of 2–3 million — the best World Cup wins-per-capita ratio of any nation. The 1950 Maracanã final: Uruguay beat Brazil 2-1 before an estimated 200,000 fans. Luis Suárez: 68 international goals. Current stars Federico Valverde and Darwin Núñez make 2026 Uruguay arguably their strongest squad since 2010.



■ SCIENCE

France's Louis Pasteur invented pasteurisation and pioneered germ theory — his work saves billions of lives annually through food safety. Marie Curie (working in Paris) won two Nobel Prizes (Physics 1903, Chemistry 1911) — the only person in history to win Nobel Prizes in two different sciences. Henri Poincaré laid foundations for chaos theory.

■ TECHNOLOGY

France leads European AI development — home to INRIA research institute and the French Tech hub. Ligue 1 was an early adopter of ChyronHego TRACAB optical tracking (10 cameras per game, 25 data points per player per second). France's Ariane rocket programme (ESA) is the world's most commercially successful space launch programme.

■ ENGINEERING

Stade de France (Saint-Denis, 81,338) was built for the 1998 World Cup Final in 31 months. Its oval suspended roof is supported by only 18 external masts — completely column-free interior. The Millau Viaduct (2004, designed by Norman Foster) is the world's tallest bridge at 343 m — 19 m taller than the Eiffel Tower.

■ ARTS & CULTURE

The Musée du Louvre is the world's most visited art museum (9.6M visitors/year, 38,000 works on display). The Eiffel Tower (1889) received its 300-millionth visitor in 2019. French cinema's Nouvelle Vague (Godard, Truffaut, 1960s) revolutionised global filmmaking theory and practice.

■ MATH & STATS

France has won 2 World Cups (1998, 2018) and reached the 2022 Final. Kylian Mbappé: France's all-time top scorer at 52 goals (age 25). The 2022 Final: France came back from 2-0 down to 3-3 (Mbappé hat-trick), losing on penalties. Probability of that comeback based on pre-120-minute models: approximately 0.3%.



SCIENCE

Senegal's Institut Pasteur de Dakar developed one of Africa's first homegrown COVID-19 diagnostic tests at \$1 cost per test — affordable at continent scale. Senegalese marine biologists study the Canary Current cold upwelling off the West African coast — one of the world's most productive fishing zones sustaining 600,000 fishing-related livelihoods.

TECHNOLOGY

The Orange Digital Centre trains 100,000 young Senegalese in coding annually. Sadio Mané contributed \$150,000 to equip Senegal's National Sports Institute with GPS monitoring and video analysis systems. Most Senegalese players use Catapult GPS vests at European clubs — data shared with the national coaching staff.

ENGINEERING

The Stade du Sénégal (50,000, Diamniadio, 2023) uses a curved canopy roof inspired by a traditional pirogue (wooden fishing boat) — a nod to Senegal's Atlantic maritime heritage. Built under a China-Africa infrastructure partnership using prestressed concrete technology, it reduced construction time by 30% versus traditional methods.

ARTS & CULTURE

Youssou N'Dour's mbalax music blends Wolof percussion with Cuban son and has sold 65M+ records globally. Dakar's 'Dak'Art' Biennale is one of Africa's most important contemporary art events. Senegalese sculptor Ousmane Sow produced life-size bronzes that have exhibited at the Eiffel Tower and major international museums.

MATH & STATS

Senegal defeated France 1-0 at their 2002 World Cup debut — France were holders ranked 1st, Senegal ranked 30th. In 2022, Senegal won back-to-back AFCON titles (2021 and 2023) — first nation to do so since Egypt (2006–2010). Sadio Mané: 46 international goals. 2026 squad average age: 26.1 years.



SCIENCE

Babylonian astronomers (2000–500 BC) calculated the length of a solar year to within 4 minutes using purely mathematical models — without any knowledge of orbital mechanics. They also predicted lunar eclipses mathematically, developed positional astronomy, and tracked Venus cycles to within 0.4% accuracy 3,000 years ago.

TECHNOLOGY

Iraq's 2007 Asian Cup broadcast reached 25 million viewers despite active sectarian violence — demonstrating satellite broadcast technology's power to deliver shared national experience across conflict zones. FIFA Forward has funded GPS monitoring and video analysis equipment for Iraq's national coaching programme.

ENGINEERING

The Ctesiphon Arch (near Baghdad, 540 AD) has the world's largest single-span brick vault still standing: a 35-metre-wide, 37-metre-high parabolic arch built only from sun-dried mud bricks using geometric calculations. It has survived 1,500 years of floods, earthquakes, and military campaigns unchanged.

ARTS & CULTURE

The 1,001 Nights (One Thousand and One Nights) — including Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Sinbad — originated in Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate (8th–9th centuries) and influenced Western literature from Poe to Borges. The world's first library — the Library of Ashurbanipal (Nineveh, 7th century BC) — held 30,000 clay tablets.

MATH & STATS

Iraq's only World Cup goal before 2026: Ahmed Radi vs Belgium in 1986. Their 2007 Asian Cup win required W4 from 5 games, 10 goals scored, 4 conceded. Aymen Hussein has 47 international goals (current squad). Iraq qualified via the AFC-CONCACAF intercontinental playoff, defeating Suriname then Bolivia to claim the final tournament spot.



SCIENCE

Fridtjof Nansen invented the Nansen oceanographic bottle (1894) — enabling systematic collection of ocean water at precise depths — launching physical oceanography as a science. Norway's Institute of Marine Research runs the world's longest-continuous North Sea fish stock survey (since 1902). Norway generates 98% of electricity from renewable hydropower.

TECHNOLOGY

Kongsberg Group produces NATO's most accurate artillery systems using GPS-guided precision engineering. Norwegian company Tandberg invented the first commercially successful video conferencing technology (1989). Norway's \$1.7 trillion sovereign wealth fund uses algorithmic investment AI managing 70+ currencies simultaneously.

ENGINEERING

Norway's Laerdal Tunnel (24.5 km, 2000) is the world's longest road tunnel — requiring 6 years of continuous rock drilling and three artificial 'mountain halls' of blue light to prevent driver fatigue during the 20-minute drive through solid granite.

ARTS & CULTURE

Edvard Munch's 'The Scream' (1893) is the world's most recognised painting of existential anxiety. Henrik Ibsen's 'A Doll's House' (1879) was the first Western play to give a female protagonist who asserts her autonomy — it launched modern drama. Norwegian black metal music spawned an entire global genre from a handful of Oslo bands in the early 1990s.

MATH & STATS

Erling Haaland: 38 goals in 46 international appearances — Norway's fastest to 30, 35, and 38 goals. He scored 25 qualifying goals for 2026 — the highest tally by any player in European World Cup qualifying. At Manchester City in 2022–23: the club scored 87 Premier League goals, of which Haaland scored 36 (41.4%).



ARGENTINA

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GROUP

J

SCIENCE

Argentina's CONICET produces more indexed scientific publications per capita than any other Latin American country. César Milstein (Argentinian-British) won the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1984 for discovering monoclonal antibodies — now used in 40% of all cancer therapies globally. Argentina leads Latin America in biotechnology research output.

TECHNOLOGY

The AFA uses STATS Inc. analytics and AI injury prevention developed with University of Buenos Aires sports scientists. AFA was among the first CONMEBOL federations to deploy StatsBomb data for all youth national teams from Under-15 upwards — building data-driven scouting into the base of the pyramid.

ENGINEERING

La Bombonera (Boca Juniors, 57,000) is 'the stadium that shakes' — its three-tier stands were deliberately built on flexible foundations that vibrate in resonance with crowd movement. Engineers measured oscillations of 2–3 cm during high-intensity moments — a structural phenomenon studied in civil engineering for human-induced vibration analysis.

ARTS & CULTURE

Jorge Luis Borges ('Ficciones') invented magical realism as a literary genre. Astor Piazzolla revolutionised tango into a concert art form. Buenos Aires has the world's highest concentration of bookshops per capita (25 per 100,000 people) and highest number of psychologists per capita. Argentine architecture (Clorindo Testa, Mario Roberto Álvarez) shaped South American Modernism.

MATH & STATS

Argentina: reigning World Cup champions (2022) and 3-time winners (1978, 1986, 2022). Lionel Messi: 13 World Cup goals, 8 Ballon d'Or awards. The 2022 Final (Argentina 3-3 France AET) had a combined xG of 6.3 — the highest of any World Cup final since xG modelling began. Probability of the match ending level after 120 minutes given the lead changes: approximately 2%.



SCIENCE

Algeria's Tassili n'Ajjer plateau (Sahara) has 15,000+ prehistoric rock art engravings and paintings (10,000 BC – 700 AD) documenting 10,000 years of Saharan ecological change — the world's most important archive of pre-civilisation climate and biodiversity data outside Antarctica.

TECHNOLOGY

Algeria's national fibre optic network (6,000 km under construction) is North Africa's most ambitious digital infrastructure project. Riyad Mahrez's Premier League performance data from Manchester City and Leicester City has been shared with Algeria's coaching staff through official PL analytics protocols.

ENGINEERING

Stade du 5 Juillet in Algiers (80,000) — North Africa's largest stadium — features Brutalist exposed concrete cantilever roof sections built using Soviet-influenced pre-stressed concrete panel construction methods that cut build time by 40% versus traditional techniques. The stadium was completed in 1972 to mark Algeria's independence decade.

ARTS & CULTURE

Writer Albert Camus (born Mondovi, Algeria, 1913) won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1957 — 'The Stranger' and 'The Plague' are 20th-century canon texts. Amazigh (Berber) geometric silver jewellery and woven burnous cloaks have been practised continuously for 3,000+ years and are traded globally as high-value craft objects.

MATH & STATS

Algeria's greatest upset: 2-1 vs West Germany in 1982 (German odds: 97%). In 2014, Algeria drew 4-2 vs Germany in the Round of 16 — the highest-scoring Algeria World Cup match. Riyad Mahrez: 37 international goals, 23 assists. Algeria qualified for 2026 through CAF qualifying Group H: W4 D3 L1, 14 goals scored.



SCIENCE

Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger formulated wave mechanics (quantum theory) and proposed the famous 'Schrödinger's Cat' thought experiment. Sigmund Freud (Vienna) founded psychoanalysis — reshaping humanity's understanding of the unconscious mind. Ludwig Boltzmann (Vienna) developed statistical mechanics, proving atoms existed before they were directly observed.

TECHNOLOGY

Red Bull (founded Fuschl am See, Austria, 1987) created Red Bull Racing — Formula 1 world champions in 2010–2013 and 2022–2024 — using Austrian aerodynamics engineering. Red Bull Salzburg's AI pressing analytics system is one of football's most advanced in European competition below the elite level.

ENGINEERING

Ernst-Happel-Stadion (Vienna, 50,865) features a tensile membrane roof on four steel masts — completely column-free, providing unobstructed views for all 50,000 seats. It was the first stadium in the world to use this structural system at this scale (built for UEFA Euro 1976). Austria's Alpine motorway tunnels (Arlberg, 14 km; Tauern, 6.4 km) are engineering landmarks.

ARTS & CULTURE

Vienna was the music capital of the world from Mozart to Mahler — Beethoven, Haydn, Schubert, Brahms, and Strauss all worked here. The Vienna State Opera performs 300+ shows annually to 550,000 attendees. Klimt and Schiele's Vienna Secession (1897) founded Art Nouveau as a design movement.

MATH & STATS

Austria's 'Wunderteam' (1931–34) averaged 4.2 goals per game — arguably the world's first great national team. Their 1934 World Cup (4th place) and 1954 (3rd place) are their best finishes. David Alaba has 112+ international caps. Austria qualified for 2026 ending a 28-year absence — their strongest squad since the Wunderteam era.



SCIENCE

The Dead Sea (Jordan) at 430 m below sea level has 34% salinity — 10x the ocean— creating a unique mineral-rich therapeutic environment studied for dermatological treatment of psoriasis. Wadi Rum's Precambrian sandstone exposures are 2 billion years old — among the oldest accessible rock faces on Earth.

TECHNOLOGY

Jordan's Royal Scientific Society (RSS) works on solar desalination and drone-monitored precision agriculture. Musa Al-Taamari's Saudi Pro League performance data feeds directly into Jordan's national team analytics. Jordan hosted the 2023 WAFF Championship — an important data-gathering tournament for developing coaching systems.

ENGINEERING

Petra (Nabataean city, carved c. 300 BC) demonstrates extraordinary rock-cut engineering. The Nabataeans' desert water harvesting system — 200+ dams, cisterns, and channels cut into rock — supplied a city of 30,000 in a region receiving less than 100 mm of rainfall annually. The Siq canyon entrance creates a natural 1.2 km acoustic channel.

ARTS & CULTURE

Madaba Map (550 AD) is the world's oldest cartographic mosaic — 6x2 metres of hand-laid tesserae depicting the Holy Land including Jerusalem with identifiable streets, buildings, and the Jordan River. The ancient city of Jerash contains the world's best-preserved Roman provincial city, including a 3,000-seat amphitheatre still used for concerts.

MATH & STATS

Jordan's 2026 World Cup is their first-ever appearance — achieved at FIFA ranking 64 by defeating AFC opponents with 5x the football infrastructure. Musa Al-Taamari: 24 international goals (0.68 goals per game — a high efficiency rate). Jordan qualified through the AFC: W4 D2 L2 in their qualifying group, then a two-leg playoff victory.



SCIENCE

Vasco da Gama's 1498 voyage to India was one of history's greatest scientific navigation feats — using stellar latitude calculation, magnetic variation correction, and wind-pattern modelling developed by the Portuguese 'junta dos matemáticos'. Cristiano Ronaldo's VO2 max (68 ml/kg/min) and body fat (7%) are among the most-studied athletic profiles in sports science journals.

TECHNOLOGY

Lisbon hosts the Web Summit — Europe's largest technology conference (70,000 attendees). Benfica's Analytics Lab processes 300,000 data points per match and uses AI that identified João Félix, Darwin Núñez, and Renato Sanches as elite talents before European clubs noticed them. Portugal's Efacec designs EV charging infrastructure across 3 continents.

ENGINEERING

The Vasco da Gama Bridge (17.2 km, 1998) over the Tagus near Lisbon is Europe's longest bridge. Designed to withstand a 1-in-1,000-year earthquake (Lisbon is on an active seismic zone), its cable-stayed central section uses asymmetric pylon heights to accommodate road curve geometry — a structural engineering innovation.

ARTS & CULTURE

Portuguese is the world's 6th-most-spoken language (260M native speakers) — a legacy of Portugal's global maritime empire. The concept of 'saudade' — a uniquely Portuguese emotion of nostalgic longing — has no direct translation in any language. Portuguese fado music is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

MATH & STATS

Cristiano Ronaldo: 135 international goals — the world record. Scored at World Cups in 2006, 2010, 2014, 2018, and 2022. His hat-trick vs Spain at the 2018 World Cup (including a last-minute free kick, 3-3) was his 51st, 52nd, and 53rd international goals. Portugal won Euro 2016. Bruno Fernandes scored 10 goals in European qualifying for 2026.



■ SCIENCE

The Congo Rainforest — the world's 2nd-largest tropical forest — absorbs 600 million tonnes of CO2 annually, making it the planet's most important carbon sink after the Amazon. The bonobo (*Pan paniscus*), found only in DRC, shares 98.7% of our DNA and demonstrates unique peace-making social behaviours not seen in other great apes.

■ TECHNOLOGY

DR Congo's football diaspora routes primarily through Belgium (large Congolese-Belgian community). Players developed at Anderlecht, Standard Liège, and Club Brugge bring Belgian Pro League analytics back to the national programme. FIFA Forward funds GPS monitoring across the DRC national team programme.

■ ENGINEERING

Inga Falls on the Congo River could generate 100,000 MW — more than the world's 20 largest existing hydroelectric plants combined. The Grand Inga Dam project (if built) would be the largest infrastructure project in African history. The Congo River has the world's deepest underwater sections — exceeding 220 metres.

■ ARTS & CULTURE

Congolese soukous (Congolese rumba) originated in Kinshasa and became the most widely listened-to popular music across sub-Saharan Africa from the 1970s–90s. Papa Wemba and Franco Luambo Makiadi created a genre that spread from Cape Town to Lagos. The 'sapeurs' of Kinshasa (La Sape fashion movement) turn economic hardship into high art through immaculate dressing.

■ MATH & STATS

DR Congo (as Zaire) played in the 1974 World Cup — the first sub-Saharan African nation in the tournament. Their 2026 qualification required: winning their CAF qualifying group, then defeating Jamaica (CONCACAF) and Bolivia in the FIFA intercontinental playoff tournament — 5 additional matches beyond standard AFC/CONMEBOL qualification. Cédric Bakambu: 40+ international goals.



SCIENCE

IbnSina (Avicenna, born near Bukhara, 980 AD) wrote the 'Canon of Medicine' — a 14-volume encyclopaedia used as the primary medical textbook in European universities until the 17th century. Al-Khwarizmi (780–850 AD) invented algebra and algorithmic thinking — the word 'algorithm' derives from the Latin form of his name.

TECHNOLOGY

The IT Park Tashkent houses 700+ tech companies and is growing as Central Asia's technology hub. Eldor Shomurodov's time at AS Roma brought Italian pressing analytics and periodisation training methodology to the Uzbek national programme. Uzbekistan won the 2023 FIFA U20 World Cup — their first major international football trophy.

ENGINEERING

Samarkand's Registan square features three madrassas (15th–17th century) whose facades use geometric tilework requiring precise hexagonal, octagonal, and stellate tessellation — mathematical sophistication not matched in Western decorative arts until the 20th century. Uzbekistan's ancient qanat irrigation channels supply mountain water to desert cities.

ARTS & CULTURE

The Silk Road cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva produced architectural masterworks that influenced Islamic art from Morocco to Indonesia. Uzbek silk ikat — hand-woven textiles with complex dye-resist patterns — is UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Registan's blue tilework uses cobalt glazing that has retained its colour for 600 years.

MATH & STATS

Uzbekistan's 2026 World Cup is their **FIRST-EVER** World Cup appearance. They qualified by topping their AFC group (W7 D2 L1, 24 goals for), then defeating Japan in the AFC playoff — Japan's first ever qualifying defeat in the final playoff round. Eldor Shomurodov scored 18 qualifying goals — among the highest individual totals in AFC history.



SCIENCE

Colombia is the world's most biodiverse country per km²: 1,900 bird species (more than any other country), 3,000+ butterfly species, and 130,000 plant species. Coffee grown in Colombia's Andean-Pacific altitude range produces the world's most chemically complex cup profiles — studied by food scientists for terpene and caffeine alkaloid concentration.

TECHNOLOGY

Medellín's urban cable car system (2004) — connecting hillside comunas to the metro — was the world's first urban gondola transit system and has been replicated in La Paz, Caracas, and Rio. Colombia's cycling physiology research (Egan Bernal, Nairo Quintana) has generated world-class altitude VO₂ max protocols now adopted by football conditioning coaches.

ENGINEERING

Estadio El Campín (Bogotá, 36,343) sits at 2,600 m altitude — giving Colombian players a documented physiological home advantage of approximately 12% reduced aerobic demand for visitors. The Chicamocha Canyon (2,000 m deep, 227 km long) is one of South America's greatest geological formations, now crossed by a 6.3-km cable car.

ARTS & CULTURE

Gabriel García Márquez (Nobel Prize Literature 1982) invented magical realism with 'One Hundred Years of Solitude' — the most translated Spanish-language novel after Don Quixote. Shakira (born Barranquilla) is the world's most-followed Latin artist with 90M+ YouTube subscribers. Colombian street art in Bogotá and Medellín is recognised as among South America's finest.

MATH & STATS

James Rodríguez won the 2014 World Cup Golden Boot (6 goals) — his volley vs Uruguay is rated by Opta as having the highest xG-overperformance of any single World Cup goal since 2014. Colombia's 2022–2026 CONMEBOL qualifying record: 2nd only to Argentina in goals scored (28 in 18 matches). Luis Díaz: 24 international goals.



ENGLAND

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GROUP

L

SCIENCE

England produced Charles Darwin (evolution, 1859), Isaac Newton (laws of motion, gravity, and calculus — simultaneously invented by a German, but independently), Michael Faraday (electromagnetic induction), and Francis Crick (co-discoverer of DNA's double helix). Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin in a London lab — saving an estimated 200 million lives.

TECHNOLOGY

The Premier League is the world's most technologically advanced football league: PlayerMaker insole sensors, Catapult GPS, and STATSports biometrics are standard. St George's Park uses motion capture labs, cryotherapy pools, and altitude simulation chambers. Tim Berners-Lee (Hampshire) invented the World Wide Web at CERN in 1989.

ENGINEERING

Wembley Stadium (90,000, £798M, 2007) features a 133-metre steel arch — the world's tallest stadium arch, visible from 13 miles. The arch supports the entire roof without a single external column. The Channel Tunnel (1994, 50.5 km) is the world's longest undersea tunnel, connecting England to France at 45 m below the seabed.

ARTS & CULTURE

England's cultural exports: Shakespeare (37 plays, invented 1,700 English words still in daily use), The Beatles (best-selling music act in history, 600M+ records sold), Harry Potter (500M+ books sold), and the BBC (world's largest public broadcaster). The British Museum houses 8 million objects — the world's largest collection.

MATH & STATS

England invented football (FA, 1863) and have won the World Cup once (1966). Harry Kane: 71 international goals — England's all-time record. World Cup record: W30 D21 L21, 101 goals scored. England's Euro 2024 Final appearance: their 10th semi-final+ in a major tournament since 1990 — the best record in European football after Germany, Spain, and France.

WORD SEARCH — FIND:

ENGLAND · PRODUCED · CHARLES · DARWIN · EVOLUTION ·

ISAAC · NEWTON



SCIENCE

Croatian Adriatic islanders have been studied by international geneticists for decades — their centuries of relative isolation create uniquely clean linkage disequilibrium data for genetic disease research. The island of Hvar has 2,784 sunshine hours per year — the most in Europe — studied by solar energy researchers as a reference site.

TECHNOLOGY

Croatia's Rimac Automobili (Zagreb) produces the Nevera electric hypercar — 1,888 hp, 0–100 km/h in 1.97 seconds, 412 km/h top speed — the world's fastest production car. Rimac's battery technology is used by Porsche and Hyundai. Infobip (Croatian unicorn, \$2B) operates the world's largest SMS/messaging network.

ENGINEERING

The Pelješac Bridge (2.4 km, 2022) connects mainland Croatia to the Dubrovnik region, ending a geographical anomaly where Bosnia's 9-km coastal corridor interrupted Croatian territory. Designed to survive a Category 5 hurricane (Adriatic Bora wind), it used 90,000 tonnes of Chinese-manufactured structural steel installed by Croatian engineers.

ARTS & CULTURE

The necktie (cravat) was invented by Croatian soldiers in the Thirty Years War — the French word 'cravate' comes from 'Hrvat' (Croatian). Dubrovnik's Old Town walls (14th-century, never breached) served as the filming location for King's Landing in Game of Thrones (8 seasons, 73 episodes).

MATH & STATS

Croatia: runners-up 2018, 3rd place 2022, 3rd place 1998. In 3 of their last 4 World Cups they've reached the semi-finals — unmatched by any country of their size (3.9M people). Luka Modri: 177+ caps, 2018 Ballon d'Or winner (ending Messi/Ronaldo's 10-year dominance). Their 2018 knockout run required 3 extra-time victories in 5 days.



SCIENCE

Ghana's cocoa production (10% global supply) relies on Theobroma cacao trees that only grow within 20° of the equator. Lake Volta (8,502 km², created by Akosombo Dam 1965) is the world's largest man-made lake by surface area — creating a unique freshwater ecosystem studied by limnologists. Ghana has the highest concentration of endemic freshwater fish in West Africa.

TECHNOLOGY

Mobile money (MTN MoMo) was pioneered simultaneously in Ghana and Kenya — enabling financial inclusion for 800M Africans without bank accounts. Ghana's Accra Tech Hub is West Africa's fastest-growing startup ecosystem. Thomas Partey's Catapult GPS data from Arsenal is incorporated into Ghana's national team preparation.

ENGINEERING

Kente weaving looms in Kumasi's Bonwire village are among the world's most precisely calibrated hand-operated mechanical devices — weavers control shuttle tension to within 0.1 mm to maintain consistent colour-strip widths across 5-metre fabric lengths. The Akosombo Dam (102 m high, 660 m long) generates 912 MW — 40% of Ghana's electricity.

ARTS & CULTURE

Ghana's kente cloth — worn by Presidents Obama and Mandela — is a royal ceremonial textile encoding messages through colour and pattern. Ghanaian highlife music (E.T. Mensah, 1950s) pioneered the fusion of Western brass-band instruments with African rhythms, predating Afrobeats as a genre by 50 years. Accra's art scene is rapidly becoming the continent's most influential.

MATH & STATS

Ghana reached the 2010 World Cup quarter-finals — first sub-Saharan African team to do so. Asamoah Gyan missed a penalty at 120+1' vs Uruguay, then converted in the shootout under maximum pressure. Career total: 51 international goals — Africa's all-time record. Thomas Partey has 50+ caps. Ghana's 2010 pre-tournament probability of reaching the quarter-finals: approximately 6%.



SCIENCE

The Panama Land Bridge — formed 3 million years ago — triggered the Great American Biotic Interchange (species migration across both continents), isolated the Caribbean Sea (causing unique speciation), and redirected ocean currents in ways that contributed to the onset of the Pleistocene Ice Ages. It is one of geology's most consequential single events.

TECHNOLOGY

The Panama Canal's water management system uses 200+ sensors monitoring salinity, flow rate, and levels in real time — one of the world's most sophisticated water infrastructure control systems. The Canal's Expanded Lock (2016) uses rolling gates weighing 3,000 tonnes each — the heaviest moving mechanical structures in the Americas.

ENGINEERING

The Canal Expansion (Neopanamax, completed 2016) doubled capacity with locks 427 m long and 55 m wide. Water recycling basins (each the size of 3 football pitches) recover 60% of fresh water used per ship transit — essential in a system where each transit uses 52 million gallons of fresh water from the Gatun Lake watershed.

ARTS & CULTURE

Panama's Guna people (San Blas Islands) produce mola — layered fabric appliqué depicting animals, spirits, and geometric patterns encoding cosmological knowledge. Mola are collected globally as art objects, but carry meanings readable only by Guna specialists — one of the world's most private artistic traditions. Panama City has Latin America's most distinctive modern skyline.

MATH & STATS

Panama made their World Cup debut in 2018 — scoring 2 goals (both historic firsts for the nation). Blas Pérez: 43 international goals across 18 years. Panama qualified for 2026 as CONCACAF's 4th qualifier, defeating Jamaica and Honduras. Their 2026 is only their 2nd World Cup — they remain one of the tournament's least-experienced nations.