

Why Did the Whole World Watch One Soccer Tournament?



Built from *The Party of 48: The World Cup Comes to Everyone* by Patrick Kim, Culture Editor

Grades 4–8 · About 45 minutes · ★ everyone · ★★ older readers

Name _____

Date _____

1. Before You Read

★ Think of a time you watched something at the same moment as lots of other people, like a big game, a show, or a parade. What was it like?

★ Do you and your friends usually watch the same shows and videos, or different ones? Why do you think that is?

2. The Short Version

Read this first. Older readers: read the full article too.

In June 2026, the soccer World Cup came to North America. For the first time, 48 teams played, which is 16 more teams than ever before. There were 104 matches in three host countries: the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Patrick Kim says the World Cup is the biggest shared event people have. Billions of people watch it. All year, Patrick writes about the end of the **monoculture**, the days when almost everyone watched the same things. Today, most people watch different things on their own screens. The World Cup is the rare exception, when strangers gather around one screen and cheer together. Patrick calls this crowd the **assembled audience**.

Many people in the United States and Canada came from other countries, so lots of teams had fans living nearby. Some fans got their first chance to see their home country play on this stage. Patrick says the host became "everyone's second country."

Patrick also looks at the money. He says adding more teams was a business decision first: more matches meant more money. Ticket prices could change with demand, and special packages cost a lot. Many fans watched from outside the stadiums, at watch parties, in plazas, and in restaurants.

Even so, Patrick calls the World Cup a party for the whole planet. His advice: "Bring a flag. Any flag."

3. Word Bank

Word	What it means
host	the country or city where a big event takes place
debutant	a team playing in the World Cup for the very first time
diaspora	people who live far from the country their family came from
monoculture	a time when almost everyone watches, hears, and talks about the same things
dynamic pricing	when ticket prices go up or down depending on how many people want them

★ Use **host** in a sentence of your own.

4. Check Your Understanding

★ 1. How big was this World Cup?

- ☐ 32 teams and 64 matches ☐ 48 teams and 104 matches ☐ 48 teams and 48 matches

★ 2. Name the three countries that hosted this World Cup.

★ 3. Patrick says the host was "everyone's second country." Why did so many visiting teams feel almost at home?

★ 4. Name two places where fans watched the games when they were not inside a stadium.

★★ 5. Patrick says growing to 48 teams was "a business decision before it was a sporting one." What does he mean? What do the purists (fans who like the old way) say about it?

5. Patrick's Attention Map

Patrick studies attention: how a crowd gets put together, who pays for it, and who profits from it. Most of the time, he says, everyone watches something different. Fill in the map for the World Cup. Then pick one thing your whole class or family watches together and map that too.

★ **Our shared thing:** What does your whole class or family watch together?

	The World Cup (from the article)	Our shared thing
Who is watching? Name the different groups of people.		
Who pays, and who makes money? Follow the money.		
What brings people together? Why do different people gather around it?		

★★ Which one gathers more different kinds of people: the World Cup or your shared thing? Why?

6. Think Deeper

★ Patrick writes that when the World Cup is close by, it "stops being programming and becomes weather." What do you think he means? Can you think of anything else that feels like weather?

★★ Patrick sees a struggle between "the global street party and the velvet rope around it." Expensive tickets mean many fans watch from outside. Who do you think a big event like the World Cup should be for? Explain.

7. Write Your Report

Write a short report answering this question: **Did making the World Cup bigger make it better?**

- **My answer:**
- **Reason 1 (from the article):**
- **Reason 2 (from the article):**
- **One thing the other side would say:**
- **My conclusion:**

For Teachers and Parents: Answer Key

Word bank sentence: Answers vary; check that the student uses host to mean the place where an event happens (or the act of holding it).

1. 48 teams and 104 matches.
2. The United States, Canada, and Mexico.
3. The United States and Canada are home to people from all over the world, and Mexico has its own soccer fans, so many visiting teams were surrounded by fans from their home country who live in the host cities.
4. Any two of: watch parties, plazas, restaurants.
5. He means the main reason for adding teams was money: more teams and more matches bring more TV (media) money and keep more soccer federations happy. Purists say that more is not better, just more.

Attention map (sample answers): World Cup, who is watching: billions of people around the world; fans in the host cities; families whose home countries are playing, including teams playing for the first time; American fans new to the sport; strangers at the same screen. Who pays and who profits: fans pay for tickets that change price with demand, for expensive packages, and for resale tickets; the tournament earns money from TV rights and tickets; resale sellers take a cut; hotels in some cities raise their prices. What brings people together: cheering for their home country, a team from their family's history playing nearby, the excitement of one huge shared event, watch parties and plazas. Shared-thing column and comparison: answers vary; look for specific groups of watchers, a reasonable guess about who pays and earns, and a clear reason people gather.

Think deeper: Open answers. For the first, strong answers explain that the World Cup is no longer just a show you choose to turn on; it is all around you, in traffic reports, restaurants, and group chats, like the weather. For the second, strong answers weigh both sides: the tournament earns money from tickets, but the fans who make the World Cup special are often left outside. Look for a clear opinion with a reason.

Report: Look for a clear answer and two reasons from the article. Reasons for "better": 16 more nations got to play, and some fans saw their country's team on this stage for the first time. Reasons for "not better": the change was mostly about money, purists say more is not better, and the group-stage math got more confusing. Check for a fair statement of the other side and a conclusion that matches the answer.