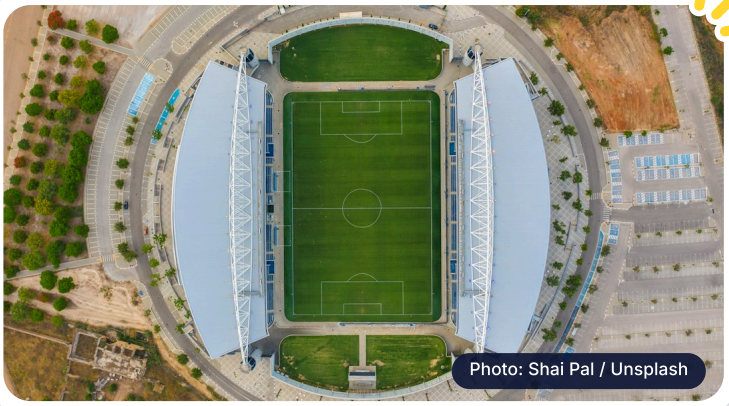
Five stars on BBC women's shortlist

LEVEL B1


Photo: Shai Pal / Unsplash

I. WARM-UP

1. Who is your favourite women's footballer right now? Why?
2. Do you play or watch football? Who with?
3. Have you ever joined a team vote at school or online?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

- **shortlist** — a final list of people chosen from many for a prize
- **nominee** — a person officially named as a possible winner of an award
- **forward** — an attacking player whose main job is to score goals
- **midfielder** — a player who works in the middle of the pitch, linking play
- **league** — a competition where clubs play many matches across a season
- **captain** — the team leader on the pitch
- **milestone** — an important number or moment that shows progress
- **reveal** — to announce something that was not known before

III. READING

Five nominees are on the shortlist for BBC Women's Footballer of the Year. The winner will be revealed at next month's BBC Sports Personality of the Year show. Last year, Chelsea and England keeper Hannah Hampton won the prize, and fans are already talking about who deserves it now.

Temwa Chawinga, a forward for Kansas City Current, scored 15 goals in 2025 and was the US league's Most Valuable Player again. She also helped Malawi reach their first Women's Africa Cup of Nations final and finished as top scorer.

Ewa Pajor fired Barcelona to four trophies, including the Women's Champions League, scoring twice in a 4-0 final win over Lyon. She also captains Poland. Alexia Putellas, now a midfielder for London City Lionesses, helped Spain retain the Women's Nations League and won a third Ballon d'Or after leaving Barcelona.

Arsenal forward Alessia Russo hit 13 WSL goals last season and reached a 30-goal milestone for England. Khadija 'Bunny' Shaw powered Manchester City to the WSL title with 21 goals in 22 games and took the Golden Boot for a third straight season. Each player shows a different way to be the best.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **BBC News:** *"Who do YOU think has been the best women's...". Original article linked at* theenglishwire.co...

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How many nominees are on the shortlist?
2. When will the winner be revealed?
3. Which player helped Malawi reach their first Women's Africa Cup of Nations final?
4. Who scored twice in Barcelona's 4-0 win over Lyon?
5. Which player scored 21 goals in 22 WSL games?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Who would you vote for from this shortlist? Why?
2. What makes a player the best: goals, teamwork or trophies?
3. Which women's club do you follow, and who is their key player?
4. Do awards like this help grow girls' football? How?



VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Should have

Use should have + past participle to show regret or say the right action didn't happen. Form: should have + V3; negative: shouldn't have + V3.

*"The team **should have passed** earlier in the game."*

*"Students **shouldn't have posted** rumours about players."*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

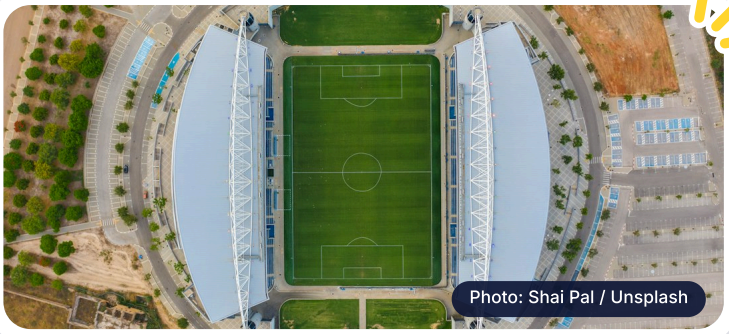
Complete each sentence with should have or shouldn't have + past participle.

1. I (watch) ___ the final, but I went to bed early.
2. Our captain (not/argue) ___ with the referee.
3. Our class (congratulate) ___ the BBC nominees, but didn't.
4. We (buy) ___ tickets before they sold out.
5. My friend was injured; she (not/play) ___ in the match.

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


Photo: Shai Pal / Unsplash

I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 6–8 minutes warm-up, 8–10 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes discussion. If needed, fold grammar into reading time.
- Pre-teach or elicit football words on the board (forward, midfielder, league, captain). In pairs, students predict meanings, then check them in the text.
- Reading and task flow: set a two-minute skim to find the five nominees, then hold a quick class vote with tallies on the board. Sensitivity: it is a competitive topic; keep the focus on on-pitch performance, not personal lives.
- Differentiation: stronger students add one extra stat they know about a nominee; others underline clues in the text before answering. Finish with 30-second pair mini-pitches arguing for their pick.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Run a quick show of hands first, then put pairs together to explain reasons and change minds.
2. Board the three options and collect examples from the text; push for one clear reason per student.
3. If students don't follow a club, let them pick from the five nominees and justify their choice.
4. If answers are short, ask for one example of how an award can inspire players at school.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Debate: In teams, prepare a 60-second pitch for one nominee and face another team in a class vote.

Writing: Write a 90-word fan post supporting your pick, using two stats from the reading.

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

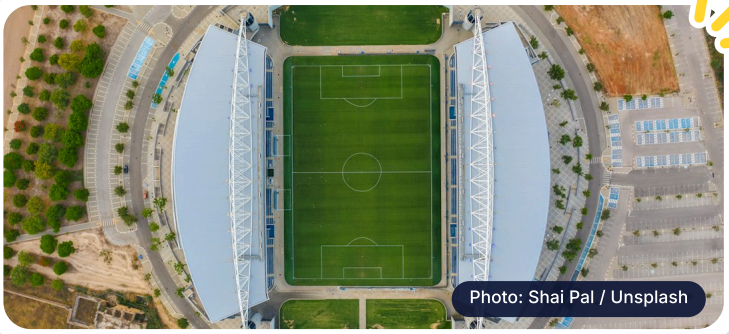
Grammar exercise: Should have

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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Photo: Shai Pal / Unsplash

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How many nominees are on the shortlist?
   Five nominees.
2. When will the winner be revealed?
   At next month's BBC Sports Personality of the Year show.
3. Which player helped Malawi reach their first Women's Africa Cup of Nations final?
   Temwa Chawinga.
4. Who scored twice in Barcelona's 4-0 win over Lyon?
   Ewa Pajor.
5. Which player scored 21 goals in 22 WSL games?
   Khadija 'Bunny' Shaw.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Complete each sentence with should have or shouldn't have + past participle.

1. I ___ the final, but I went to bed early. **should have watched**
2. Our captain ___ with the referee. **shouldn't have argued / should not have argued**
3. Our class ___ the BBC nominees, but didn't. **should have congratulated**
4. We ___ tickets before they sold out. **should have bought**
5. My friend was injured; she ___ in the match. **shouldn't have played / should not have played**

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use should have + past participle to show regret or say the right action didn't happen. Form: should have + V3; negative: shouldn't have + V3. (Examples constructed.)

"The team **should have passed** *earlier in the game."*

"Students **shouldn't have posted** *rumours about players."*