

§ 1. My parents always said I was born to be a sportsman. They said that even when I was in nappies, I wasn't happy unless I was kicking or throwing a ball. My first memory is of Dad and me playing football in our back garden. I recall my mum sitting down on the grass **cheering** me on as I clumsily kicked a football into the goal net my dad was 'defending'. The sense of achievement when I scored my first goal stuck with me, and my life has revolved around football ever since. As I grew up, I dreamed of becoming a football player. During class, I tried to stay focused on my studies; I knew that few people became professional sportsmen and it was crucial to get a good education. But I devoted every spare second to my passion. I knew that if I wanted to become a success, I would have to put all my energy into the game.

§ 2. My big break came when I was 18. Leicester City FC offered me a place in the team. It was there that I learned the true value of teamwork. I played with a fantastic group of guys there and we worked toward one common goal — to win! I learned that every person has their own individual talents, and a great team brings these talents together. We enjoyed great success at Leicester, and I was lucky enough to become one of the UK's top scorers I was transferred to Everton and, while I was sad to leave my fellow team-mates, I was **excited** about working with new people and making new friends. My time at Everton was an outstanding experience. While I was there, I scored 38 goals in 52 games. It wasn't long until I was on a new journey, this time across the sea to Spain to play for FC Barcelona. I was nervous at first, but it turned out that there was no reason to panic. I felt great pride when I stepped into the stadium and onto the pitch in Barcelona.

§ 3. As you can imagine, the proudest I felt was when I played for my country, England, in the World Cup. The tournament raises the level of competitiveness for every player. Not only do you have to be mentally prepared, but you have to be at the peak of physical fitness — so, as you can imagine, it didn't help that I had to play the tournament with my left arm heavily strapped up! But I was determined not to let one injury stop me and played anyway! Because we were a strong team, we got to the quarter finals, and I scored six goals during the entire competition and won the 'Golden Boot' award.

§ 4. Football has taken me around the world, from England to Spain to Japan! I have become fluent in two other languages and have experienced other cultures. My career provided me with many happy memories that I wouldn't change for the world.

Определите значение указанного слова в тексте.

cheering (§ 1)

- 1) encouraging 2) laughing at me 3) calming me down