



LISTENING: PREMIER LEAGUE PREVIEW

In order to do this task, you should follow these steps:

1. Listen to the podcast.
2. Do the exercises below.
3. Have a look at the vocabulary support and read the podcast transcript to help you understand the text, if necessary.

✓ **WORKSHEET**

1. Which region do most commentators' favourites belong to?

- a. London and the South East
- b. The North West
- c. The North East

2. Which team has got the signing of the season, Petr Cech?

- a. Chelsea
- b. Tottenham
- c. Arsenal

3. The team that has splashed the cash on new signings is...

- a. Manchester City
- b. Manchester United
- c. Liverpool

4. The teams from the Midlands that will struggle to avoid relegation are...

- a. West Bromwich Albion, Leicester and Aston Villa
- b. Aston Villa and Leicester
- c. Stoke City and West Bromwich Albion

5. In the podcast, Bournemouth is said...

- a. to have an attractive play and ability
- b. to be a team which looks short on quality
- c. to be a newly promoted team

✓ VOCABULARY SUPPORT

Bragging rights: the right to talk with pride about your team, especially when compared with a rival

Pundit: person who makes comments or judgments; critic or commentator

Reliance: dependence

Firing on all cylinders: playing 100%

Blunt: lacking refinement or subtlety; straightforward and uncomplicated

To capitalise on: to build on; to improve on

Community Shield: in English football, it is an annual match contested between the champions of the previous Premier League season and the holders of the FA Cup at Wembley Stadium.

Signing: a sportsperson who has been hired

The Gunners: nickname of Arsenal Football Club

To gel: to work well together; to play as a unit

Mounting a title challenge: being in a position to win the title/ league

To link up: to connect or be connected with

Up their game: improve their play

To splash the cash: to spend extravagant sums of money

Spot: place

To prise away: to take away from; to remove (with difficulty)

The Toffees: nickname for Everton Football Club

Squad: any small group of people engaged in a common activity; a team

Relegation: when a team has to move down a division because of poor results

Dog fight: a desperate battle

The Black Cats: Sunderland's nickname

Fixture: habitual

To punch about their weight: to do better than expected; perform well with fewer resources than rivals

Minnows: a small team from a lower league or a small country; an underdog; a team with few resources; a team that doesn't have a long tradition of playing football

Dark horse: a team that has a chance of winning a competition or a cup

✓ PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

2015/ 2016 Premier League preview

20 teams are ready to kick off the 2015/ 2016 Premier League and each team's supporters will be hoping they have **bragging rights** come the end of the season, especially over any local rivals. In this listening practice report, we take a look at which regions the 20 teams play in and how they may perform.

London and the South East (six teams)

First of all, the capital city and the surrounding area: six teams from this region, including most **pundits** favourites, Chelsea, who are the team to beat. Their only weakness seems to be a **reliance** on Diego Costa up front: without him **firing on all cylinders**, they may be **blunt** in attack. Hoping to **capitalise on** last season's FA Cup win and the victory over Chelsea in the **Community Shield** are Arsenal. They certainly look a complete team and may have got the **signing** of the season in Petr Cech. **The Gunners** look good for a top three finish. Crosstown rivals, Tottenham, may need another season under boss Pochettino to really **gel**, especially with a focus on youth, and can expect a Europa League place.

On the other hand, West Ham, already out of this year's Europa League qualifiers, could face a long and difficult season. Just North of London is Watford, and the newly promoted side, full of new signings, are one of the favourites to go straight back down a division.

The North West (four teams)

Four clubs, two based on Merseyside, two in Manchester, will all be hoping to improve on last year's showings. Of the four, Manchester City seems to have the best chance of **mounting a title challenge** and will definitely finish in the Champions League places, but a lot will depend on how new signing, Sterling, **links up** with Agüero, and whether or not City's other big stars, such as Yaya Touré and Kompany, can **up their game**. Most intriguing are Manchester United. There are no more excuses for their manager Van Gaal, especially as the club has really **splashed the cash** on signings such as Depay, Schneiderlin, Schweinsteiger and Darmian. How these stars play as a unit remains to be seen, but United are strong contenders for a top four **spot** and should be an entertaining side to watch.

The two Merseyside clubs will have different ambitions. Everton will just hope to avoid the disaster that was last season. Key to this will be holding on to their star defender, Stone, but Chelsea just might **prize him away** from **the Toffees**. Liverpool

will have their eyes set again on trying to crack the top four but, on paper, their **squad** doesn't look strong enough to challenge the two teams from Manchester, Chelsea and Arsenal. Europa League again.

The Midlands (four teams)

We're including Stoke City in this region and they, along with West Bromwich Albion, Leicester and Aston Villa, make up the teams from the Midlands. Aston Villa may spend most of the season struggling to avoid **relegation** after losing important players, like front man Benteke, midfielder Cleverley and captain Delph. West Brom finished a respectable 13th last season and, with Tony Pulis in charge, mid table safety looks the most likely outcome. Stoke City were impressive last season and Mark Hughes will hope they can push on further up the table and maybe have a decent cup run, too. Leicester, like Villa, may struggle and will be in the **dog fight** to avoid relegation come March and April.

The North East (two teams)

Both, Newcastle and Sunderland, had bad seasons last year. **The Black Cats**, 16th last season, look the more solid of the two teams and, for Newcastle, a lot will depend on how Newcastle's new manager, McClaren, handles the pressure at St. James'. Going forward they look good, with new signings Wijnaldum and Mitrović. Verdict: both should be safe from relegation.

The rest (four teams)

Swansea, from the Welsh South coast, are an excellently run team and have made themselves a **fixture** in the league. Finishing eighth last season, for a club this size, was a real achievement. Similarly, Southampton have impressed over the last few seasons with their attractive play and ability **to punch about their weight**. Neither will trouble the top four, but neither will fear relegation either.

Newly promoted side, Bournemouth, just down the coast from Southampton, are the League's **minnows**; with a stadium capacity of just over 10,000, this small South coast club will be most neutrals second team. They could be **dark horses** for doing better than expected and could avoid relegation. This may not be the case for Alex Neil's Norwich, who looks short on quality. They deserve their chance but a reliance on a young manager and the squad that got them promoted may not be enough. Relegated.