



# PLEASE RELEASE ME



Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:  
1A5X-P1LA-MUKQ



Source: Reuters

## 1

### Warm up

Look at the photos. Discuss the questions in groups.



Source: Reuters



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1. What do you think most professional athletes consider when negotiating a contract?
2. How do you think professional athletes can get out of their contracts?



## 2 Focus on vocabulary

### Part A: Match the vocabulary to the definition.

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. <u>invoke</u> (v)       | a. a part of a contract that allows one or both of the people to end the contract                     |
| 2. <u>transfer</u> (v)     | b. one of the people or groups of people involved in a contract or legal argument                     |
| 3. <u>break clause</u> (n) | c. a legal agreement that allows someone to use property for an amount of time, usually for rent paid |
| 4. <u>lease</u> (n)        | d. move someone or something from one place to another  |
| 5. <u>party</u> (n)        | e. a person who pays rent for the use of property   |
| 6. <u>tenant</u> (n)       | f. must be done because of a law or a rule  |
| 7. <u>landlord</u> (n)     | g. a person who owns or has property for rent   |
| 8. <u>compulsory</u> (adj) | h. use a law, rule or clause of a contract as a reason for doing something                            |

### Part B: Now complete the following sentences with a word from Part A.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ collects the rent on the first of the month.
2. It is not possible to \_\_\_\_\_ ownership without the written approval of the owner in a contract.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ do not get along, so they only spoke to each other through the legal representatives.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_ requires payment of three months' rent, so I'm not looking for a new flat.
5. Our \_\_\_\_\_ will end in January, so I will begin looking for a new place for our office in November.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ is always late with the rent, so we are going to bring legal action against him.
7. I don't think the judge should \_\_\_\_\_ international law to support her ruling.
8. You cannot negotiate with her for three weeks. Her contract has a \_\_\_\_\_ waiting period.





## 3

## Listening for definitions

Read and answer the questions below.



1. What is the meaning of a *buy-out clause*?
  - a. A clause that allows a club to sell a player to another club for an agreed price.
  - b. A clause that allows a player to have his contract transferred to another club.
  - c. A clause that allows players to buy their way out of their contract.
  
2. What is the meaning of a *gentleman's agreement*?
  - a. An unofficial or unwritten agreement that people agree to respect even though it can't be enforced
  - b. An agreement between two extremely rich individuals or businesses that costs a lot to enforce
  - c. An agreement in which people agree not to create problems for each other so they don't lose money





## 4

**Listening comprehension**

Listen again. Choose the correct information.

1. The legal expert compares a buy-out clause to ...
  - a. a lease agreement.
  - b. a gentleman's agreement.
  - c. a very large tax.
  
2. After a player invokes a buy-out clause, the player ...
  - a. will ask the new club to pay his taxes.
  - b. negotiates a price to be free from his contract.
  - c. can sign a new contract with another club.
  
3. A buy-out clause is often set at a price that is \_\_\_\_ the player's value so that it is unlikely the player will invoke it.
  - a. higher than
  - b. lower than
  - c. about the same as
  
4. The money paid for a buy-out clause must be paid by ...
  - a. either the player or the club that wants the player to join them
  - b. the club that wants the player to join them
  - c. the player
  
5. The main reason that players don't use their buy-out clause is because of ...
  - a. loyalty to their football club.
  - b. the high taxes they may have to pay.
  - c. the problems they create with other teams.



## 5

**Grammar point****Past Perfect and Simple Past.**

The Past Perfect shows the relationship in time between two past events. It shows that one action happened before another in the past. The Past Perfect is used in the first (or earlier) event, and the Simple Past is often used in the second (or later) event.

- The club **didn't allow** the player to transfer because they **had signed** a contract.
- He **had played** for the team for two years before **he asked** to leave.

Look at the sentences and decide where to use Past Perfect and where Simple Past. Compare your answers with your partner.

1. She strongly \_\_\_\_\_ (advise) her client not to sign the contract as she \_\_\_\_\_ (discover) some concerning language when reviewing the document earlier.
2. The player \_\_\_\_\_ (agree) not to include a buy-out clause in the contract, though others \_\_\_\_\_ (advise) him previously to demand one.
3. He \_\_\_\_\_ (sign) the contract yesterday although his solicitor \_\_\_\_\_ (tell) him not to many times before.
4. She \_\_\_\_\_ (be) very worried until the company finally \_\_\_\_\_ (approve) her transfer this morning.
5. The team \_\_\_\_\_ (pay) £20 million to the club for their star player last month, but they \_\_\_\_\_ (offer) twice that for another player the previous year.





## 6

## Legal vocabulary

Part A: Complete the chart with the correct forms for the different parts of speech.

verb	noun	adjective
(1) _____	insistence	(2) _____
(3) _____	(4) _____	allegedly
XX	reluctance	(5) _____
bargain	bargain/bargaining	(6) _____

Part B: Now use one word from each line in the chart in the sentences.

1. A professional athlete's \_\_\_\_\_ power largely depends on the athlete's performance.
2. Her \_\_\_\_\_ to ask for a buy-out clause had been a point of disagreement with her legal advisor since he thought she should \_\_\_\_\_ on having one.
3. The club's offer is \_\_\_\_\_ close to £110 million, but no one has seen the official document.

## 7

## Reading: predicting content

You are going to read an article about the importance of carefully reading contracts. First, quickly scan the first paragraph. Which two topics do you expect to read about in the other paragraphs?

1. Reasons why footballers might want to transfer to a different club.
2. The negotiation process for some of the largest contracts in football.
3. An explanation of a release clause as well as names of players who have them.
4. The typical length of a contract for a professional footballer.
5. A comparison between a buy-out clause and a release clause.



# Read your contract

## Play smart, pay smart

1. Professional footballers are amongst the highest paid athletes, with compensation for the sport's biggest names at more than £20 million per year, and for the few superstars at the very top, over £50 million. With these salaries, it seems there would be little to complain about, but what if a footballer wants to transfer to a different team? How easy is it to get out of a contract? The answer is it depends... Players who have a release clause in their contracts have a much easier time transferring clubs.
2. Tottenham Hotspurs star Harry Kane was the subject of much speculation in 2021 when he made it known that he wanted to leave to sign with Manchester City. Although he did not have a release clause, Kane believed that he and Hotspurs chairman Daniel Levy had come to a gentleman's agreement. Kane believed that if the club was compensated properly, he could leave. When Manchester City allegedly offered £100 million to Tottenham for Kane, Kane thought he would be packing his bags for Manchester. Levy rejected the offer, and Manchester City allegedly increased the offer to £150 million. Levy still refused, and Kane had no recourse. He had signed a contract, and if he wanted to play, it would be in his Spurs uniform.
3. Manchester City thought it had had a chance to secure Kane. They had recently offered £100 million to Aston Villa for Jack Grealish, who was also eager to join Manchester City because of its potential to win another Premier League title. The £100 million was enough for Aston Villa to give up Grealish. However, there was a key difference. There had been a release clause in Grealish's contract. This clause required Aston Villa to agree to release him if it received an offer of a certain amount. Aston Villa was able to reject lower offers for Grealish because of the release clause.
4. However, release clauses are not always easy to negotiate. They have to be set at the right amount. If the amount is too high, it may weaken the club's bargaining power because no one would be willing or able to pay the amount. If the amount is too low, the club may have shot itself in the foot because others may believe the player is worth more and are willing to meet the price. In hindsight, Aston Villa could have set Grealish's release clause higher since Manchester was willing to pay £100 million. Why not £120 million or £140 million?
5. So why are these clauses not more common in England? Release clauses offer clubs a chance to reduce uncertainty about future transfers and guarantee a price for talent. The reluctance of players to insist on them may come from a sense that it is disloyal to the club. For instance, Steven Gerrard reportedly asked for a release clause to be taken out of his contract to show his commitment to Liverpool. While this thinking is understandable, the Grealish transfer shows it is not always appropriate. Grealish's release clause put Aston Villa in a stronger position to bargain, and this benefited the club. It also clearly benefited Grealish as he was able to transfer to the club of his choice, Manchester City. Kane's dream of joining Manchester City is likely to remain just that - a dream. And today, Kane probably regrets that he hadn't insisted on such a release clause in his contract.





## 8

**Finding vocabulary**

Scan the article and find words or phrases which mean the same as the following.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ having something or being able to do something to help you get out of a difficult situation (p. 2)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ to get or achieve something, especially after using a lot of effort (p. 3)
3. \_\_\_\_\_ do or say something that causes harm to oneself, especially when trying to do something good for oneself (p. 4)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ understanding a situation differently by when looking back on it (p. 4)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ to promise something or be sure something will happen (p. 5)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ not supporting or believing in someone or something, especially when you are expected to (p. 5)
7. \_\_\_\_\_ a promise to support something (p. 5)

## 9

**Reading comprehension**

Read the article again and choose the right answer for the questions below.

1. Harry Kane wanted to leave Tottenham because ...
  - a. he wanted to play on a team with Jack Grealish.
  - b. he didn't get along with the chairman of the club.
  - c. he had a better chance of winning a title with a different club.
  - d. he felt he could get more money and a better contract with a different club.
2. Tottenham didn't allow Kane to go because ...
  - a. Kane didn't have a release clause in his contract.
  - b. Manchester wasn't willing to pay a reasonable amount for Kane.
  - c. the chairman didn't want Manchester to have Grealish and Kane in the team.
  - d. the chairman had a gentleman's agreement with Kane to keep him with the club.
3. The amount to activate the release clause in Grealish's contract was ...
  - a. just under £100 million.
  - b. £100 million.
  - c. more than £100 million.





- d. unknown.
4. Release clauses are difficult to negotiate because ...
- they weaken a club's bargaining power.
  - players often don't want them in their contracts.
  - they make it easy for other clubs to take the team's best players.
  - it is difficult to agree on an amount that is acceptable to both the player and club.
5. Players may not push for a release clause because ...
- most clubs refuse to include them in player contracts.
  - they may have to take a lower salary to get one in their contract.
  - a gentleman's agreement is better for both the player and the club.
  - they don't want to be viewed as disloyal to the club.

**10****Talking point**

Work in pairs or small groups and discuss the following questions.

- Do you think buy-out clauses should be required in professional sports contracts? Why or why not?
- Why might a football club want to keep a player even if the player had asked to be transferred?
- What other businesses or fields might have contracts with buy-out clauses or release clauses? Why?

**11 Optional activity/homework**

Choose one question and write a paragraph (200 words). Ensure that you check your grammar, spelling and punctuation.

**1**

Imagine you are representing a professional footballer. He is going to negotiate a new contract, and he would like your advice. Would you advise him to insist on a buy-out clause, a release clause or both of these in his new contract? Why or why not? Neither the buy-out nor the release clause are required in this country. Write your response in the form of a letter to the footballer.

**2**

Are there ever situations, in any industry, in which you think a gentleman's agreement should be or is as good as a contract? Why or why not?