Football is a collision sport that has surpassed baseball as “America’s pastime.” The game is played between two teams: while one team’s offense attempts to run or pass the ball (which is oblong, leading to unpredictable bounces) across the opposing team’s goal line and into the end zone, the other team’s defense attempts to keep them from scoring by tackling anyone who is carrying the football. Eleven total players are allowed on the field at a time per team. The playing field is one-hundred and twenty yards long and fifty-three yards wide. Besides offensive and defensive units, each team also has “special teams” units who are take the field when possession of the football changes. The game is played by participants at all age levels. Most of the time males are the participants, but females can also play. There are countless variations of the sport.

Football has evolved as it has grown in popularity. When it was established in the late 1800’s, the participants didn’t wear helmets, and barely wore pads over their shoulders. As the game progressed into the early 1900’s, players wore leather helmets and very thin padding over their shoulders. Players didn’t start wearing facemasks until the 1950’s and early 60’s. Around this time players started wearing thicker shoulder pads, and pads to protect their thighs and knees. The game grew in popularity, and so did the size of the players and the pads they wore. By the 1980’s, players wore extremely large and wide shoulder pads to go along with heavy helmets and large facemasks. Beginning in the early 2000’s, the size of shoulder pads and helmets decreased; shoulder pads became lighter, yet remained sturdy, and helmets also became lighter, but still offered as much or more protection as their predecessors.