

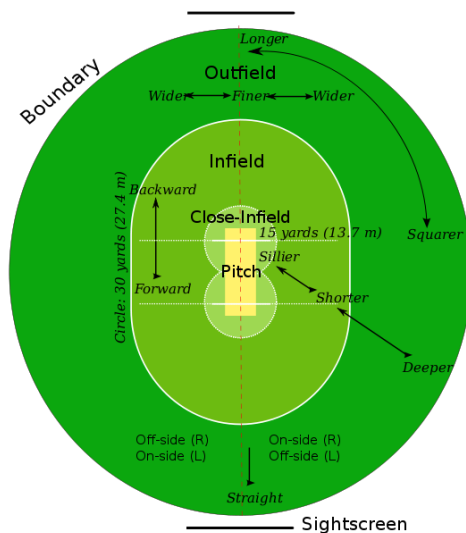
SPORT CRICKET

Cricket is a **bat-and-ball game** played between **two teams of 11 players** on a field, at the centre of which is a rectangular **22-yard long pitch**. One team **bats**, trying to score as many **runs** as possible while the other team **bowls** and **fields**, trying to dismiss **the batsmen** and thus limit the runs scored by the batting team. A run is scored by the striking batsman hitting the ball with his bat, running to the opposite end of the pitch and touching the **crease** without being dismissed. The teams switch between batting and fielding at the end of an **innings**.



A bowler bowling to a batsman. The paler strip is the cricket pitch. The two sets of three wooden stumps on the pitch are the wickets. The two white lines are the creases.

In professional cricket the length of a game ranges from **20 overs of six bowling deliveries** per side to Test cricket played **over five days**. The Laws of Cricket are maintained by the **International Cricket Council (ICC)** and the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) with additional Standard Playing Conditions for Test matches and One Day Internationals.



Cricket was first played in **southern England** in the **16th century**. By the end of the 18th century, it had developed into the national sport of England. The expansion of the British Empire led to cricket being played overseas and by the mid-19th century the first international matches were being held. The ICC, the game's governing body, has ten full members. The game is played particularly in Australasia, the Indian subcontinent, the West Indies, Southern Africa and England. Unlike

those of most sports, cricket playing **fields** can **vary** significantly in **size and shape**. While the dimensions of the pitch and infield are specifically regulated, the Laws of Cricket do not specify the size or shape of the field. Other local factors, such as altitude and climate, can also significantly affect play.

Cricket is a sport played predominantly in the **drier periods of the year**. A scheduled game of cricket cannot be played in wet weather. Dampness affects the bounce of the ball on the wicket and is a risk to all players involved in the game.

Cricket is a unique game where in addition to the laws, the players have to abide by the **"Spirit of the Game"**. The standard of sportsmanship has historically been considered so high that the phrase "it's just not cricket" was coined in the 19th century to describe unfair or underhanded behaviour in any walk of life. In the last few decades though, cricket has become increasingly fast-paced and competitive, increasing the use of appealing and sledging, although players are still expected to abide by the umpires' rulings without argument, and for the most part they do. In addition to this, some batsmen have been known to "walk" when they think they are out even if the umpire does not declare them out. This is a **high level of sportsmanship**, as a batsman can easily take advantage of incorrect umpiring decisions.

Test cricket is the highest standard of **first-class** cricket. A Test match is an international fixture between teams representing those countries that are **Full Members of the ICC**. Test matches between two teams are usually played in a group of matches called a **"series"**. Matches last **up to five days** and a series normally consists of **three to five matches**.



A Test match between South Africa and England in January 2005.

Cricket has had a broad impact on popular culture. Cricket has had an influence on the lexicon of these nations, especially the English language, with such phrases as **"that's not cricket"** (unfair), **"had a good innings"**, **"sticky wicket"**, and **"bowled over"**. The term **"Bradmanesque"** from Don Bradman's name has become a generic term for outstanding excellence, both within cricket and in the wider world.