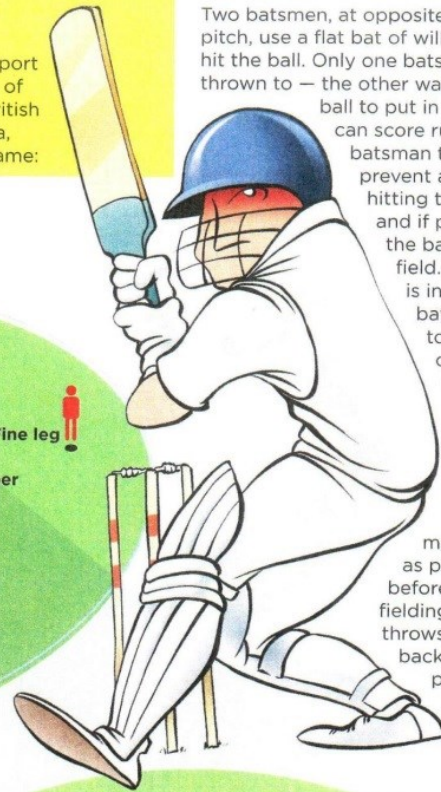


How to play cricket!

The game of cricket is a bat-and-ball sport played between two teams, usually of 11 players each. It is thought to be the second-most popular sport on the planet, behind football (soccer). It has been played for hundreds of years, the modern form originating in England and spread across the British Commonwealth. It is wildly popular in England, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand, among others. Here is a quick look at the game:

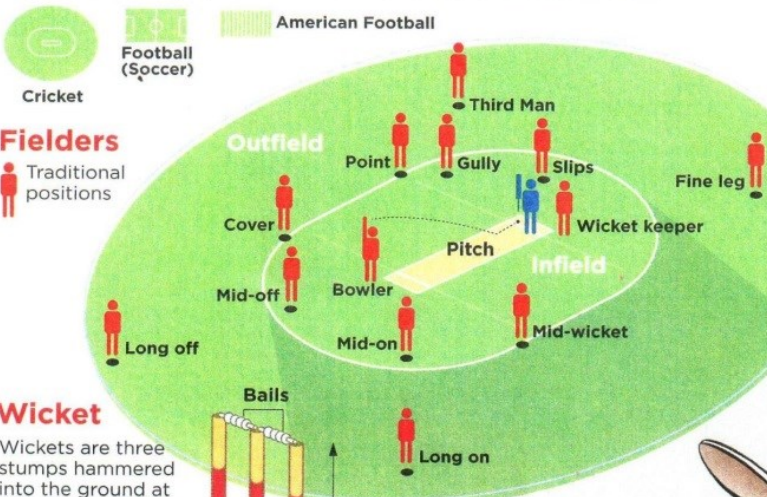
Batsman

Two batsmen, at opposite ends of the pitch, use a flat bat of willow wood to hit the ball. Only one batsman is thrown to — the other waits for the ball to put in play so he can score runs. The batsman tries to prevent a pitch from hitting the wicket and if possible, hit the ball into the field. Once a hit is in play, the batsmen run to the opposite crease — past each other — scoring runs. They can do this as many times as possible before the fielding team throws the ball back to the pitch.



The playing field

A large, oval, grassy space with a diameter between 450 and 500 feet.

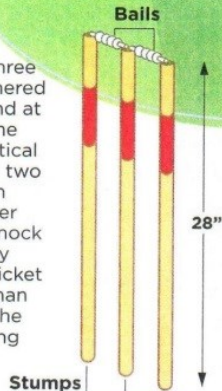


Fielders

Traditional positions

Wicket

Wickets are three stumps hammered into the ground at each end of the pitch. The vertical 'stumps', hold two small 'bails' on top. The bowler attempts to knock the bails off by striking the wicket and the batsman tries to stop the ball from hitting the wicket.



Bowling

A bowler's primary mission is to get the batsman out. He throws a small ball towards the batsman, bouncing it once before it arrives. Skilled bowlers can release the ball with so much spin it jumps off the ground in a different direction, fooling the batsman.



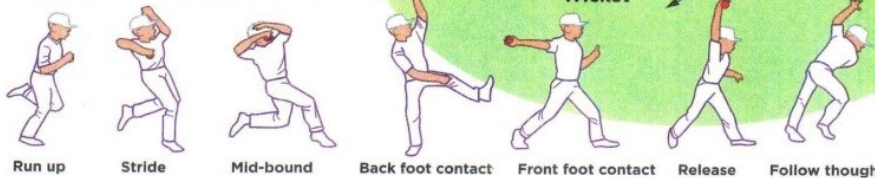
The ball

The cricket ball is similar to a baseball: a core of cork, wound tightly with string and covered in leather with a slightly raised sewn seam. The ball is traditionally dyed red. White cricket balls have been used at night under floodlights.



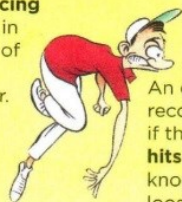
What a wind-up!

A cricket bowler starts with a run...



Scoring runs, getting outs

A ball is bowled, **bouncing once** in front of the batter.



An out is recorded if the ball **hits a wicket**, knocking loose a bail.

If the batsman **hits the ball** in play...



...he runs to the other crease, **scoring a run**. The fielders will get the ball back to their wicket keeper who will try to knock off a bail **before the batsman gets back** to the crease.

