

**Cricket** is a [bat-and-ball game](#) played between two teams of eleven players on a [field](#) at the centre of which is a 22-yard (20-metre) [pitch](#) with a [wicket](#) at each end, each comprising two [bails](#) balanced on three [stumps](#). The [batting](#) side scores [runs](#) by striking the [ball bowled](#) at one of the wickets with the bat and then running between the wickets, while the bowling and [fielding](#) side tries to prevent this (by preventing the ball from leaving the field, and getting the ball to either wicket) and [dismiss](#) each batter (so they are "out"). Means of dismissal include being [bowled](#), when the ball hits the stumps and dislodges the bails, and by the fielding side either [catching](#) the ball after it is hit by the bat, but before it hits the ground, or hitting a wicket with the ball before a batter can cross the [crease](#) in front of the wicket. When ten batters have been dismissed, the [innings](#) ends and the teams swap roles. The game is adjudicated by two [umpires](#), aided by a [third umpire](#) and [match referee](#) in international matches. They communicate with two off-field [scorers](#) who record the match's [statistical information](#).

[Forms of cricket](#) range from [Twenty20](#) (also known as *T20*), with each team batting for a single innings of 20 [overs](#) (each "over" being a set of 6 fair opportunities for the batting team to score) and the game generally lasting three to four hours, to [Test matches](#) played over five days. Traditionally cricketers play in all-white [kit](#), but in [limited overs cricket](#) they wear club or team colours. In addition to the basic kit, some players wear protective gear to prevent injury caused by the ball, which is a hard, solid spheroid made of compressed [leather](#) with a slightly raised sewn seam enclosing a [cork](#) core layered with tightly wound string.

The earliest reference to cricket is in [South East England](#) in the mid-16th century. It spread globally with the expansion of the [British Empire](#), with the first international matches in the second half of the 19th century. The game's governing body is the [International Cricket Council](#) (ICC), which has over 100 members, twelve of which are [full members](#) who play Test matches. The game's rules, the [Laws of Cricket](#), are maintained by [Marylebone Cricket Club](#) (MCC) in [London](#). The sport is followed primarily in [South Asia](#), [Australia](#), [New Zealand](#), the [United Kingdom](#), [Southern Africa](#) and the [West Indies](#).<sup>[1]</sup>

[Women's cricket](#), which is organised and played separately, has also achieved international standard.

The most successful side playing [international cricket](#) is [Australia](#), which has won seven [One Day International](#) trophies, including five [World Cups](#), more than any other country and has been the [top-rated Test side](#) more than any other country.