**Cricket** is a national sport which is played between two teams of eleven players each who score runs (points) by running between two sets of three small, wooden posts called wickets. Each of the wickets is at one end of a rectangle of flattened grass called the pitch. Around the pitch is a much larger oval of grass called the cricket ground.

Today, it is a popular sport in England, Australia, the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh), South Africa, New Zealand, the West Indies and a few other countries such as Afghanistan, Ireland, Kenya, Scotland, the Netherlands and Zimbabwe.

Cricket Rules:

There are two teams: the team bowling has 11 players on the field. The team batting always has two players on the field.

The aim of cricket is to score more 'runs' than the other team. Runs are got by batsmen running between the wickets after a ball has been bowled, or hitting the ball over the boundary, or by the umpires penalising the bowling side for bowling an illegal ball.

The captain of the bowling team chooses a bowler from his team; the other 10 players are called fielders. The bowler is trying to aim the ball at a wicket which is made up of three sticks (called stumps) stuck into the earth, with two small sticks (called bails) balanced on them. One of the fielders, called the wicket keeper, stands behind the wicket to catch the ball if the bowler misses the wicket. The other fielders chase the ball after the batsman has hit it.

The bowler runs towards his wicket, and bowls towards the batsman at the other wicket. He does *not* throw the ball. He bowls the ball overarm with a straight arm. If he bends his arm, the other team are given one run and he has to bowl the ball again. An 'over' is six balls meaning he bowls six times. Then another player becomes the bowler for the next over, and bowls from the other end, and so on. The same bowler cannot bowl two overs one after the other.

The batsman is trying to defend the wicket from getting hit with the ball. He does this with a bat. When he hits the ball with his bat, he may run toward the other wicket. To score a run, the two batsmen must both run from their wicket to the other wicket, as many times as they can, before they can be run out. Being run out is explained below. If the ball leaves the field after being hit without bouncing, six runs are scored. If the ball rolls or bounces out, whether or not the batter hit it, it counts as four runs.

There are different ways that a batsman can **get out**. The most common ways are:

* The batsman misses the ball and it hits the wicket: called ***bowled*.**
* The ball hits the batsman's body when it would have hit the wicket otherwise. Called ***LBW***(*leg before wicket*). The way this rule is applied is complicated; this is just the general idea.
* A fielder catches the ball after the batsman hits it, and before it bounces or leaves the field: called ***caught***
* A batsman is **Stumped** out If the bowler bowls a ball at the batsman and
* the batsman does not hit the ball with his bat,
* the batsman steps out of his crease,
* and the wicketkeeper gathers the ball and breaks the wicket with it while the batsman is out of his crease.
* While the batsmen are running, a fielder can throw the ball at the wicket. If the batsmen cannot finish the run, and the ball hits the wicket, the batsman nearer to the wicket that is hit is out: this is called *run out*.

When a batsman is out, another comes onto the field to take his place. The innings is over when ten wickets are taken (i.e. ten of the eleven batsmen are out). After this, the team which was the 'fielding' team becomes the 'batting' team. They now have to score more runs than the other team managed to score. If they score more runs before ten wickets are taken, they win. If they do not, the other team wins.

In a one-day game, each side has one innings, and innings are limited to a certain number of overs. In longer formats each side has two innings, and there is no specific limit to the number of overs in an innings.

The field

A cricket field is where cricket is played. It is circular or oval-shaped grassy ground. There are no fixed dimensions for the field. Its diameter usually varies between 450 feet (137 m) to 500 feet (150 m).

## Different forms of cricket

### Test matches

Test matches are the top international matches played between countries. The countries permitted to play test matches are accredited by the ICC: The International Cricket Council. The ten countries are listed above, with 'West Indies' counting for this purpose as a country. Tests last for up to five days: it is the longest format of cricket.

### National league systems

Called counties in England, and states in Australia and islands in the West Indies. These are three or four day matches.

### Limited overs cricket

In these games, the length is determined by the number of overs, and each side has one innings only. A special formula, known as the 'Duckworth–Lewis method' is applied if rain reduces the time for play. It calculates the target score for the team batting second in a limited overs match interrupted by weather or other circumstance.

#### **One day internationals**

Usually restricted to 50 overs batting for each side

#### **Twenty20 cricket**

Twenty20 cricket has 20 overs for each side