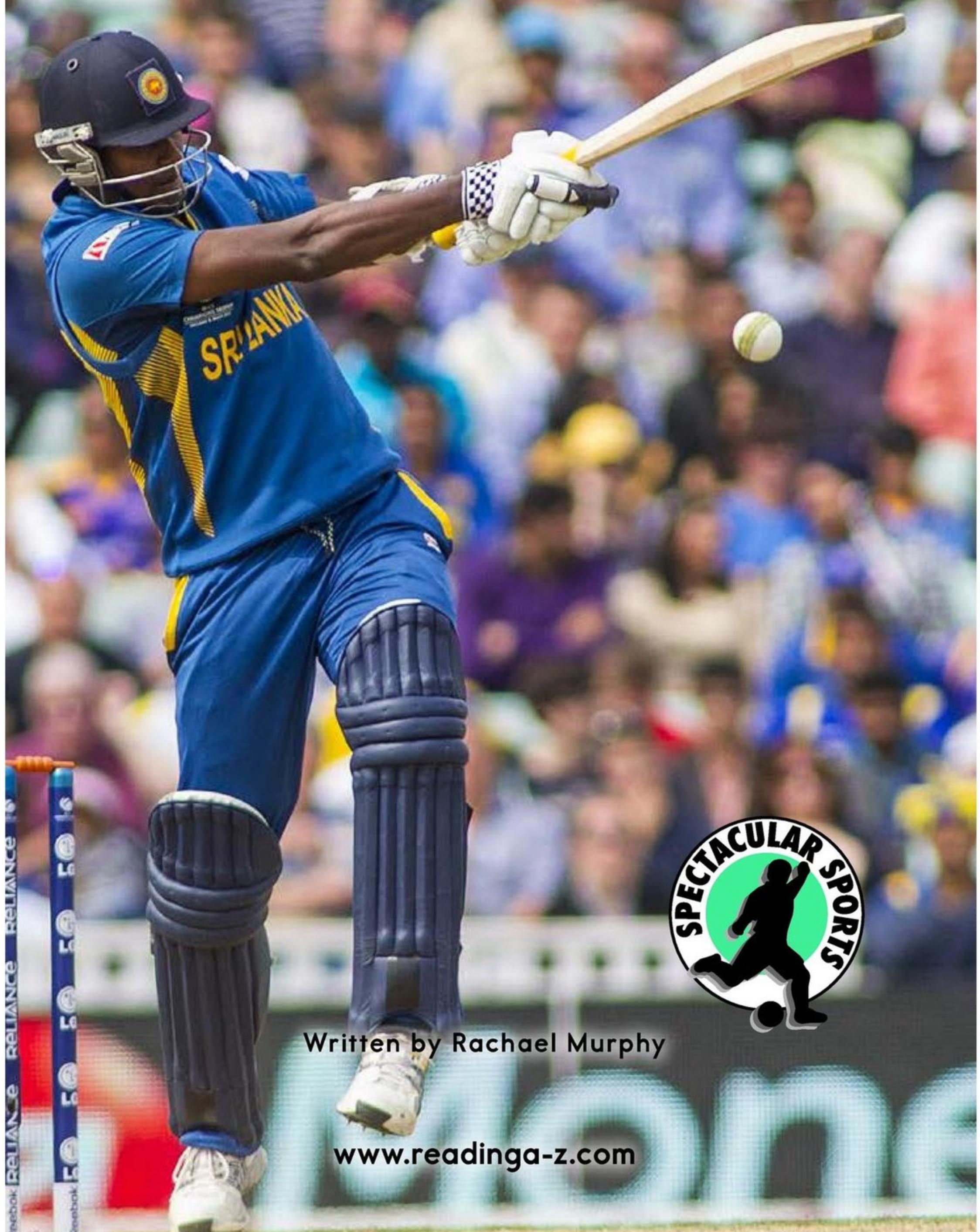


LEVELED BOOKS

Cricket



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Focus Question

What is cricket, and how is it played?

Words to Know

adapted
behavior
boundary
cherish
complicated

draw
fielding
international
umpires

Front cover: A player swings at the ball in an international match in London, England.

Back cover: A huge crowd watches a cricket match in Australia.

Title page: A cricket bat and ball

Page 3: Men enjoy a cricket match near the ocean in the West Indies.

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Spectacular Sports
Level S Leveled Book
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Correlation

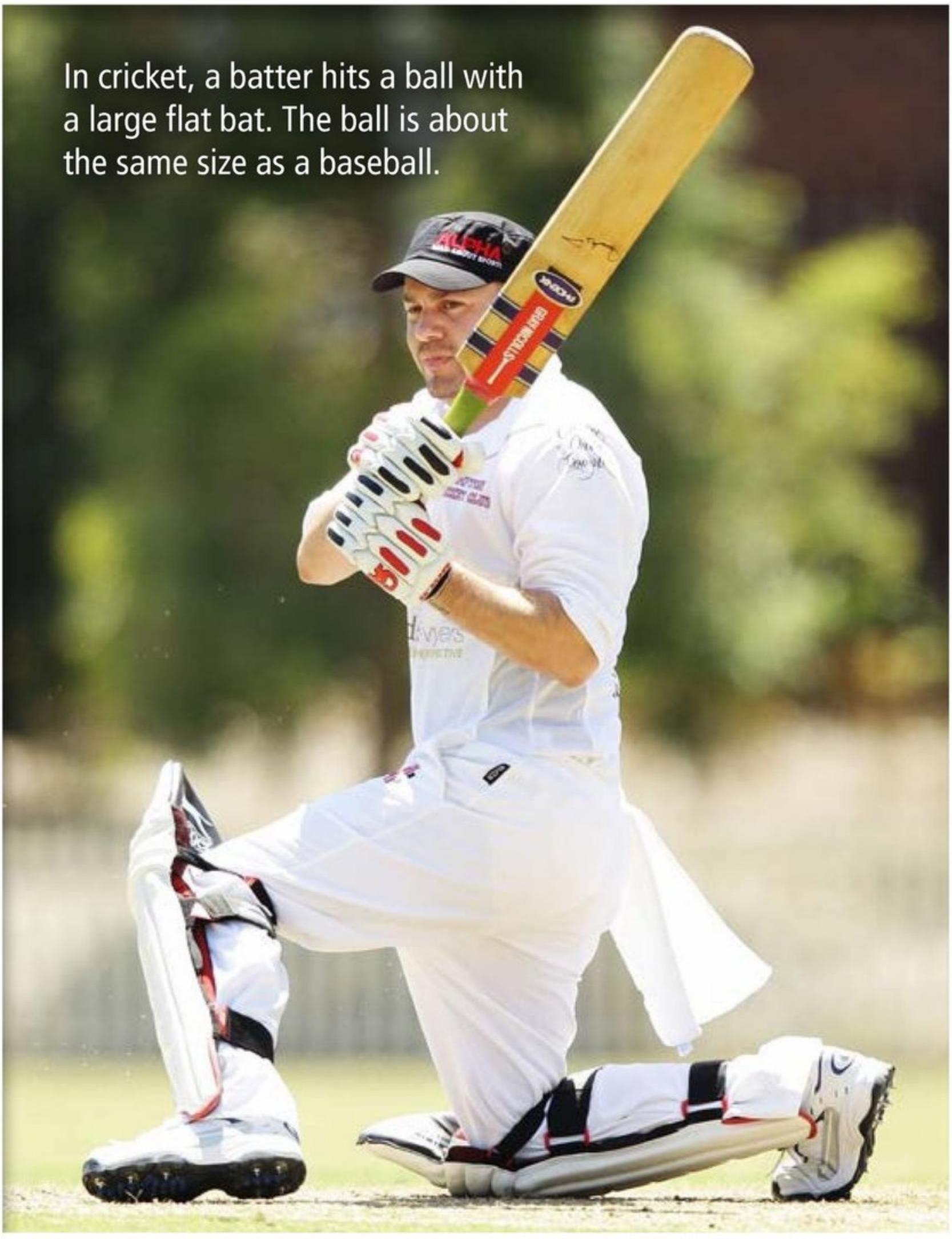
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In cricket, a batter hits a ball with a large flat bat. The ball is about the same size as a baseball.



Welcome to Cricket

Cricket is a sport with an honored history and a huge **international** following. Players from around the world compete in front of crowds of adoring fans from India to Jamaica. To enjoy the game, new players need a bat and ball, a few friends, and some free time to practice their cricket skills.

How to Play Cricket

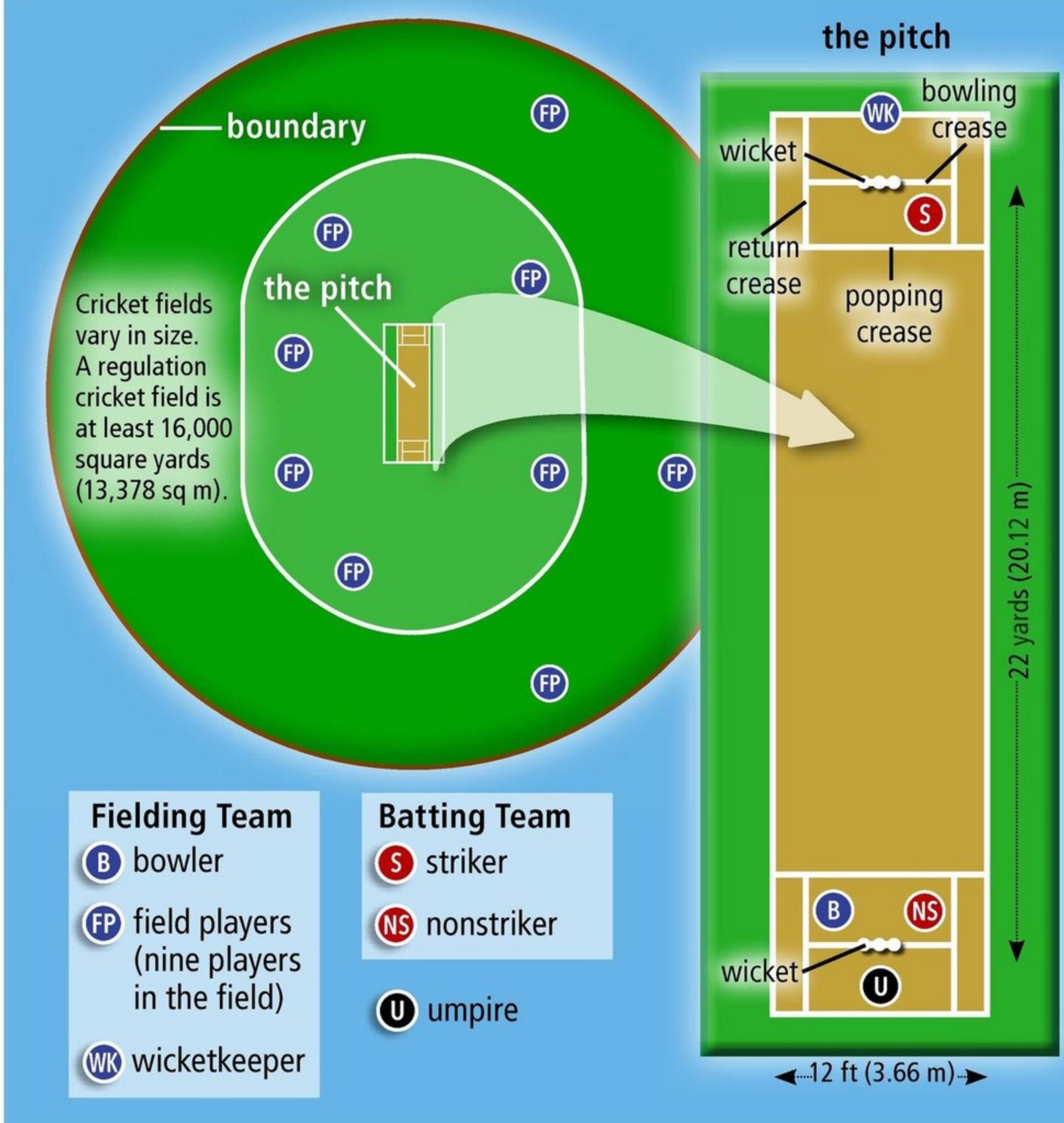
Teams play cricket on an oval field with a cleared rectangle in it called the *pitch*. Two teams with eleven players take turns batting and bowling. A team's turn at bat is called an *inning*.

On the bowling team, one player takes the position of bowler (thrower) and another takes the position of wicketkeeper (catcher). The other nine players take position in the oval. Two batters from the batting team take the field and stand on opposite ends of the pitch. The first player to bat is called the *striker*. The other batter is the *nonstriker*.



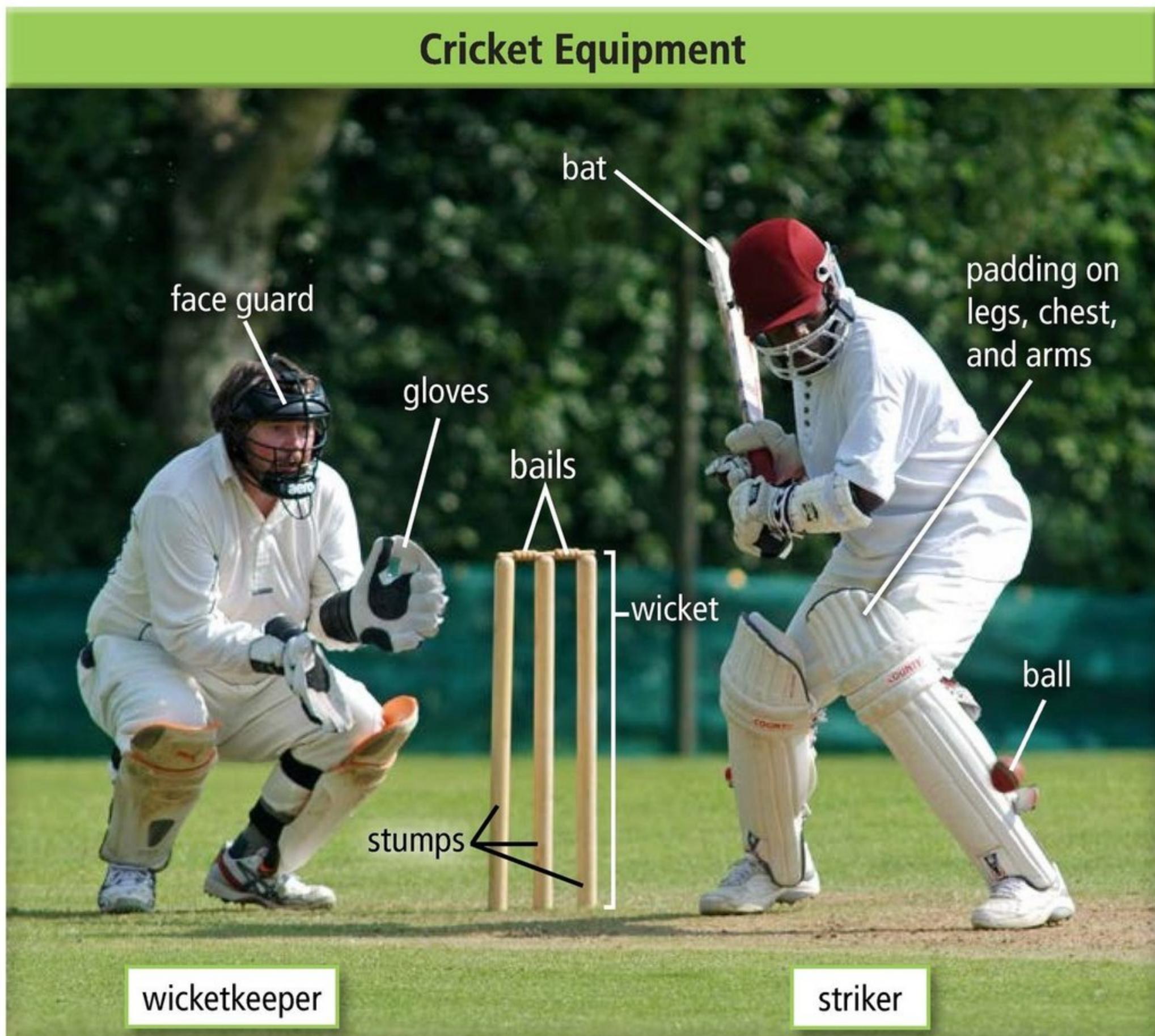
An Australian wicketkeeper (yellow) prepares to catch a ball. The wicketkeeper is similar to the catcher in baseball.

Cricket Field

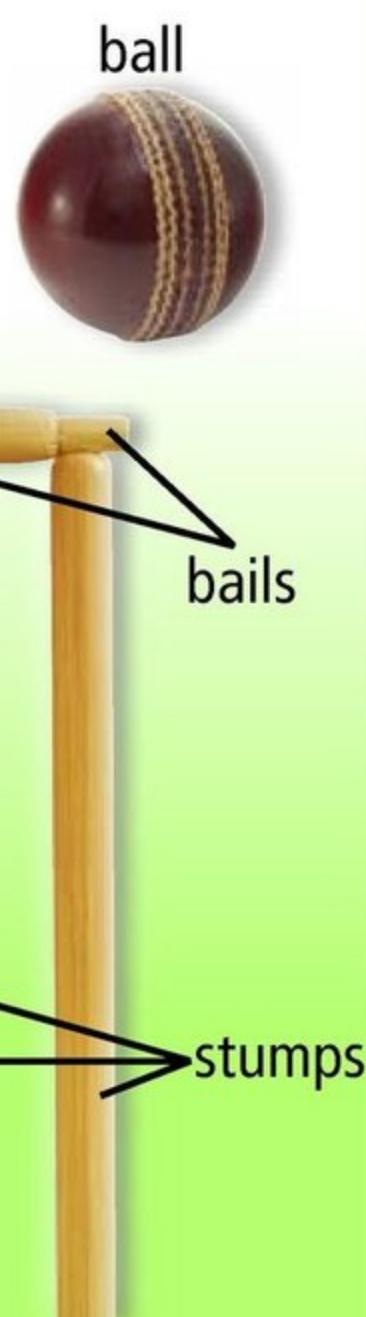


The bowler will bowl, or throw, the ball overarm (with the arm above the head and without bending the elbow). The bowler tries to get the batter out by hitting the wicket. The wicket is three small posts in the ground, called *stumps*, with two pieces of wood on top, called *bails*. If the bowler can knock the bails off the stumps, then the batter is out!

Batters can stop the ball from hitting the wicket by hitting the ball with their bat. They can also hit the ball hard enough to score runs. When the striker hits the ball, both the striker and the nonstriker will start running to the opposite ends of the pitch. At each end of the pitch is a line just in front of the wicket, called the *popping crease*. If the two runners pass the popping crease and change places, they've scored a run!



Wicket stumps are hammered into the ground.



The striker and the nonstriker run back and forth again and again, scoring a run each time, but they need to be careful! The **fielding** team will try to “run out” the batter, or get him or her out. If the batter

is not safe behind the popping crease and a fielder knocks the bails off the wicket stumps with the ball, the batter is out. Batters can stop safely behind the crease at any time to prevent an out. A batter can also be “caught” out if a player on the bowling team catches a hit ball before it bounces on the ground.

When batters finish running, whoever is standing in the striker’s original position is now the striker. Also, if a bowler bowls the ball six times and there are no hits or outs, the bowler changes places with another player on his or her team. The nonstriker then gets a turn to be the striker.

A batter can also score extra runs. For example, if the ball is hit and passes the **boundary** without ever bouncing, six runs are added to the team's score.

Each match lasts two innings or until the day ends. The team with more runs wins. If the day ends without both teams finishing their innings, the game is a **draw**.

Cricket players and fans expect honesty, fair play, and good manners. Many of the rules in cricket require that teams come to an agreement about whether a player is out. There is no arguing or waiting for **umpires** to make a call. All players have to meet this high standard of good **behavior**.



Players from a Bangladesh team run after a hit in a match against South Africa.

People play cricket at the Artillery Ground in London in 1743.



The Story of Cricket

Cricket fans and players **cherish** their sport's history. Nobody knows exactly when people started playing cricket. We do know that by the 1500s, children in England were playing the sport. Not long after that, adults began playing, too. By the early 1700s, some players started playing for wages and fees, becoming the first professional cricket players.

Around that same time, a group of noblemen in London created a set of cricket rules. These rules are still in use hundreds of years later. Only a few rules have been changed or added over the years.

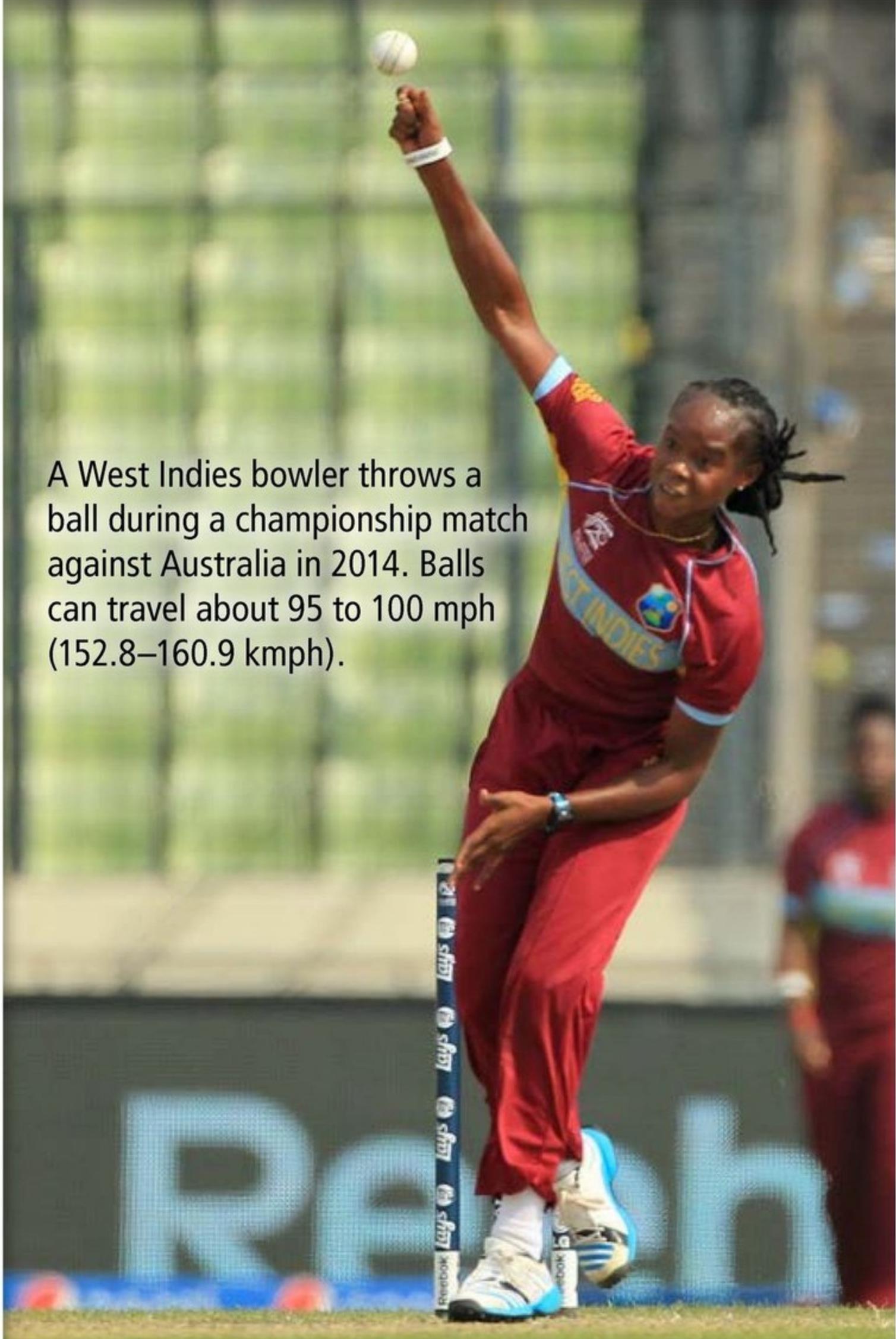
The nineteenth century is known as “the Golden Age of Cricket.” Bowlers started bowling overarm, and batters **adapted** to balls bowled at a higher rate of speed. Cricket spread all over the world: teams formed in the United States, Canada, Australia, India, South Africa, New Zealand, and throughout the Caribbean. In the late nineteenth century, what are now thought of as the first Test-level cricket matches were played. Test matches are long, multiday matches that decide international championships.

Do You Know?

Today, cricket is popular in many of England’s former colonies, but not in the United States. While the sport was popular in early America, the rising popularity of baseball in the late 1800s changed that. Probably based on an English children’s game called *rounders*, baseball, with its faster pace and shorter game-time, was a better fit for American tastes, and by the early 1900s, cricket had all but vanished from the United States.



Cricket was featured in the 1900 Olympic Games. Since then, cricket's popularity around the world has grown. Now, international teams play against nations that ruled cricket during its Golden Age. They bring new things to the sport, like the fast bowling style created by West Indian players.



A West Indies bowler throws a ball during a championship match against Australia in 2014. Balls can travel about 95 to 100 mph (152.8–160.9 kmph).

Cricket Today

Today, the best teams in the world play cricket on a professional international level in Test matches, with ten national teams currently competing at this level. Outside the Test level, there are numerous levels of play. Women's teams play at the national and international levels. There are also leagues and special matches that follow special rules.



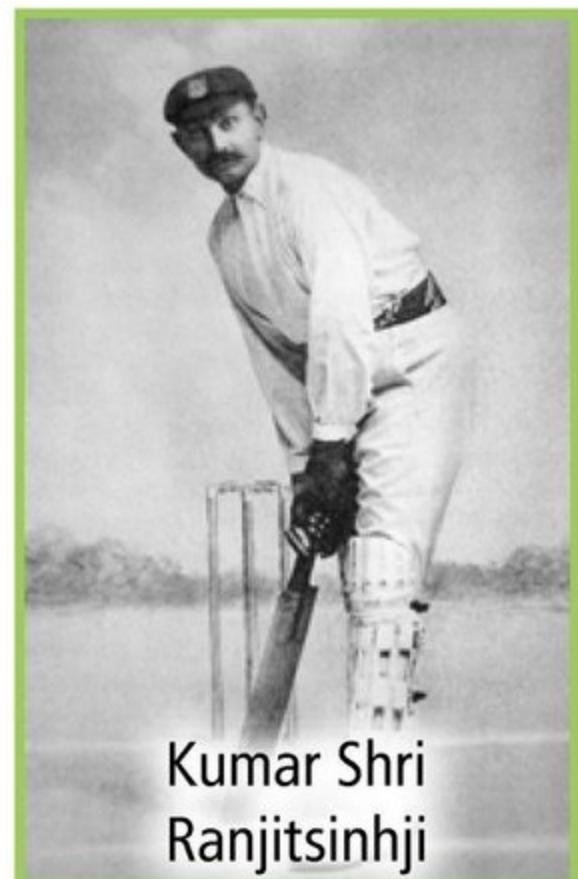
Heroes of the Oval

Over the centuries, there have been many outstanding cricket players. W. G. Grace (1848–1915) changed the way the sport was played by creating a smart, **complicated** batting style that could handle a variety of bowling styles. He's widely considered one of the most important cricket players ever.



W. G. Grace

Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji (koo-MAR SHREE rahn-JEET-seeng-jee), known as "Ranji" (1872–1933), was a royal leader in his home country of India. He was introduced to cricket in England and became one of the sport's best batters. The Ranji Trophy, the Indian national championship, is named after him.



Kumar Shri Ranjitsinhji



Claire Taylor

Since 1889, each year five players are chosen as cricket's Players of the Year. In 2009, Claire Taylor (1975–) became the first woman to win the honor.



With a bat, a ball, and a wicket, young players can hone their skills. These boys strike up a game in Asia.

Ready to Play?

Cricket has a rich history, but its future is in the hands of tomorrow's batters, bowlers, and fielders. There are a few things new players should remember: protect the wicket, keep an eye on the ball, and hold on to cricket's spirit of fair play and respect. Good luck, and good game!

Glossary

adapted (<i>v.</i>)	changed to fit a new or specific situation or environment (p. 11)
behavior (<i>n.</i>)	the way a human or other animal acts in a certain situation (p. 9)
boundary (<i>n.</i>)	something, such as a fence or line, that marks the point at which an area begins or ends (p. 9)
cherish (<i>v.</i>)	to treat with love and care; to hold dear or protect (p. 10)
complicated (<i>adj.</i>)	having many parts or details that are difficult to understand; complex (p. 14)
draw (<i>n.</i>)	a sports event or game that ends without a definite winner; a tie (p. 9)
fielding (<i>adj.</i>)	playing in the field of a baseball or cricket game (p. 8)
international (<i>adj.</i>)	concerning two or more nations or countries (p. 4)
umpires (<i>n.</i>)	officials who rule on plays at a sporting event (p. 9)

Cricket

A Reading A-Z Level S Leveled Book

Word Count: 1,020

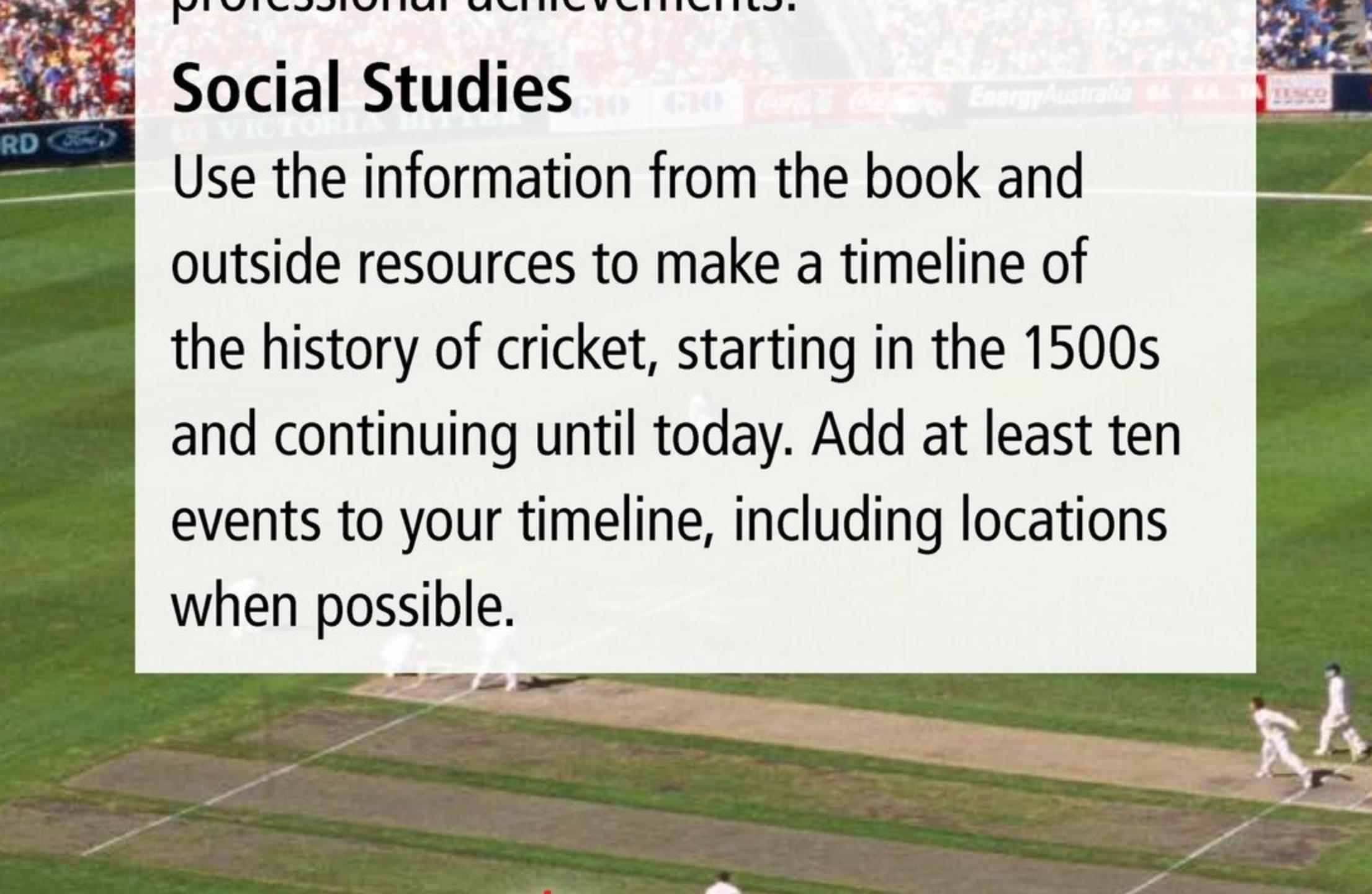
Connections

Writing

Research to learn more about a famous cricket player. Write a newspaper article about that player, including when he or she began playing cricket and his or her professional achievements.

Social Studies

Use the information from the book and outside resources to make a timeline of the history of cricket, starting in the 1500s and continuing until today. Add at least ten events to your timeline, including locations when possible.



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