

## Vocabulary: Baseball

The two most popular “bat and ball” games are *cricket* and *baseball*. While cricket is popular in England, Australia, India, Pakistan and South Africa, baseball is popular in the USA, Canada, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.



### History

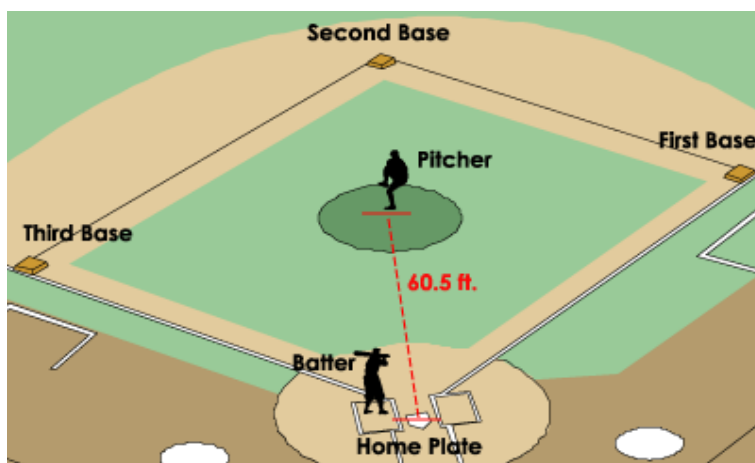
In the 1840s, a New York firefighter called Alexander Joy Cartwright helped to develop a ball game called "baseball". In 1845, he formed the “Knickerbocker Baseball Club” and created a set of rules which became the basis of modern baseball. Cartwright umpired the first official game on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1846, in New Jersey. The teams were the *Knickerbockers* and the *New York Nine*.

In 1857 the *National Association of Baseball Players* was established, and in 1901 the *American League* was founded.

The *World Series* is baseball's biggest event, and the USA and Canada have the strongest teams in the world. Professional leagues have been established in other countries including Cuba, the Netherlands, Australia, Japan, Puerto Rico, Italy, Venezuela, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Korea, Taiwan and China. Leagues for women have also been created in several countries, and international competitions have been organized since 2001. The most famous baseball player is Babe Ruth (1895-1948).

### How the Game is Played

Baseball is played between two teams of nine players and there are four umpires. The teams take turns pitching and batting. The *pitcher* throws the ball from the *pitcher's mound*, with the objective of throwing it over a pentagonal rubber slab known as the *home plate*. The *batter* stands on one side of this plate, and tries to hit the ball when it is pitched. If the batter doesn't hit a pitch that is in the *strike zone*, meaning it's over the plate and not too high or too low, the



umpire calls a *strike*. If three strikes are called, the batter is *out*. If the batter hits a pitch and the ball is caught by one of the *fielders*, the batter is also out. But if the batter hits a pitch into *fair territory* and it isn't caught, he drops his bat and runs towards *first base*. If a fielder gets the ball and touches the batter with it (*tags* him) before he gets to first base, he is out. But if he gets there without being *tagged*, he is *safe*. He can either stop at first base, or if he thinks he can get to second base safely, he can keep going. Once he stops at a base, the next batter comes in. If the next batter hits a pitch, the first batter can run to the next base, and so on. If he can run all the bases and get back to the home plate without being tagged, he scores a *run* for the team. His team will keep sending out new players to bat until three of them are “out”. The opposing team then has a chance to bat and score some runs. When both teams have

batted, the first *inning* is over. In professional baseball, the team with the most runs after nine innings is the winner.

The pitcher works closely with his *catcher*, who is the player standing behind the home plate who catches the ball whenever it isn't hit by the batter. The catcher often decides which type of pitch the pitcher should use, and uses secret hand signals to communicate with him. Pitchers use many styles of pitches, including *fast balls*, *curve balls*, *sliders* and *change ups*. One of the arts of pitching is to disguise the type of pitch in order to confuse the batter. But if the batter hits a pitch, he could hit a *fly ball* (high into the air), a *pop fly* (almost vertically), a *line drive* (fast and low to the *outfield*), or he could hit a gentle *bunt* (into the *infield*). If the batter hits a pitch high and far, *out of the park*, he scores a *home run*. If he does this when the bases are *loaded* (there are base runners already waiting on all three bases), all of the runners can score a run on the same *play*. This is called a *grand slam*, and it's the highest-scoring play in baseball. The dream of every player is to bat in the World Series, hit a *home run* and score a *grand slam*. Nothing in baseball could be greater than this.

**Source:** <https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/sports-baseball.htm>