

## Baseball Basics

Teams consist of nine players and take turns fielding and at batting, with the home team batting second.

An **inning** consists of batters from each team taking their turn at bat until three batters are out. A game lasts nine innings, but is extended into extra innings if the scores are level.



The fielding side consists of a **pitcher**, **catcher**, four **infielders** (first baseman, second baseman, shortstop and third baseman), and three **outfielders** (left field, centre field and right field).

The pitcher throws overhand, using a variety of deliveries from a raised mound to the home plate - a distance of 60.5ft (18.4 m). The pitcher is aiming to through the baseball into the strike zone (the top of the strike zone is the mid-level between the top of the batter's shoulders and his belt, and the bottom is at the level just beneath the knee cap. The right and left boundaries of the strike zone correspond to the edges of the home plate.)

An opposing batter attempts to hit the pitches and then **get on base**, while the fielders attempt to get the batter out through various plays.

There are 5 main ways a player can be out:

- the "strike-out": occurs when the batter acquires three strikes before hitting the ball (within the field); the batter never becomes a runner. (Hence the phrase "Three strikes and you are out".)
- the "ground out": when the batter hits the ball but a defensive player retrieves it after it has touched the ground and throws it to another defensive player standing on first base before the runner arrives there.
- the "force out": occurs when a runner is required to run to a base (by rule) but fails to reach it before a defensive player reaches the base with the ball. The "ground out" is actually a special case of "force out."
- the "fly out": if a defensive player catches a hit ball before it touches the ground, the batter (now a runner) is out (regardless of his location).
- the "tag out": while between bases, a runner is out if a defensive player touches him with a held ball.

If the pitcher throws four pitches outside the **strike zone**, the batter obtains a base on **balls**, and gets a **walk** to first base.

A run is scored every time a batter becomes a **runner** and crosses home plate after touching each base in the prescribed order. A home run is a base hit in which the batter is able to circle all the bases, ending at home plate and scoring a run himself (along with a run scored by each runner who was already on base).

When the fielding team gets their opponents' three batters (or runners) out, the teams swap roles.

If the score is level after nine innings, play continues into extra innings until one team has scored more than the other in an equal number of turns at bat.