

**Baseball** is a sport played between two teams usually of nine players each. It is a bat-and-ball game in which a pitcher throws (pitches) a hard, fist-sized, leather-covered ball toward a batter on the opposing team. The batter attempts to hit the baseball with a tapered cylindrical bat, made of wood (as required in professional baseball) or a variety of other materials (as allowed in many nonprofessional games). A team scores runs only when batting, by advancing its players—primarily via hits—counterclockwise past a series of four markers called bases arranged at the corners of a ninety-foot square, or "diamond." The game, played without time restriction, is structured around nine segments called innings. In each inning, both teams are given the opportunity to bat and score runs; a team's half-inning ends when three outs are recorded against that team.

There are four basic tools of baseball: the bat, the ball, the mitt, and the field.

- The bat is an offensive tool, either made of wood or aluminum depending on the game being played. It is a long, hard stick, about 2 inches (5 centimeters) in diameter, except at the handle, which is about 1-inch (2.5 centimeters) diameter.
- The ball is white for baseball (though other colors can be used) with red lacing about the size of a fist. Softball uses a white or yellow ball (usually) with white lacing about the size of two fists.
- The glove or mitt is a defensive tool, made of leather, worn on the players hand to aide in catching the ball. It takes various shapes to meet the unique needs of the defensive position of the player.
- The game is played on a field, whose dimensions vary depending on the age of the players. However, every field has a diamond, with bases at its corners, that the offensive players circumnavigate, as mentioned above. That part of the field close to the bases is called the infield, and that part distant from the bases is called the outfield.

