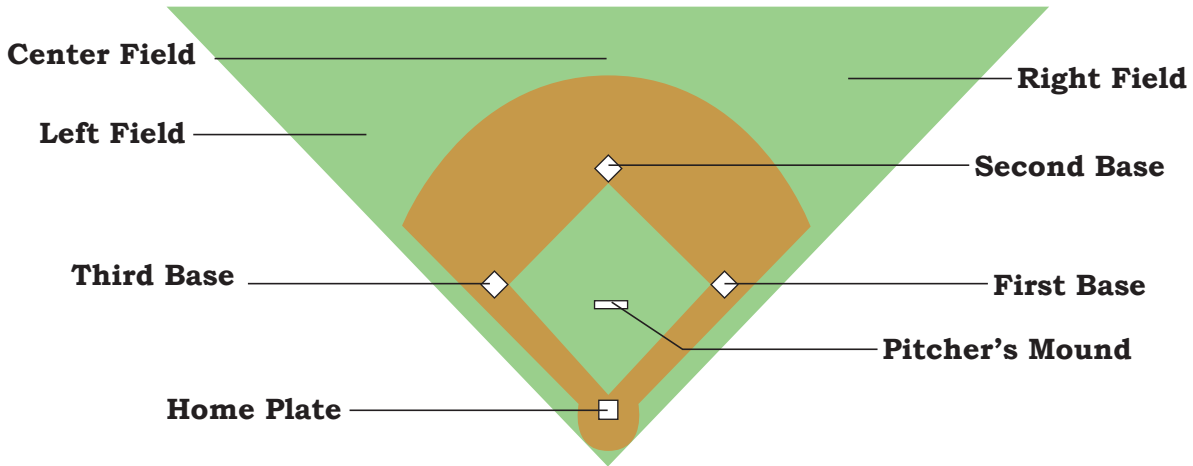


The Basics of Baseball

To play baseball, you need two teams of nine players. The object of the game is to score more **runs** than the other team. To score a run, a player must hit the ball, run all the bases, and make it back to home plate.

Baseball is played on a **field**. A baseball field has an **infield** and an **outfield**. The infield has four **bases**: first, second, third, and home plate. In the middle of the infield is the **pitcher's mound**, where the pitcher stands when he throws the ball. The **catcher** squats behind the **batter**, who hits the ball with a bat from home plate. The **umpire**, who does not play for either team, makes sure that the game is played fairly.



Players take turns trying to hit the ball. If the batter can't hit the ball after three swings he's out, and the next player goes up to bat. When a batter swings but doesn't hit the ball, it's called a **strike**.

If the batter hits the ball, he or she runs to first base. When the next batter hits the ball, the first batter runs to second while the one that was just batting runs to first. If a player from the other team catches the ball while it's in the air, the batter is out.

If the ball is in the air, players in the field try to catch it. If the ball has hit the ground, the **fielder** (a person playing in the field) must either throw it to a **baseman** (a fielder standing at a base) or run to the base before the runner gets there. If the baseman catches the ball before the runner gets to the base, the runner is **out**. After three outs, the teams switch places, and the team that was up to bat takes the field.

A game of baseball is split up into **innings**, which end when both teams have taken their turns playing in the field and going to bat. Innings are played nonstop for seven or nine innings. The team with the most runs at the end of those innings wins.

VOCABULARY Define these terms:

run: _____

umpire: _____

strike: _____

fielder: _____

baseman: _____

inning: _____

Q&A

1. What happens when a batter misses the ball three times in a row?

2. How does a player score a run?
