

Story of Cricket

Question 1: Test cricket is a unique game in many ways. Discuss some of the ways in which it is different from other team games. How are the peculiarities of Test cricket shaped by its historical beginnings as a village game?

Answer: Compared to other modern sports, a typical game of cricket takes a longer time to finish. A Test Match is played for five days and it still ends in a draw. A one-day match takes a whole day to finish. Even the shortest version; the Twenty-Twenty; takes about four hours to finish. Most of the modern sports take around ninety minutes to finish. The lengthy nature of cricket is because of its origin in the pre-industrialization days when the economy was purely agrarian. During off seasons for farming; people had plenty of time to watch a cricket match for several days.

Cricket grounds can be of different shapes and sizes in different parts of the world. Cricket was the earliest modern team sport to be codified. The rules and regulations of cricket evolved on their own over a period of time. During its early years, cricket was played on the commons. The size of the commons land was variable and no boundary was present. The length of the boundary line was decided by the umpires after taking the consensus of the captains of the two teams.

Question 2: Describe one way in which in the nineteenth century, technology brought about a change in equipment and give one example where no change in equipment took place.

Answer: Vulcanised rubber was used for making pads and gloves. The cricket bat has remained more or less same over the years. These two examples show the effect and non-effect of technological changes on cricket.

Question 3: Explain why cricket became popular in India and the West Indies. Can you give reasons why it did not become popular in countries in South America?

Answer: Playing cricket was a manifestation by the elites of aping their colonial masters. Hence, cricket became popular in British colonies; like India and the West Indies. South America was never under the British rule and hence cricket could not become popular in South American countries.

Question 4: Give brief explanations for the following:

(a) The Parsis were the first Indian community to set up a cricket club in India.

Answer: The Parsis were rich businessmen and were the first to ape the western lifestyle. Hence, they were the first Indian community to set up a cricket club in India.

(b) Mahatma Gandhi condemned the Pent angular tournament.

Answer: The Pentagonal tournament was a contest among teams which were formed on communal lines. Hence, Mahatma Gandhi condemned this tournament.

(c) The name of the ICC was changed from the Imperial Cricket Conference to the International Cricket Conference.

Answer: The term 'Imperial' in the earlier version carried the connotations of the colonial period and hegemony. When other cricket playing nations grew in prominence, the name was changed to International Cricket Conference in 1965.

(d) The shift of the ICC headquarters from London to Dubai.

Answer: The ICC headquarters were shifted from London to Dubai mainly to shift the office to a tax-free destination. Many cricket playing nations did not have double taxation treaty with England. So, shifting the HQs was a purely commercial decision. Some analysts also see it as a symbolic shift of power from Europe to Asia.

Question 5: How have advances in technology, especially television technology, affected the development of contemporary cricket?

Answer: Cricket became a marketable game which could generate huge revenues. Cricket boards became richer by selling television rights to television companies. The TV channels made money by selling advertising slots. For companies, cricket provided opportunity to advertise their products and services to a large and captive audience.

Cricketers became celebrities because of continuous television coverage. Apart from getting better pay from their cricket boards, the cricketers also began to earn huge sums of money by appearing in commercials.

Television coverage resulted in expansion of audience base for the game. People from small towns and villages could see and experience the joy of cricket. Many children from the small towns could dream of becoming cricketers, by emulating their idols.