

Title: Cricket: A Religion, a Festival, and an Emotion

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Level: Upper Intermediate to Advanced

Genre: Sport - Cricket

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Cricket is the most popular game in Bangladesh. Once, **football** used to rule here in Bangladesh, but since the popularity of cricket started to increase, it has taken the place of football as the number one game of the country. Now this country is addicted to cricket, and cricket is the national passion.

In Bangladesh the first dream of most young people is to play cricket for their country. They want to be superstars like their local idols *Shakib Al Hasan, Mashrafe Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Mushfiqur Rahim, and Mustafizur Rahaman*. But in a country like Bangladesh not every **parent** can **afford** the expense of turning their son or daughter into a famous cricketer, because becoming a cricketer is something of a luxury here.

When I was around 5 or 6 years of age, I started to learn **a bit** about cricket, and since then my love for cricket has continued to increase. I remember, in my early days, I didn't even know how to hold the cricket bat. However, later I learned how to do this properly. Not only did

I love playing cricket, but with time my love for watching cricket on television increased too. When I was in school, and Bangladesh was playing a **match**, what was happening in the game was always a big concern for me. As the internet wasn't widely **available** in those days, we depended on either television or **radio** to follow the games. Of course, we couldn't watch TV or listen to the radio while we were at school. It was so hard not to know about what was happening! However, one of our teachers, Mr. *Aminul Islam*, was a big cricket **fan** and he often used to call his home to get the latest score of a match and then he would let us all know. Ah! How beautiful those days were!



At that time, Bangladesh was a very early **participant** in test cricket games, and our national **team** was not so strong, but it was **improving**, particularly in One Day **International** (ODI) games. Bangladesh used to be defeated in almost every game, but with the **passage** of time Bangladesh also started to fight back and began to win against the more powerful cricket

nations. In 2005, Bangladesh **achieved** a famous win against the world's champion team, Australia, in a game in the city of Cardiff in Wales. Our country's first cricket superstar, young *Mohammad Ashraful* scored an outstanding *century** in the match, which surprised the **entire** cricketing world. That night, people in Bangladesh were so happy that they came out of their houses to party on the streets. I was not even 10 at that time, and I cried tears of joy seeing my country win a game against the world champions, Australia. I was so **excited** that after the game I was not able to sleep, and when I **woke** up the next morning, I changed the **channels** on the television one after the other to see all the reports made about the famous Bangladesh win over Australia.

Since then, Bangladesh has **managed** to win many big matches on important occasions. Before that, Bangladesh used to depend on only one or two players to win a game, but that has changed, and nowadays, Bangladesh team members play together as a strong team. Some **individual** players, like *Shakib Al Hasan*, *Tamim Iqbal*, and *Mushfiqur Rahim* are not only the best players of their country, but they also **dominate** the world cricket ranking.



A lot of new young stars are coming into the team and are also **performing** well. In 2020, Bangladesh won the under-19 World **Cup** championship in South Africa by **beating** its neighbour, India. The women of Bangladesh are also playing cricket so well nowadays, and they play in every **major ICC tournament*** too. In fact, in 2018, the Bangladesh women's team won the first major ICC Trophy for Bangladesh when they won the Asia Cup.

Cricket is not just a game here in Bangladesh. Rather, it is a festival. To mark the wins of the Bangladesh national cricket team, everyone, from children to the **elderly**, people of all ages in fact, come out of their homes to **participate** in the victory **procession**. The stadiums are always **packed** whenever Bangladesh is playing on their own **soil**. In the rural **areas** of the country, a lot of people get together in the **tea-stalls*** to watch their country playing on the television. In the urban areas, while some people watch the games on television at home, others

go out and watch the games on large **screens** near their homes. This is **probably** the reason why the Bangladesh cricket team always addresses the large crowds supporting them all over the country. Even though a cricket team is usually made up of only 11 players, the Bangladeshi national team members speak to their supporters as if they are the 12th player in their team. When Bangladesh is playing **abroad**, it doesn't matter in which country the Bangladeshi team is playing, Bangladeshi people always go to the stadium to support their national team, *The Tigers**.

Nowadays, more parents support their son or daughter if they wish to take up cricket as a career than was the case a **decade** ago. Although cricket is an expensive game, and the **equipment** that is needed to play cricket usually costs a lot, still a lot of parents support their children who wish to play. They do everything they can to help them **achieve** their dream of representing Bangladesh on the world stage. Every cricket-loving Bangladeshi person hopes that Bangladesh will win against their powerful opponents on a more **regular** basis, and that Bangladesh will win the World Cup. Reaching this **goal** will **create** a wave of great joy across the whole country. It will let the whole world know that we Bangladeshi's can really do what we want to do, and that we truly can achieve what we struggle to achieve.



Learning Activities

Vocabulary

1) Words from the second 1000 high frequency General Service Word List (GSL).

These words are very common in English so pay close attention to learning these words before you learn other words.

abroad

century* (see

excited

afford

glossary)

fan

beating

cup

football

(a) bit (of/about)

elderly

improving

entire

international

(a) lot (of)	passage performing	screens
managed	probably	soil
match	procession	tea* (see glossary)
packed	radio	woke (up)
parent	regular	

2) **Words from the Academic Word List (AWL).** These words are necessary to know for academic study, especially at university level.

achieve	decade	major
area	dominate	participant /
available	equipment	participate
channels	goal	team
create	individual	

3) **Off-list words.** These words are not as common in English as the words in the two lists above. You do not need to learn these words until you know all the words in lists 1 and 2 above, well, which are written in **bold** in the story.

addicted	career	cricket
bat	champion	festival

idols

rural

trophy

internet

score

updates

luxury

stadium

urban

opponents

superstar

passion

television / TV

Glossary

century = Literally this word means ‘one hundred years’, but in cricket this word means 100 runs (or more) in a single innings of a game.

ICC tournament = A major competition organised by the ICC (the International Cricket Council, which is the organisation that governs world cricket).

tea stalls = small shops, often outside or on the road side, that sell drinks of tea and snacks.

The Tigers = The name of the National Bangladeshi cricket team. The Royal Bengal Tiger is the national animal of Bangladesh.

4) Comprehension Questions

- a) **Remembering:** What event took place in Cardiff that surprised the world? Why was it so surprising? How did people in Bangladesh celebrate this event?

- b) **Remembering:** According to the writer, why is it difficult for a young person to become a successful cricketer in Bangladesh?
- c) **Understanding:** What does it mean to be ‘addicted’ to something? What do you think the writer means when he says that Bangladeshi people are addicted to cricket?
- d) **Understanding:** What does the expression “*to cry tears of joy*” mean? What does the writer mean when he says that winning the World Cup “*will create a wave of great joy across the whole country*”?

5) Critical Thinking Questions

- a) **Analysing:** What is the difference between a ‘passion’ and an ‘obsession’ (or an ‘addiction’)? Give some examples that explain your ideas. Why do you think Bangladeshi people as a nation, are so in love with cricket, and not some other interest like the game of chess (in Russia), or rugby (in New Zealand), or ice-hockey (in Canada)?
- b) **Applying:** How important is cricket to you? Is there anything else (not a person) that you are passionate about? Why/why not? If you had unlimited resources and time, and you could pursue any interest you wish, what would it be, and why?
- c) **Evaluating:** Is it a good thing to be passionate about an interest, such as sport or a hobby? When might it be a positive quality in an individual? When might it be a negative quality in an individual? How do you feel about people who are crazy about their interests and think and talk of nothing else? In what ways is a national obsession with a sport helpful for a country. In what ways might it be harmful?

d) **Creating: Do either activity i) OR activity ii) below...**

i) Work with a partner. Go to the Internet and find a **short** video that shows **the highlights** of a one day international cricket match between Bangladesh and another country. Watch the video and make notes of the important events that took place during the game. Record the names of the key players who were involved in the game and anything important that they did.

Use your notes to create a mock radio news report, in English, together. Do NOT copy information directly from your source material. Put everything into your own words. Now, report the game to your classmates as if they are a radio audience and you are two cricket commentators. Try not to read directly from your notes, and try to make your commentary sound as exciting as possible. You could even play the video (or part of the video) with the sound off as you give the commentary. Each person in your pair should speak for an equal amount of time. Be prepared to answer questions from your classmates about your report.

OR

ii) Work with a partner. Choose a famous sports star that you both admire and do some research about that person. Create a set of research notes in English and use these to make a short six-minute video or PowerPoint presentation that gives information about his/her life and achievements, along with pictures and text, and a statement about why you both admire him/her. **Do NOT copy information directly from the sources you use, but summarise the information and put it into your own words.** Make sure to include a list of

references to show where your information and pictures come from. Each person in your pair should speak for an equal amount of time. You should not read directly from your notes. Present your video to your classmates and be prepared to answer questions about it afterwards.