

Play Ball!

After watching America's favorite pastime, enjoy these fun baseball-themed activities!



FUN READING ACTIVITIES

A MAGNIFICENT CATCH!

Pretend that you are in the stands, bottom of the 9th inning, and you see the winning homerun ball of your favorite player coming right toward you! Tell a story or write a journal entry that describes what you saw, what you felt, and what you did.



FAN FAVORITE

Do you have a favorite baseball player? Visit baseballhall.org and choose any member of the Hall of Fame. Compare the statistics of that player with your favorite player. How do they match up? Which one has more hits? Strike outs? Homeruns? Longer career? If you want to write a fan letter, major league team addresses can be found at mlb.mlb.com.

BASEBALL BRAINSTORM

Do you know the expression, "You're playing hardball"? That's called a sports metaphor, comparing everyday life to sports. Everyday conversation is full of sports metaphors. With a friend, list at least 10 sports metaphors that people use all the time. Then define or "translate" what they actually mean.

I SPY...

The game of baseball and its venue — a ball park or even a playground — are full of geometric shapes. What shapes can you find at the ballpark? Make a list with a sketch beside each of the shapes you see on and off the field. Is there one shape that you see more than the rest?

MAP IT OUT

Plan the ultimate summer vacation for baseball fans. Go to ballparks.com/baseball/index.htm for a map of the current major league baseball parks in the country. Which park would you like to visit? How many miles is this park from your house? How could you get there? Would you have to travel through any other states? If so, which ones?

DESIGN A DOG

Hot dogs are a favorite food at most ballparks. Depending on where you are in the country, the toppings on a hot dog can be quite creative. Design a signature "dog" to sell at your local ballpark. What toppings would it include? What would you call it? How much would it cost? For fun, create an ad for your design.



"THERE IS NO JOY IN MUDVILLE"...

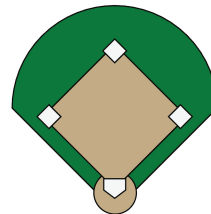
The best-known poem about baseball is "Casey at the Bat." Do research: What is the setting? Was this poem inspired by a particular game? Now read the poem carefully. Does the ending surprise you? You be the author. (A) Rewrite the last two stanzas of the poem to change the meaning, (B) write a story about the time you stepped in for Casey, or (C) turn the poem into a story from Casey's point of view.

This poem was written to be sung at games. Try it to the tune of "Great Big Brownie Smile" or another tune.

RUNNING THE BASES

Bases are loaded! You hit a grand slam home run. Every player will run from their base to home plate. How many total feet will all players run? Make a diagram to help find the answer.

HINT: A baseball diamond is a 90 x 90 foot square; that means there are 90 feet between each of the four bases.

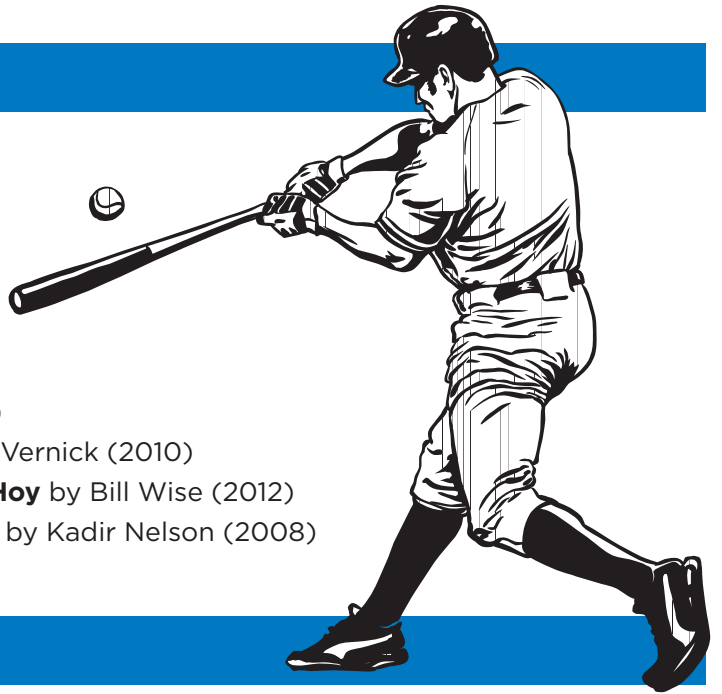


PERSONAL PENNANT

Using colored construction paper and markers, design and make a pennant for yourself, your family or a friend. What color paper will you choose? Be sure to display your name somewhere in the design. On the pennant, write words or draw pictures that show your strengths and/or interests. Make streamers or add ribbon if you wish.

BASEBALL-THEMED BOOKS

- Dad, Jackie and Me** by Myron Uhlburg (2010)
Dear Ichiro by Jean Okimoto (2002)
H Is for Home Run by Brad Herzog (2004)
Home Run by David Diehl (2008)
Michael's Golden Rules by Deloris Jordan (2007)
Players in Pigtails by Shana Corey (2003)
Randy Riley's Really Big Hit by Chris Van Dusen (2012)
She Loved Baseball: The Effa Manley Story by Audrey Vernick (2010)
Silent Star: The Story of Deaf Major Leaguer William Hoy by Bill Wise (2012)
We Are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball by Kadir Nelson (2008)



POETRY GRAND SLAM

Casey at the Bat

by Ernest Lawrence Thayer (1888)

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play,
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,
A pall-like silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
Clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
They thought, 'If only Casey could but get a whack at that-
We'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat.'

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,
And the former was a hoodoo, while the latter was a cake;
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
For there seemed but little chance of Casey getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;
And when the dust had lifted, and men saw what had occurred,
There was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from five thousand throats and more there rose a lusty yell;
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;
It pounded on the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile lit Casey's face.
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt;
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,
Defiance flashed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped-
'That ain't my style,' said Casey. 'Strike one!' the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore;
'Kill him! Kill the umpire!' shouted some one on the stand;
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the dun sphere flew;
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, 'Strike two!'

'Fraud!' cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered 'Fraud!'
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer has fled from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go.
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,
And somewhere men are laughing, and little children shout;
But there is no joy in Mudville- mighty Casey has struck out.

For more fun and activities, visit RIF.org.

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