Lesson 3 – Pre-Visit
Baseball at the Movies

Objective: Students will be able to:
• Read and analyze movie reviews written by professional critics.
• Watch a baseball film and analyze various film elements.
• Write critical reviews of a baseball film.

Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Advance Preparation:
- Select two or more movie reviews for class analysis (many can be found at www.rottentomatoes.com)
- Select a baseball movie for students to watch and review. It is recommended that you do not simply depend on the rating, but that you view the movie in advance to ensure its suitability.

Materials Needed:
- Copies of the movie reviews selected earlier
- A baseball movie appropriate for middle school students
- Your preferred means of screening the movie
- Copies of the “Baseball at the Movies: Viewing Worksheet” (included)
- Copies of the “Baseball at the Movies: Review Guide” (included)
- Notebook paper
- Pencils or pens

Vocabulary:
Critic - A professional who publishes his or her opinion on a particular movie/play/book
Applicable Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.6.9 Compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.9 Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.6 Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.9 Analyze a case in which two or more texts provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1, W.7.1, W.8.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4, W.7.4, W.8.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Applicable Common Core State Standards (Continued):

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.5, W.8.5** With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
1. To begin this lesson, discuss that film has been an important medium of popular culture communication for the last century. Movies both reflect and influence people’s interests. Generally, people want to see movies that are about things they enjoy. Since many people like baseball, baseball movies have been popular for a very long time. Tell students that there have been well over one hundred movies made about baseball, and new ones are released every year.

2. Have students volunteer baseball movies they have seen. Students may list anything from wide release movies, to made-for-TV movies, to documentaries. Students may also reference movies that are not directly related to baseball, but incorporate it in some way. Create a class list on the board. If multiple students have seen the same movie, simply keep a count behind that particular title.

3. Review the class list. How many different baseball movies have students seen? Which movies are the most popular?

4. Discuss the movies most viewed by your students. Why are these particular films so popular? Prompt students to think about the films’ plots, characters, dialog, and overall messages.

   For example, let’s say that many students have seen the movie “The Sandlot.” Is this movie enjoyable because students can identify with the characters, or because the dialog is funny, or because the plot is entertaining? Students might agree that it’s a popular movie for all of those reasons.

5. Introduce movie reviews. Explain that movie reviews written by professional movie critics often appear in newspapers, online, on radio, and on television.

6. Ask students, “How many of you have ever read or heard a movie review?” “Did you see the movie reviewed?” “Did you agree with the reviewer?”

7. Provide students with copies of the movie reviews you selected earlier.
8. Read the reviews aloud. Define any unfamiliar vocabulary words. Have students compare and contrast the critics’ opinions. Discuss different elements of the movie addressed by the critics’ reviews:
   - Characters
   - Actors
   - Plot summary
   - Comparison to novel (if applicable)
   - Opinion

9. Introduce the activity.
1. Explain that students will be watching a baseball movie and writing their own critical reviews.

2. Provide students with the “Baseball at the Movies: Viewing Worksheet”. Have students read through the questions before viewing the movie so that they are aware of what movie elements to watch for.

3. Screen the baseball movie of your choice. Allow students to take notes during the screening. You may choose to grade students on their attentiveness during the film.

4. After the movie, provide time for students to respond to worksheet questions. Students may use their own paper if they need more space.

5. Review students’ responses to the worksheet questions. Encourage classroom discussion, especially about points on which students disagree.

6. Provide students with the “Baseball at the Movies: Review Guide”.

7. Have students begin working on their movie reviews following the format laid out on the guide sheet.

8. Students should finish their reviews for homework if not completed in class, or you could have them spend a couple of days working on it in class and revising.

**Conclusion:**

To conclude this lesson, find and print professional reviews of the movie you watched as a class. Have students compare and contrast their opinions to those of the professional critics. Do students agree or disagree with the critics’ assessments? Why?
1. Who are the 5 most important characters in the film? List the names of the actor or actress playing each role.

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2. Summarize the plot of the movie.

3. What group of people would like this movie (demographics)?

4. Did you like this movie? Why or why not?

5. What rating would you give this movie? (1-5 Stars, 5 being the best) Why?

6. What spoilers might ruin the movie for viewers if you told them about it?

7. All movies teach a lesson (theme/moral). What did you learn from this one?
Use this guide to help you construct your movie review. Refer to your worksheet answers to help you express your opinions.

1. Title – Give your review a catchy title that will grab readers’ attention. Your title can indicate if your review will be positive or negative.

2. Paragraph 1 – Opening paragraph – In this paragraph you may summarize the film (don’t give away the ending!), and generally state your opinion of the movie (positive or negative). You will get into more detail later.

3. Paragraph 2 and 3 – Discuss things that you liked about the movie in these paragraphs. Why did you like these elements? Use descriptive words to describe the plot, acting, music, etc.

4. Paragraph 4 and 5 – Discuss things that you did not like about the movie in these paragraphs. Explain why you did not like these elements. As you did in paragraphs 2 and 3, use lots of descriptive language.

5. Paragraph 6 and 7 – Characterization – In these paragraphs, focus on the characters in the movie. Remember, you can talk about characters that were not the lead actors! Did the actors portray the characters well? What was it about their portrayal that you liked or didn’t like? Will certain audience members be able to relate to certain characters? How? Will certain audience members not like certain characters? Why not?

6. Paragraph 8 – These are your final comments. You’ll want to say something here to encourage readers to see this movie, or maybe you’ll encourage readers to stay home and watch TV instead. At the end of this paragraph, give the movie a star rating out of 5.