

# Teacher's Guide for FACES

## April 2015 BASEBALL: The World's Pastime

Prepared by Heather Bode

Heather Bode grew up watching Major League Baseball spring training in Pompano Beach, Florida. She has many fond memories of getting autographs from the top players. She still has those autographs in a box somewhere.

### Getting Started

What is a pastime? Some might consider watching movies a pastime. Look at the following list of movies. What do they have in common? (*Answer: BASEBALL*)

- *Field of Dreams*
- *The Sandlot*
- *The Bad News Bears*
- *A League of Their Own*
- *The Perfect Game*
- *The Rookie*
- *42*
- *The Natural*
- *Major League*
- *Million Dollar Arm*
- *Eight Men Out*

Baseball is called America's Pastime. So why do you think the subtitle of the issue calls it the World's Pastime?

### High Five

(SL2) Break students into groups. Instruct each group to draw a baseball on a sheet of paper. After reading the five points, have the groups choose three and summarize them by writing them inside the baseball. Use the rest of the paper to list what each group knows about baseball.

### The Chicken: The Most Popular Bird in Baseball

(RL3) Compare/contrast team mascots. Discuss their overall purpose.

(SL2) Mascots have gained popularity in other sports also. There is even a reality show about being a mascot. Watch a clip from *Behind The Mask* on YouTube.

(W3) Assume you are a mascot. What is it like behind the mask? What are the perks? Is there a downside?

### In the Big Inning...

(L5) The title is a play on words. What is it? (In the beginning...)

(RL1/RI1)

1. Where did baseball come from?
2. Why shouldn't this be a surprise?

3. Who is credited with standardizing the rules?
4. Why was this crucial to the success/survival of the game?
5. How did the knowledge of baseball spread to the west, south, etc.?
6. List historical events coinciding with the spread.

(W7&8) Research: How did Abner Doubleday get credit for inventing baseball?

(SL1) Should the baseball Hall of Fame stay in Cooperstown? Why/why not?

### **Baseball: A Global Sport**

Geography Theme: MOVEMENT

(RST7) Use a world map to draw arrows indicating movement to show how baseball spread.

(RI6) Cuba vs. Spain

- What was the Spanish point of view/reason for banning baseball?
- What was the Cuban point of view/reason for playing baseball?

(RL8) Find evidence in the article supporting the idea that baseball is much more than a sport.

(RI1) What aspects of baseball make it easily adaptable to places all over the world?

### **Baseball in World War II/ Throw Like a Girl**

(RI1)

- Why did professional players enlist?
- Why was there a difference between minor/major league players seeing combat?
- What is the significance of Hitler's Youth Stadium being renamed Soldiers Field and being the sight of the European Theater of Operations World Series?
- Why did the military allow/encourage competition like this?

(W7) Conduct short research on African Americans serving in World War II.

(SL1) Discuss: The atrocities of Nazi Germany are well documented. Was America atrocity-free? What about Japanese War Relocation Camps? Segregation in the military and at home?

(RL7) Watch clips from *A League of Their Own Documentary* on YouTube. How does this help in understanding this sidebar? (Please view ahead of time as there may be parts you wish to edit out.)

(RL3) Compare/contrast women's professional baseball (AAGPBL) and men's professional baseball.

### **Breaking the Color Barrier: Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Major League Baseball**

(SL2) Watch clips of *42* or the movie trailer on YouTube. (Please preview.) Then read the account of Branch Rickey and Jackie Robinson at: [www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/robinson.htm](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/robinson.htm)

Evaluate the information presented in these formats.

(RL3) List characteristics of the following people:

- Branch Rickey
- Jackie Robinson
- Ben Chapman

(RST8) From looking at your list, what were Branch Rickey and Ben Chapman using to form their opinions of Jackie Robinson? Facts? Reasoned Judgment? Speculation?

(W1) Would you have been able to conduct yourself as Jackie Robinson did when faced with racism? What, in your opinion, makes this a global issue?

(SL1) When the movie *42* came out, there was some concern that Branch Rickey was painted as a good guy while some people think he was just using Jackie Robinson as a way to make money. Discuss the possibility: Even when motives are mixed, good things can come out of it.

### **The Babe Ruth of Puerto Rico**

(RL2) Roberto Clemente sent a message of the importance of giving back. How did he do this? Why did he do this? At what cost?

(SL1) Why is it important to have a hero from your own country?

(RL3) Compare/contrast Jackie Robinson and Roberto Clemente. Did you notice they both signed with the Dodgers? Is that important? Why?

(W7) Conduct short research into the plane crash and the aftermath of Clemente's death.

### **Baseball, Fame and Fortune**

(W7) Conduct short research to find out the top baseball salaries from 2014.

(RST7) Create a bar graph displaying these numbers and compare them to the average American household.

(SL2) Evaluate this information and compare it to the article. What are your thoughts on the disparity? (Keep in mind the good ways players can and do "give back" to communities.)

### **Where Baseball Is King**

(SL4) Research Dominican Republic baseball academies at: [www.mlb.com/dr/academies.jsp](http://www.mlb.com/dr/academies.jsp)  
What else do these camps focus on besides baseball? Why? Report your findings to the class.

(W7) Research the Dominican Republic. How big is it? What is the population? What is the level of poverty on the island? What do these statistics have to do with the level of determination by these young players?

### **Dear Tommy**

(RI1) List the benefits of seeking advice from a professional in a career field you might be interested in pursuing.

(RH7) Make a flow chart illustrating the steps Kevin took to get to the minor leagues. What should be the next step? What might happen instead?

Infer:

- Has this been a quick and easy journey?
- Why does Kevin play more than one position?
- Why does he also work part-time in the off season?

(SL1) Have you ever been injured playing a sport? Discuss the pros and cons of playing through an injury from two points of view: the athlete and the medical professional.

### **A Closer Look: Tools of the Trade**

Videos on how to make baseballs and baseball bats can be viewed on the Science Channel. Type in "baseball" in the search box.

### **Casey At The Bat**

(RL5) Explain the difference between this poem and Dear Tommy and/or another article in the issue.

(RL2) What is the message of the poem? Support your answer with details from the text.

(L4) Determine the meaning of these phrases based on context clues:

- "When Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same"
- "We'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat"
- "And the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake"
- "Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered fraud"

### **Wrap Up**

Major League Baseball recently announced plans to shorten the length of baseball games. Read about it at:

<http://ftw.usatoday.com/2015/02/mlb-pace-of-play-changes-new-rules-2015>

- What are your suggestions for speeding up the game?
- Why does Major League Baseball feel this is needed?
- A pastime is defined as something someone does for enjoyment rather than work. What does this say about American culture if we want to speed up our pastime?
- Will the world follow if MLB makes these changes?
- Predict what changes we might see in the future.
- Does MLB have the right to change the rules if baseball really is the world's pastime? Why/why not?