

BASEBALL TEACHERS NOTES – by Lindsay Clandfield

Level: Intermediate to Upper Intermediate

Aim: Students read about the language and popularity of baseball in the United States and play a quiz game related to baseball.

Warmer. Tell the class you are thinking of a sport (baseball). They have to ask you questions to find out what sport it is. You can only answer yes or no. They can ask a maximum of ten questions. They cannot ask questions like “It is football?” “Is it tennis?” (too easy!) Sample questions could be: Do you play this game individually or in teams? Is it played with a ball? etc. Can they guess the sport after ten guesses?

Stage 1. Give out the reading and the worksheet. Set a time limit for the first exercise (3 minutes).

Here are some sample answers:

1. *America’s National Pastime* 2. *How to play baseball* 3. *Baseball’s origins* 4. *Strikes and scandals* 5. *Baseball heroes* 6. *Baseball and language*

Stage 2. Do exercise 2 in pairs. Feedback as a class. Grammar note: Check the correct use of relative clauses here (e.g. a person who, a thing which...)

Stage 3. Before doing exercise 3 write out the expressions on the board. Ask the class if they can figure out what they mean. You could perhaps give a situation to describe each one. Then ask the class to do exercise 3.

Answers:

- a) “*He’s out in left field*” (*Left field is usually where the weakest fielder is put.*)
- b) “*She threw me a real curve ball with that question!*” (*A curve ball is a kind of pitch.*)
- c) “*You’re batting a thousand!*” (*Batting a thousand means you never miss a ball*)
- d) “*You’d better cover your bases*”
- e) “*Let’s touch base on that*”

Stage 4. Allow time for exercise 4. Tell the students to look at the article for any useful language that could help them talk about their sport. This could be done as a mini project for homework, or in another class.

Stage 5. Play Ball. To play the game, draw a big baseball field on the board. Label the bases home plate, first, second and third (they are laid out in the shape of a diamond, with home plate at the bottom). You could cut out and mount the baseball players beforehand. Each team should have four baseball player cards. Explain that you are the umpire and will decide if a question is right or wrong. Give students the rules and go over them. Give them time to choose what order they want to do the questions (they can answer questions in whichever order they choose, this is where the strategy of the game comes in). When they answer a question correctly, stick the card to the board on the corresponding base (with a bit of tape or blue-tack).

Variation: *Instead of using the questions provided in the game, why not ask the students to make their own questions? They could do this as an alternative to step 4, especially if they know something about baseball. If you have internet access you could direct them to the following sites and make ten multiple choice questions:*

www.baseball-almanac.com

www.baseballhistory.com

www.baseball1.com

www.baseball-links.com

Variation 2: *Use Play Ball as a revision game. Students make ten revision questions from the coursebook for each other with different levels of difficulty and then play.*

Play Ball answers:

Team A

Singles: 1) *caught, hit, pitched* 2) *The Star Spangled Banner (National Anthem)* 3) *October*

Doubles: 1) *Canada* 2) *possibilities include ketchup, mustard, pickle, relish...* 3) *Fidel Castro (Cuba) and Hugo Chavez (Venezuela)*

Triples: 1) *tobacco or chewing gum* 2) *Any Given Sunday (it's a football movie)*

Home Runs: 1) *Chicago* 2) *The New York Yankees or the New York Mets*

Team B:

Singles: 1) *ran, scored, struck* 2) *a baseball cap or helmet (for batters)* 3) *Yes.*

Doubles: 1) *bat, ball, glove, shin guards, mask and a padded chest protector (the last three are for the catcher)* 2) *Wesley Snipes* 3) *Chipmunk*

Triples: 1) *Joe DiMaggio* 2) *Kevin Costner*

Home Runs: 1) *One out of every three times you are at bat you get on base* 2) *A Grand Slam*