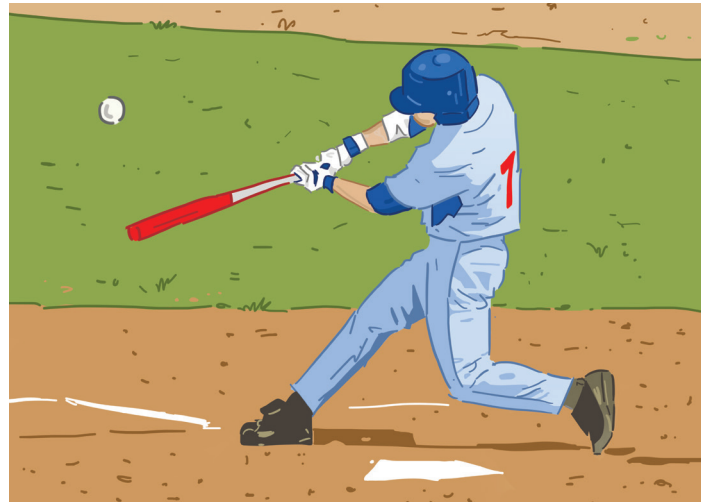


# Baseball

*“Baseball is like driving; it’s the one who gets home safely that counts.”*

—Tommy Lasorda, Los Angeles Dodgers



## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you play or have you ever played baseball?
2. Do you know how many players are on a baseball team?
3. Do you know where baseball originated?
4. Do you know what a baseball is made of?
5. Is baseball popular in your country?

## Quick Facts

**Sport:** Baseball

**Key Players:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Playing Surface:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Equipment:** \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. roster         | a) the player who tries to hit the ball with a bat   |
| _____ 2. pitcher        | b) a period of play in which both teams have a turn as offense/defense   |
| _____ 3. batter         | c) the small hill where the pitcher is positioned  |
| _____ 4. pitching mound | d) a list of people in an organization   |
| _____ 5. home plate     | e) the place where the batter stands to hit the ball and where the runner tries to return to in order to score a point |
| _____ 6. base           | f) a designated spot where a player is safe between plays  |
| _____ 7. tag            | g) the player who throws the ball  |
| _____ 8. inning         | h) a well-thought-out plan for achieving a goal  |
| _____ 9. strategy       | i) numerical records covering a period of time   |
| _____ 10. tee           | j) to touch a player and cause him/her to be out of play   |
| _____ 11. statistics    | k) a stick that you can position a ball on for hitting   |
| _____ 12. legend        | l) a person who is so well known that his/her name lives on long after death   |

## Reading

1. Baseball is a popular team sport that evolved from several “bat and ball” games in Europe. It is played on a baseball diamond with two teams. Nine players from a **roster** of about 25 play on each side at one time. The teams take turns playing offense and defense. To become a skilled baseball player, athletes must learn to throw, catch, and hit a baseball. It also helps to be a strong runner. Basic equipment includes a ball, a bat, gloves, and bases.
2. The two main opponents in baseball are the **pitcher** and the **batter**. The pitcher (defense) throws the ball from the **pitching mound**. The batter (offense) hits the ball from **home plate**. After a batter hits the ball, he or she has to run around the **bases** without getting **tagged** by a fielder or catcher on the other team. Runners get a point for their team if they make it back to home plate before the team is out. Unlike many other team sports, baseball does not use a clock. Each game has nine **innings**. An offensive team gets three outs in each inning before switching to the position of defense.
3. Baseball is a game of skill and **strategy**. Professional pitchers study batters closely and adjust their pitching style to *strike* them *out*. Strategic runners *steal bases* to get home faster. The manager also relies on strategy to help his team win. Players watch managers and catchers closely for signs about how to make each play.
4. Baseball is known as America’s pastime, but it is also popular in Canada, Mexico, Cuba, and Japan. Talented players worldwide are brought to America to play in the Major League. America Minor League baseball also has a huge fan base. Millions of children play in youth leagues as well. Very young kids play a variation called T-ball. This introduction to baseball allows players to hit the ball off a **tee**.
5. Baseball fans love to study baseball **statistics**. They keep track of the records of individual players and teams. Fans are interested in batting averages and the number of home runs, errors, and strikeouts. Collecting baseball cards with these statistics became popular in the early 1900s. Cards featuring **legends** like Babe Ruth, Ted Williams, and Mickey Mantle are the most valuable. Baseball cards must be rare and in good condition to be worth money to collectors.

## Comprehension

Read the statements below. Write T if the statement is true. Write F if the statement is false and correct the information. Write NM if the fact is not mentioned.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Baseball is played on a field called a baseball diamond.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Twenty-five players on each time play at one time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The pitcher and the catcher are the two main opponents in a baseball game.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Baseball requires a balance of skill and strategy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. T-ball is the name of a kids’ sport that is similar to baseball.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The wealthiest player on a team is the pitcher.



## “Take Me Out to the Ball Game”

Practice the lyrics to this famous baseball song.  
Search for the music online and sing along!

*Take me out to the ball game,  
Take me out with the crowd.  
Buy me some peanuts and Cracker Jack,  
I don't care if I never get back.  
Let me root, root, root for the home team,  
If they don't win, it's a shame.  
For it's one, two, three strikes, you're out,  
At the old ball game.*

—Jack Norworth

## Discussion

1. Is baseball a popular sport in your native country? Why or why not?
2. What aspect of baseball do you enjoy most:  
throwing, hitting, running, managing, or watching?
3. How does baseball differ from other team sports?
4. The term “fan” comes from the word “fanatic,” meaning “filled with extreme enthusiasm.” Why are some people so fanatic about baseball?
5. Baseball players are some of the highest-paid players in professional sports. Do baseball players deserve multi-million-dollar contracts?