BASEBALL UNIT STUDY



By Amanda Bennett

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This book is dedicated to our homegrown sluggers – Today's joy and tomorrow's promise!

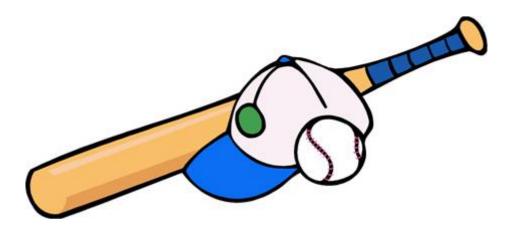


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Introduction

Baseball! Just hearing the word can bring visions of exciting plays, great players, hot dogs, soda pop and peanuts in the stands, and a great afternoon of fun. Many Americans get to play softball or baseball during their childhood as a neighborhood sport or as a member of an organized children's league.

Frequently, parents were not involved in the game as children and were unaware of the details or the history of the sport – and that includes the parents here at our house! Our children began to play on Little League teams and really got involved in baseball and softball, while my husband and I had no idea of the rules, the history, or the strategy behind the game. In the meantime, this sport REALLY got their attention and they wanted to learn more about it in a unit study. As a result, we began an adventure that has been so much fun and very enlightening for ALL of our family.

This unit study has been developed to provide a close look at baseball as a sport, using a cross-curriculum approach. Geography, history, science, research, and reading are included in this unique study. Some of the topics included in the study are:

- History of baseball in America
- Rules and plays of baseball
- Players and legends
- Science and math in baseball

Enjoy the story of baseball and all that it holds in the way of a learning adventure! What better way to learn about forces and momentum than when studying why a curve ball curves, or learning about vibration by finding the sweet spot of a bat? Why is it important to warm up before playing a baseball game? Spend some time learning about reflexes and reaction time, as well as the roles that they play in sports.

Use your imagination and spend some time off the bleachers – get into some great books and spend some time out in the grass playing catch with your students to get some "hands-on learning" and make some great memories.

Batter up!

FAMILY PROJECT IDEAS

Ideas for Making the Study Fun and Memorable!

While working on this unit, consider including a FEW of the following ideas in your study to add some sparkle AND reinforce the learning while having some fun. I have included quite a list here so that you have some choice in the projects -- NOT so that you will do them all! Please use just a few of these, or use some of those from the Internet Links listed throughout the guide, or use some of your own project ideas -- learning should be enjoyable for both the teacher and the student!

- 1. If possible, hang a map of the United States on the wall, placing some kind of marker at each team's home location. The marker can even be a small piece of a Post-It paper! Try to help them learn the cities and states as their favorite team "moves" around the map to play the season's games. Great for US geography knowledge!
- 2. A favorite project for baseball is creating a baseball tablecloth! Using an inexpensive twin-size flat sheet, have the children decorate the tablecloth with their spelling words, baseball park drawings, team statistics, favorite player biographies, and more. Make SURE that you keep a piece of plastic or newspaper between the sheet and the table, so that the indelible markers and fabric paints don't bleed through onto the tabletop! As this masterpiece is created during the study, enjoy the ideas and make sure that everyone signs the work of art and dates their signature. They can trace their hands on the cloth, and include their own baseball team statistics, too. Have fun creating a lifetime treasure!
- 3. Our family has always enjoyed traditions, both old and new. Consider setting aside one evening a week to watch a game together with popcorn or Cracker Jacks, and plenty of pillows. The children will look forward to these evenings together, and everyone can have a turn choosing the snacks for the weekly game.
- 4. If one of your children is on a baseball or softball team, think about ways to emphasize their progress as the season goes forward. You don't necessarily need to emphasize their sports statistics it is important to emphasize how they've grown, both physically and emotionally! Their improvement in sportsmanship and teamwork is very important, as well as listening to the coach and playing for fun instead of victory alone.
- 5. Consider taking a field trip to a local baseball park during a time when the field is not in use. Take along a picnic lunch and a long measuring tape, and let the students measure the distances between the bases and from the pitcher's mound to home plate. Have them run from home to first base, as if

- they had hit the ball, and let them time each other as they sprint to first base. Use the opportunity to have a fun picnic AND get in some relaxed practice.
- 6. Have the students create some team pennants from poster board and put them up on the walls of the den. They can either make some for their own team or make some for their favorite professional or farm team.
- 7. One of the things that we've done in the past was to have the children write letters to the baseball teams, asking for information about the team. In return, the teams have mailed them all kinds of fun information, bumper stickers, baseball cards, and photos. The addresses of the teams can be found at the Internet Link MLB Team List.
- 8. Attend a local baseball or softball game, whether the team is made up of youngsters or a minor league team. Have your students keep score using standard score sheets. They should track each play of the game, as well as other important statistics. This provides a great experience in math application to real life!
- 9. Another fun discovery that we made was the concept of building some of the ballparks from building blocks that interlock, Lego® blocks, for example. The students can find a picture or drawing and then figure out how to build it and display their work. This is a great project for them to work on during family read-aloud times.
- 10. Use the sports section of your newspaper have the children clip photos and statistics about their favorite team and players. They can glue these into their Baseball Journals, or create a wall display on a piece of poster board.
- 11. If your students are interested in baseball cards, perhaps you can take them to a baseball card shop. What an amazing place! I'll never forget the first time that I went into one of these with our children wow! I couldn't believe ALL of the cards, and some of the prices were astounding. However, some were very reasonably priced you can find a Mark McGwire card for around \$2.00. The kids will be able to look around and learn more about collecting, as well as learning about some of their favorite players.
- 12. From time to time, there may be autographing parties by baseball players at the local mall or sporting goods store. Watch for these and take your students to see the players and get their autographs. Have them think of one question that they would like to ask a baseball player at the signing, too. What a thrill to be able to ask "their" questions and have them answered by a "real" baseball player!
- 13. Have the older children create a wall chart that shows the games of the seasons, team standings, schedule, etc. including any information for the

season that your students are interested in tracking. This way, they can update the chart on a daily basis and enjoy watching the season develop.

Please remember -- these ideas are just that, ideas and not requirements. You don't need to use them all, just pick and choose the ones that sound interesting to YOUR family. You will be surprised to see just how many new ideas will surface during the adventure!



Week One

Baseball: Week One - Day 1

LOWER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your **Baseball Journal**:

"Never let the fear of striking out get in your way."

Babe Ruth

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your **Baseball Journal**. **Website suggestions**: <u>Baseball and</u> Physics Online Dictionary, Word Central, and Webster's 1828 Dictionary

base ball baseball

Interesting Baseball Legends

In this section, we are going to be investigating some of the legends of baseball. Using the Internet Links given below or one of your favorite baseball books, investigate **Babe Ruth**. Record your answers in your Baseball Journal. **Website suggestions**: Babe Ruth and American Presidents Timeline

- 1. What is his full name?
- 2. When was he born, and who was the President of the United States when he was born? (Use the <u>American Presidents Timeline</u> link)
- 3. Did he have a nickname when he played baseball?
- 4. What teams did he play for during his baseball career?
- 5. What position did he play, and can you find his career batting average?

Read and Discover

Using an encyclopedia, book, or Internet site, read the following questions and find the answers. Write your answers in your Journal.

- Today, we are going to investigate the **Arizona Diamondbacks**. Using encyclopedias, books, or the following websites, find the answers to these questions:
 - a. Where are they located, and what is the name of their home ballpark?
 - b. How far are they from your hometown? Use a US map to locate their home city, then estimate how far this is from your hometown.
 - c. What is their team record as of today? **Website suggestions**: Arizona Diamondbacks -- Scores, Stats and More, Arizona Diamondbacks, and MLB Team List Information
- 2. Draw a sketch of a baseball diamond and label the different parts of the playing field. **Website suggestion**: Learning the Basics with the MLB

Baseball: Week One - Day 1

UPPER LEVEL

Today's Quote

Copy today's quote into your **Baseball Journal**:

"Never let the fear of striking out get in your way." Babe Ruth

Words of Wisdom (WOW Words)

Look up the following words in the dictionary and write the words and their definitions in your Baseball Journal. Website suggestions: Baseball and Physics Online Dictionary, Webster's 1828 Dictionary, and Dictionary.com

baseball bunt at bat

Interesting People and Places

In this section, we are going to be investigating some of the legends of baseball. Using the Internet Links given below or one of your favorite baseball books, investigate Babe Ruth. Record your answers in your Baseball Journal. Website suggestions: Babe Ruth and American Presidents Timeline

- 1. What is his full name?
- 2. When was he born, and who was the President of the United States when he was born? (Use the American Presidents Timeline Link)
- 3. Did he have a nickname when he played baseball?
- 4. What teams did he play for during his baseball career?
- 5. What position did he play, and can you find his career batting average?

Read and Discover

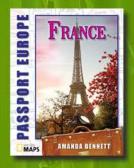
Using library books, encyclopedias, or Internet sites, find the answer to these guestions and record your answers in your Journal, along with the source of your information (book, encyclopedia, website, etc.)

- 1. Today, we are going to investigate the Arizona Diamondbacks. Using encyclopedias, books, or the following websites, find the answers to these auestions:
 - a. Where are they located?
 - b. What is the name of their home ballpark?
 - c. What is the name of one of their farm teams?
 - d. Use a US map to find their ballpark's town. How far is this town from your town? (Use the MapQuest site to find distances.)
 - e. When is their next game, and who do they play?
 - f. What is their record as of today?

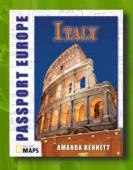
- Website suggestions: Arizona Diamondbacks -- Scores, Stats and More, Arizona Diamondbacks, MLB Team List Information, and MapQuest **Directions & Distance Calculator**
- 2. Draw a sketch of a baseball diamond and label the different parts of the playing field. Website suggestion: Learning the Basics with the MLB
- 3. Describe the objectives of the game of baseball. **Website suggestion**: Objectives of the Game

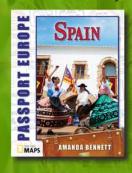
EXPLORE THE WORLD with Amanda Bennett

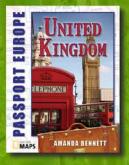
PASSPORT GEOGRAPHY: One-Week Unit Studies, Grades K - 12





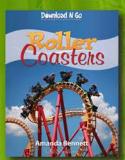


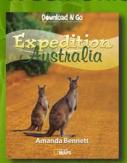


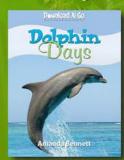


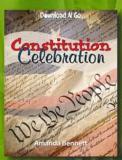
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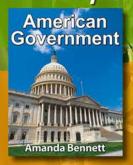


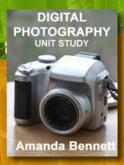






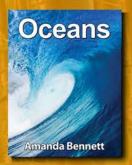
Unit Study Adventures: Four-Week Unit Studies, Grades K - 12











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