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STUDY GUIDE: BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

BASEBALL

History

Baseball began in the early 19th century. The sport was originally called “town ball” or “base.” In 1839, the **Father of Baseball, Abner Doubleday**, wrote the original set of rules for baseball in Cooperstown, New York. The first recorded baseball contest took place in June of 1845. At Elysian Field in Hoboken, New Jersey, the New York Baseball Club defeated Alexander Cartwright’s Knickerbockers. The first organized baseball league was founded in 1858. It was called the National Association of Players. The league remained amateur until 1871, when the National Association of Players evolved into the first professional league. It began with nine teams, and it grew to 13 teams in 1875. Following the 1875 season, the National Association changed its name to the National League. Businessmen ran the league by establishing standards and policies for tickets, schedules, and player contracts. Due to the success of the National League, a rival league called the American Association emerged in 1882. Major League baseball is still divided into two leagues today, the American League and the National League.

Baseball Hall of Fame

The first Baseball Hall of Fame election was held in 1936, but the current Hall of Fame was not dedicated until June 12, 1939, in **Cooperstown, New York**, where it is still located.

Each year, members are elected to the Hall of Fame. In most cases, candidates must have been retired for at least five years and must have played at least 10 years in the major league before being considered for nomination.

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Baseball Basics

I. The Field

Both the infield (a 90-ft. square) and the outfield, and the lines that designate them, are considered fair territory. The regulation distance from home plate to left and right field is 325 feet or more, and the distance to straightaway center field is at least 400 feet. Everything else outside of the foul lines constitutes a foul. The pitcher's mound is ten inches higher than home plate.

II. Equipment

Bats

A baseball bat used in the major or minor leagues is traditionally a long piece of rounded wood, usually made of ash wood, but sometimes hackberry or hickory. The major league requires that a bat be no more than 42 inches long or 2.75 inches in diameter at the point where it is the thickest. Aluminum bats may be used in all other divisions, but wood bats are still required at the major and minor league levels.

Balls

A baseball usually ranges from 9 to 9.25 inches in circumference, and it generally weighs 5 to 5.25 ounces.

Gloves

Each fielder wears a glove or mitt. There are three types of gloves, including catchers' mitts, first basemen's gloves, and fielders' gloves. A catcher's mitt and first baseman's glove may be worn interchangeably, but they may not be used by any other player.

III. Rules

Each team consists of nine players on the field at a time. In the American League, a team may employ a designated hitter and utilize 10 players. The object of the game is to score more runs than your opponent. A team can score runs by getting a runner on base. In order to score a run, the runner must move from first, to second, to third, and touch home plate, in a counter-clockwise fashion. There are seven different ways that a batter can reach base. The batter can get a hit, get walked by the pitch (base on balls), or get hit by a pitch. He or she can also get to base by an error, a dropped third strike, catcher interference, or fielder's choice.

The team with the most runs in nine innings wins. There are exceptions to this rule. First, if there is a tie score, the game goes into extra innings. Secondly, if the home team is winning after 8½ innings, it is not necessary for them to bat in the ninth inning. Each inning consists of three outs for each team. (Teams switch between playing defense and offense after three outs.) Players follow a batting order. A player is out if a hit ball is caught by a fielder, the batter or base is tagged by a fielder who has control of the ball before the runner reaches the base, or if the batter gets three strikes.

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If the ball isn't pitched into the strike zone and the batter doesn't swing, it is a ball. After four balls in the same "at bat," the batter is sent to first base. This is called a base on balls, or walk. A player who hits a fair ball gets to run. Two runners can't occupy a base at the same time, but they may run simultaneously. Also, the trailing runner can't pass the lead runner.

American League Baseball

Team	Location	Stadium
1. Anaheim Angels	Anaheim, CA	Edison International Field
2. Baltimore Orioles	Baltimore, MD	Oriole Park at Camden Yards
3. Boston Red Sox	Boston, MA	Fenway Park
4. Chicago White Sox	Chicago, IL	U.S. Cellular Field
5. Cleveland Indians	Cleveland, OH	Jacobs Field
6. Detroit Tigers	Detroit, MI	Comerica Park
7. Kansas City Royals	Kansas City, MO	Kauffman Stadium
8. Minnesota Twins	Minneapolis, MN	Metrodome
9. New York Yankees	Bronx, NY	Yankee Stadium
10. Oakland Athletics	Oakland, CA	Network Associates Coliseum
11. Seattle Mariners	Seattle, WA	Safeco Field
12. Tampa Bay Devil Rays	St. Petersburg, FL	Tropicana Field
13. Texas Rangers	Arlington, TX	Ballpark in Arlington
14. Toronto Blue Jays	Toronto, Ontario, Canada	SkyDome

National League Baseball

1. Arizona Diamond Backs	Phoenix, AZ	Bank One Ballpark
2. Atlanta Braves	Atlanta, GA	Turner Field
3. Chicago Cubs	Chicago, IL	Wrigley Field
4. Cincinnati Reds	Cincinnati, OH	Great American Ball Park
5. Colorado Rockies	Denver, CO	Coors Field
6. Florida Marlins	Miami, FL	Pro Player Stadium
7. Houston Astros	Houston, TX	Minute Maid Park
8. Los Angeles Dodgers	Los Angeles, CA	Dodger Stadium
9. Milwaukee Brewers	Milwaukee, WI	Miller Park
10. Montreal Expos	Montreal, Quebec, Canada	Olympic Stadium
11. New York Mets	Flushing, NY	Shea Stadium
12. Philadelphia Phillies	Philadelphia, PA	Veterans Stadium
13. Pittsburgh Pirates	Pittsburgh, PA	PNC Park
14. St. Louis Cardinals	St. Louis, MO	Busch Stadium
15. San Diego Padres	San Diego, CA	Qualcomm Stadium
16. San Francisco Giants	San Francisco, CA	SBC Park

Common Abbreviations for Stats Calculated in the Sport of Baseball

Batters

AB = At-Bat
H = Hit
2B = Double
3B = Triple
HR = Home Run
RBI = Runs Batted In
K = Swinging Strikeout
Backward K = Looking Strikeout
SB = Stolen Base
SB% = Stolen Base Percent
AVG = Batting Average
SLG = Slugging Percentage
GO = Ground out
GB = Number of Fair Ground Balls Hit (hits, outs and errors)
FB = Number of Fly Balls Hit (except for line drives)
FO = Fly out
* = Bats Left-handed
= Switch Hitter

Positions (for scoring purposes):

1 = pitcher
2 = catcher
3 = first base
4 = second base
5 = third base
6 = shortstop
7 = left fielder
8 = center fielder
9 = right fielder
DH = designated hitter

Pitchers

G = Games Pitched
GS = Games Started
CG = Complete Games
GF = Games Finished
IP = Innings Pitched
H = Hits Allowed
R = Runs Allowed
ER = Earned Runs Allowed

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HR = Home Runs Allowed
LOB= Left on base
IBB = Intentional Bases on Ball
SO = Strikeouts
WP = Wild Pitches
HB = Hit Batsmen
GB = Groundballs Hit against the Pitcher (hits, outs and errors)
FB = Fly Balls Hit against the Pitcher (excludes line drives)
GF = Ratio of Grounders to Flies
SHO = Shutout
RW= Relief Win
ERA = Earned Run Average
SV = Saves
SVO= Save Opportunities
BB = Walks Issued
AVG = Opponents Batting Average
* = Throws Left-handed

Fielders

PO = Putout
A = Assist
E = Error
DP = Double Play
Fld. Pct. = Fielding Percentage
Outs = Number of Outs Resulting from a Ball Hit to a Player

Definitions for Some of these Common Stats:

Batting Average: The number of hits divided by the number of at bats.

Cleanup Slugging%: The slugging percentage of a player when batting fourth in the batting order.

Earned Run Average: Earned runs times nine, divided by the number of innings pitched.

Fielding Percentage: Putouts plus assists, divided by putouts plus assists plus errors.

Ground/Fly Ratio (Grd/Fly): The ground balls of a hitter divided by fly balls.

Pickoffs (Pk): The number of times a certain runner was picked off base by a pitcher.

Save Percentage: This is calculated by dividing the number of saves (SV) divided by the quantity of save opportunities (OP).

SBA: Stolen-base attempts (vs. a catcher).

Secondary Average: A way to look at a player's extra bases gained, independent of batting average, by calculating the total bases - hits + walks + stolen bases - caught stealing and dividing them all by the at-bats.

Slugging Percentage: The total number of bases divided by at-bats.

Win-Loss Percentage or Winning Percentage: Wins divided by the quantity of wins plus losses.

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Groundball/Flyball Ratio: A hitter's stats when batting against a pitcher that usually produces mostly grounders or mostly flies. Any ratio less than 1.00 makes the batter a flyball hitter. Any ratio greater than 1.50 means the batter is a groundball hitter. All others count as neutral.

Glossary

Ace: The best starting pitcher on a team.

Around the horn: A double play that goes from third to second to first base.

Backdoor slider: A pitch that looks like it will fall outside the strike zone, but breaks over the plate.

Bag: Another word for base.

Balk: An illegal movement by a pitcher that results in the runner gaining an additional base.

Base on Balls: Another term for a "walk." If the pitcher pitches four balls in one at-bat to a batter, the batter gets to walk to first base.

Bases Loaded: This means there is a runner on first, second, and third base.

Basket Catch: A fielder catches a ball with the web of the glove pointing downward.

Batting Average: The number of at-bats divided by the number of hits. (.250 is the standard.)

Beanball: A pitch purposefully thrown to hit the batter.

Bronx cheer: Ironic term for when the crowd boos.

Can of Corn: An easy catch.

Chin Music: A high inside pitch.

Clean-up Hitter: The fourth person in the batting order.

Cutter: A fastball that breaks late.

Diamond: Another name for the infield because it is shaped like a diamond. It can also be a term used to describe the whole field.

Double: A hit that allows the batter to reach second base.

Double Play: When two outs happen in one play.

Dugout: An enclosed seating area that is reserved for players, coaches, managers, and other uniformed team members.

Earned Run: A run scored without the help of an error.

Earned Run Average: The number of earned runs the pitcher allows, multiplied by nine and divided by the actual number of innings pitched.

Fielder's Choice: When a batter reaches a base safely, but another runner(s) is out at another base. This is scored as a hitless at-bat for the batter.

Force Play: A play in which a runner is forced to run to the next base because the batter hits the ball and therefore becomes a runner.

Full Count: A count of three balls and two strikes against a batter.

Grand Slam: The bases are loaded. The next batter hits a homerun.

Ground-rule Double: Any ball that bounces out of fair play but was originally hit in fair territory. When this happens, the batter gets second base, and all runners on base go forward two bases as well.

Hill: Another term for the pitcher's mound.

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Hit and Run Play: This happens when a runner automatically runs to the next base when the pitcher releases the ball, and the batter must attempt to swing and hit the pitch no matter where it is thrown.

Homer: Slang for a home run.

Home Team: The team that plays defense first. The game is usually being played on their home field.

Hot Corner: A term for the player occupying the third base position.

Infielder: A fielder who plays an infield position: first base, second base, third base, or shortstop.

In Flight: Describes a ball that is batted, thrown, or pitched but hasn't hit the ground yet.

Inning: A period of play where each team bats until three outs are recorded for each team. Then the teams switch offense and defense positions.

Intentional Walk: A batter is purposefully thrown four balls.

In the Hole: The player who will be second after the current batter.

Left on Base: Runners who are positioned on bases after three outs.

Line Drive: A ball that is hit at a low trajectory, in the air, directly at a player, or through the infield.

Meatball: A pitch that's easy to hit.

Offense: The team at bat.

On Deck: The player who will bat after the current batter.

Outfielder: A fielder who plays a position in the area located the farthest from home base.

Painting the Black: Throwing the ball over the edge of the plate.

Passed Ball: A ball that gets past the catcher.

Perfect Game: A game where a pitcher doesn't allow a single batter to reach base safely.

Pick-off: An attempt by the pitcher or the catcher to throw out a runner who is caught off the base.

Pinch Hitter: A batter who replaces a hitter for one at-bat. They may not return to the game after they are finished with their at-bat, unless they are to remain in the game.

Pinch Runner: A player who enters the game to be a runner for someone who has already reached base. They may not return to the game after they are finished running, unless they are to remain in the game.

Putout: A fielder is credited with a putout if he or she receives the ball from another player and gets a runner out or if he or she fields the ball and tags the runner or the base.

Ribbie: A slang term for an RBI (run batted in).

Run Down: A play that happens when a runner gets caught between two or more defenders between two bases.

Runs Batted In (RBI): Runs that are accumulated by a batter. They can be a result of a base hit, an out (excluding double plays); sacrifice hits and sacrifice flies, walks, and/or being hit by a pitch.

Sacrifice Bunt: An intentional bunt that advances runners, even though it means the hitter will most likely be put out.

Safe: A call by an umpire that means the runner is entitled to the base for which he or she was trying.

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Save: A pitcher successfully keeps his or her team's lead and finishes a game.

Scoring Position: A runner is on second or third base.

Seeing-eye Single: A soft, ground ball that slides between infielders for a base hit.

Signs: Offensive signals that are given by the third-base coach to the batter or runners.

Single: A hit that allows a batter to reach first base.

Southpaw: A left-handed pitcher.

Squeeze Play: The batter bunts to help the runner on third base come home.

Starter: Any player who begins the game.

Stolen Base: A runner successfully advances to the next base, in between pitches, without the batter contacting the ball or getting a walk.

Strike Out: A batter swings and misses three pitches or doesn't swing at three pitches that fall in the strike zone.

Substitute: A player who enters the game after the game has started.

Suicide Squeeze: A hit-and-run bunt when there is a runner on third base.

Sweet spot: The best place, a few inches down the barrel, for the bat to make contact with the ball.

Switch Hitter: A batter who is able to bat both left- and right-handed.

Three up Three Down: When the first three batters of an inning are retired, one right after the other.

Triple: A hit that allows a batter to reach third base.

Twin Killing: A double play.

Uncle Charlie: Another word for a curve ball.

Utility Man: A team member who can play multiple positions of defense.

Utility Player: A player who can play various positions.

Visiting Team: The team that is on offense first.

Whiff: Term for strikeout.

Wild Pitch: A pitch that goes by the catcher and lets runners go farther. (The pitcher is at fault.)

Workhorse: A pitcher who can pitch repeated innings.

SOFTBALL

History

Softball was invented in November 1887, at the Farragut Boat Club in Chicago, Illinois. Many of the Yale and Harvard Alumni, including George Hancock, a reporter for the Chicago Board of Trustees, were awaiting the result of their respective team's football game. They tied the laces of an old boxing glove together, tossed it to each other, and used a stick for a bat. Chalk was used to mark the bases and base paths. Hancock and his friends decided to adapt the outdoor game into an indoor form. They nicknamed the sport, "indoor-outdoor." The game went through many name changes, including Kitten Ball, and Diamond Ball, until Walter Hakanson, a Denver YMCA official suggested the name softball to the Joint Rules Committee in 1926. The official opening tournament for softball was in Chicago in the summer of 1933. Softball continually grew in popularity. Today more than 40 million people participate in this sport across the United States. Women's softball was introduced as an Olympic sport at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. It is currently the number one team participation sport in the U.S.

Softball Hall of Fame

The National Softball Hall of Fame is located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Its first inductee was Harold "Shifty" Gears in 1957. The official dedication of the Hall of Fame was in June of 1973.

Baseball vs. Softball

Softball is basically an adapted version of baseball. Many of the rules and terms are the same. However, there are a few main differences:

- Softball is played in seven innings. Baseball is played in nine innings.
- The distance between the base paths is 60 feet, instead of 90 feet, like in baseball.
- The distance from home to the outfield fences are different.
- There is no pitching mound in softball. The pitcher stands on a plate in the center of the "pitching circle."
- The regulation distance from the pitching plate to home plate is 43 feet.
- The regulation ball is much larger than a baseball.
- The ball is pitched underhand instead of overhand.
- There are two different styles of softball, slow-pitch and fast-pitch.
- In softball, you can't lead off until the pitcher has released the ball.
- Baseball and softball use different types of bats, according to league stipulations.