

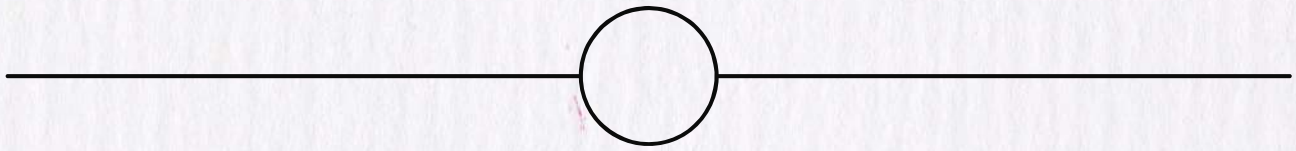
KC @ BAT

WINNING ISN'T ~~EVERYTHING.~~

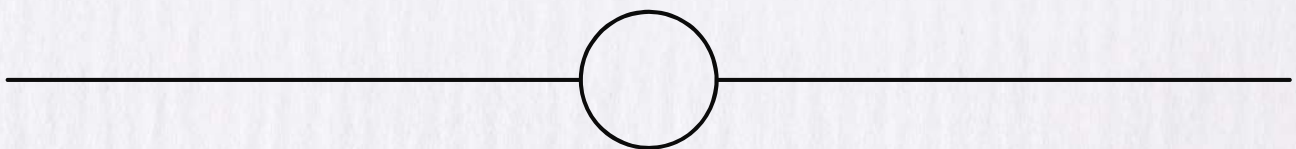
Study Guide



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PLAY BALL!

Synopsis

Ernest Thayer's beloved 1888 poem about fictional baseball legend Casey and the town of Mudville springs vividly to life in the present day. When young K.C. moves to Mudville with her father from New York City, she struggles to fit in at her new school. But it's through her love of baseball that she finally connects: an avid ballplayer, K.C. whips the down-and-out local team into shape, leading them all the way to the championship game, where she learns that there are things even more important than winning...



Thematic Overview

With songs like “Take Me Out To The Ballgame,” *KC@Bat* is a story many of us have grown up with. It’s uniquely American and has the sentimentality of a “simpler” time in our collective American past. And yet the themes in the musical and the poem that the show is based on are still resonant today.

The story tells the tale of a non-descript school in a losing funk and the “new girl” who has the ability to turn the down-and-out little league team around. The kids want to be winners and KC wants friends and in the end they all learn a valuable lesson about teamwork and perseverance through personal trials and disappointments.

We hope this study guide will inspire you to take the material from page to stage to classroom and engage your students in the power of teamwork

This study guide will help students better understand the relationships in the play, examine the underlying themes, and reflect on their experience.

ABOUT...



Pre-Show Questions

LITERATURE

Have you ever read the poem “Casey At The Bat?”

What do you think the poem might be about from the title?

Do you have a favorite poem?

This musical is based on a poem. How are poems and musicals different?

This musical is based on a poem. How are poems and musicals similar?

THEMES

What does it mean to be part of a team?

Have you ever been a new student in a school?

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Have you ever played baseball?

What makes a good athlete?

How would you categorize the game of baseball?

What skills in baseball can be applied to school life?

How does a team function differently than an individual?

How are music and athletics/sports similar or different?

PRODUCTION

What do you imagine the scenery will look like?

What does a baseball player look like? How do you think the costumes will reflect that?

Use your imagination to anticipate what the music for the show will sound like.



Curriculum Connections

1 Reading Standards For Literature (K–5)

Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

2 National Physical Education Standards

Through learning experiences in physical education, students develop the social skills necessary to exhibit empathy and respect for others and foster and maintain relationships. In addition, students develop skills for communication, leadership, cultural awareness, and conflict resolution in a variety of physical activity settings.

3 National Core Arts Anchor Standards

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

4 Reading Standards For Literature (9–10)

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

5 Reading Standards For Literature (6–12)

Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium.

"English Language Arts Standards." English Language Arts Standards | Common Core State Standards Initiative, www.thecorestandards.org/ELA/. Accessed 31 Mar. 2024.

"New National Physical Education Standards." Physical Education and Health Education-Shape America, www.shapeamerica.org/MemberPortal/standards/pe/new-pe-standards.aspx. Accessed 31 Mar. 2024.

"Home." National Art Standard, www.nationalartsstandards.org/. Accessed 31 Mar. 2024.



Themes & Motifs

Teamwork

No one wins by themselves. By working together everyone can overcome their challenges and meet common goals.

Being Yourself

Every student in Mudville is different and unique. Even though they think that they want to follow the leader- they learn there is strength in being who they are!

Friendship

It's okay to be different than your friends- in fact KC shows the team that everyone can learn from one another to make their team (and school) stronger.

Problem Solving

When the kids of Mudville are faced with a problem- they can't solve it alone. Each child brings a unique problem solving skill to help the team grow.

Acceptance

Throughout the musical, the kids learn to accept KC and she learns to accept them for who they are.

Courage

Whether it's KC accepting her new role as the coach of their team or Lolly's courage to stand up to bullying, the show encourages students to be courageously themselves.





Vocabulary

GROUP 1

- Stadium
- useful
- Mascot
- Argue
- Responsible
- teammates

GROUP 2

- Brag
- Rivals
- Leadership
- Comment
- Weaving
- Declined
- Popular
- Borrow

GROUP 3

- Scoop
- Solution
- Journalist
- Geometry
- Equipment
- Protector
- Championship
- Worth

GROUP 4

- Merit
- Understated
- Encourage
- Valedictorian
- Unopposed
- Lunges

GROUP 5

- Sophisticated
- Evaluation
- Exclusive
- Complexion
- Rotations
- hypothetically
- Estranged

GROUP 6

- Naive
- Acquaintance
- Expose
- Articulated
- Abbreviated
- Conglomerate
- Rhetorical



The Poem That Started It All...

CASEY AT THE BAT

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day;
the score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play.
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,
a sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A stragglng few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
they thought, if only Casey could get but a whack at that –
they'd put up even money, now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,
and the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake,
so upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
for there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,
and Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;
and when the dust had lifted, and the men saw what had occurred,
there was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from five thousand throats and more there rose a lusty yell;
it rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;
it knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,
for Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;
there was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,
no stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;
five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt.
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,
defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,
and Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.

Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—
"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore.

"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand;
and it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;
he stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;
he signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;
but Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said: "Strike two."

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and Echo answered fraud;
but one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
and they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;
he pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,
and now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
the band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,
and somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;
but there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.



BY ERNEST THAYER
1863 –1940

The Poet: Ernest Thayer



Ernest Lawrence Thayer was born on August 14, 1863.

Born into a wealthy family, Thayer grew up in Lawrence, Massachusetts and later Worcester where he was educated privately. Thayer enrolled in Harvard in 1881 where previous generations of his family had attended. At Harvard, Thayer participated in many collegiate activities including becoming the editor of Harvard's humor magazine *Lampoon* as well as being a member of The Hasty Pudding Club.

In 1885 Ernest graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. College friend, William Randolph Hearst, invited Thayer to join him as a member of the editorial staff of the *San Francisco Examiner*. Thayer began to write a humor column under the pen name "Phin." Between 1896 and 1897, Thayer worked for the *New York Journal*.

Thayer's life changed on June 3, 1888 with the publication of "Casey at the Bat." Published under his pseudonym, "Phin," this poem would go on to become Ernest's most famous work thanks in great part to public performances of the poem given by William DeWolf Hopper. Hopper would incorporate an oration of this poem in his radio addresses and theatrical performances. It is estimated that from the 1880s through the 1930s, Hopper recited this poem nearly 15,000 times- even playing the titular role of "Casey" in a silent film produced in 1914.

Between 1896 and 1897, Thayer worked for the *New York Journal*.

Ernest Thayer married Rosalind Hammett in 1913 and the couple moved to Santa Barbara California where he lived until his death on August 21, 1940.

Photo Credits:

Spalding, Albert Goodwill, editor. Ernest L. Thayer. 1900. 18 West 53rd Street New York, NY 10019.

Ernest Lawrence Thayer, famous poet - Family Friend Poems. (n.d.). Family Friend Poems.

<https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poet/ernest-lawrence-thayer/>

Academy of American Poets. (n.d.). Ernest Lawrence Thayer. Poets.org. <https://poets.org/poet/ernest-lawrence-thayer>



An American Poem

Thayer did not set out to write the great American poem in 1888 when the ballad was first published, but the smooth cadence of the words and easy rhythm was enough to catch the eye (and ear) of DeWolf Hopper. Hopper was one of the most popular actors on Broadway in the 1880s and was known for his comedic timing and recitations.

Hopper helped popularize the satiric epic of the hometown hero grown cocky and confident by performing the poem for public audiences for over a decade to the cheers and adulation that the title hero of the poem does not receive. A preserved rendition of the interpretation by Hopper which made the poem famous is archivally recorded by the Smithsonian as one of the most important poems in popular culture at the time.

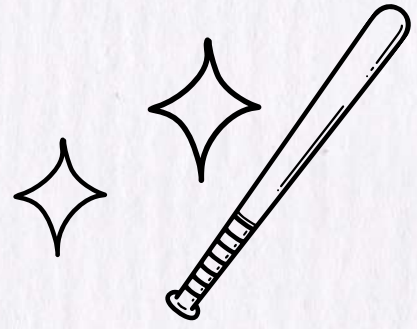
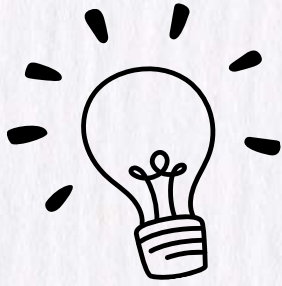
Meanwhile, author Ernest Thayer returned to his family's textile mill in Lawrence, Massachusetts and tried to distance himself from the poem- even though it had found a life (and audience) of its own. Reportedly Thayer would diminish compliments about the poem by sharing that it was written in less than an hour, but this did not stop the popularity of the poem and its story.

Over the decades following the publication, the tale was set to music, recorded countless times, was featured traditionally on radio broadcasts and even spawned a silent film with two-time Oscar-winner Wallace Beery. In 1946, nearly 60 years after the initial publication, Walt Disney Studios produced a cartoon version of the tale which is still one of the most endearing adaptations of the story.

Having sold the rights for a mere \$5, and having published under a pseudonym, Thayer never saw royalties or fortune from his work, but the legacy of Casey and The Mudville Nine live on in classrooms, poetry slams and anthologies today for the next generation of baseball aficionados.



DESCRIBE "RAMONA"



DESCRIBE "KC"

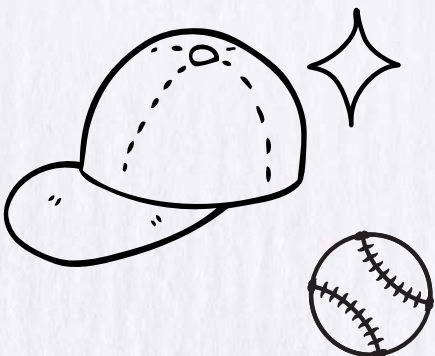
DESCRIBE "LOLLY"

**MIND
MAP**

DESCRIBE "PRISSY"

DESCRIBE "HENRY"

DESCRIBE "DAVID"



PLAY BALL!

WORD SEARCH

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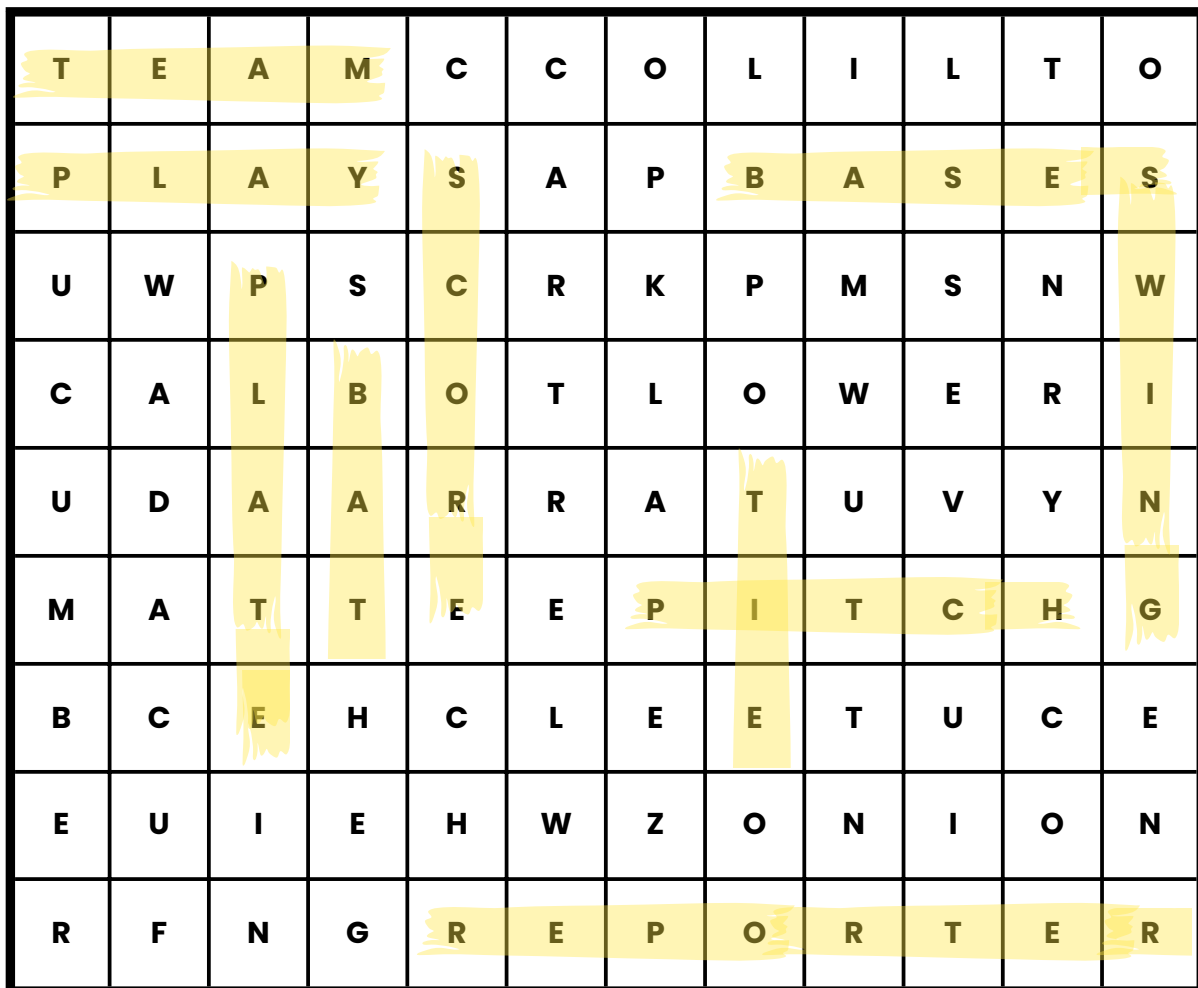
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R	F	N	G	R	E	P	O	R	T	E	R

- PLAY
- BASES
- TEAM
- REPORTER
- PITCH
- SCORE
- TIE
- BAT
- PLATE
- SWING

PLAY BALL!

WORD SEARCH

Find the words listed below and mark them with correct colours.



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See You In The Outfield!



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Our mission is to make art, theatre, music and dance accessible to students, ages 6-18, families and senior citizens who have Alzheimer's Disease and dementia.



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