



Let's Play Ball!

by Lois Grippio



Baseball for Kids

Kids all over the United States love to play baseball. Most towns have a league for children. Teams play baseball in the spring and summer.

Boys and girls play on the teams. They play other teams from nearby towns. The players' friends and families watch from the stands.

READ & RESPOND

Synthesize

Write one thing you know about baseball or one thing you want to learn about baseball.

The Beginning of Little League

Baseball leagues for kids did not always exist. A man named Carl Stotz started the Little League about 70 years ago. Carl loved baseball. He thought baseball was good for kids. It was a great way to teach teamwork.

Carl's neighbors thought so, too. They raised \$35 to start three teams. They got stores to donate uniforms. Carl called it the Little League.



READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

Who started Little League? Why did he start it?

Little League Then and Now

The very first Little League game was played on June 6, 1939. The Lundy Lumber team played against the Lycoming Dairy team. Lundy Lumber won.

Today, Little League teams play in every state. They play in 80 countries, too. Little League is the biggest organized sports program in the world.



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READ & RESPOND

Synthesize

Write one thing you learned about Little League that you did not know before.

Learning Skills

Baseball players learn many skills. They must hit the ball with the bat. They must run fast around the bases. Players need to catch balls. They have to tag runners and throw the ball to other players.

One player can't win a game alone. Kids learn to work as a team. They practice, and they get better. They learn to count on each other.



READ & RESPOND

Synthesize

Did the information on this page give you a different way of thinking about baseball? Explain.

Going to the Big Leagues

Some great baseball players got started in Little League. One of them was Cal Ripken, Jr. He played for the Baltimore Orioles.

Baltimore fans loved Ripken. They cheered when the announcer said his name. Ripken played in 2,632 straight games! He is in the Baseball Hall of Fame.



READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

Is this information important to understanding the central idea? Why, or why not?

Life After Little League

Many Little League players do not become great baseball players. Some go on to do other important work. Krissy Wendell became a great hockey player. Her team won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Little League teaches teamwork skills. People can use these skills all their lives. Little League players can become teachers, firefighters, nurses, and engineers. They can do any job working with other people.



READ & RESPOND

Synthesize

Think about what you have learned about Little League. How do the skills learned in Little League help people all their lives?



Who Can Belong to Little League?

- Boys and girls, ages nine to twelve, can join.
- At first, just boys could play.
- After 1974, girls could join, too.



Little Leaguers in the Baseball Hall of Fame

Nolan Ryan: Pitcher, Texas Rangers

Tom Seaver: Pitcher, New York Mets

Carl Yastrzemski: Outfielder, Boston Red Sox

Johnny Bench: Catcher, Cincinnati Reds

Roberto Alomar: Infielder, Toronto Blue Jays

READ & RESPOND

Central Idea

What is the central idea of the text?

Reread and Respond



1 How do you think fans affect the way teams play baseball?

Hint

Think about how you feel when people cheer you on.

2 Why did Carl Stotz think baseball was good for kids?

Hint

For a clue, look on page 194.

3 How can you tell that Carl's neighbors thought Little League was a good idea?

Hint

Look on page 195.