

## **Title of Lesson: Casey at the Bat: An American Hero?**

**Teacher's Name:** Linda MacCleave

**School:** Retired--Brookland Middle School/Henrico County Public Schools

**Grade Level:** 8

### **SOLs Addressed**

- 8.5 The student will read and analyze a variety of narrative and poetic forms.
- 8.6 The student will read, comprehend, and analyze a variety of informational sources.
- 8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

### **Primary Objectives**

- Students will research and learn about baseball in the American culture.
- Students will increase knowledge of literary techniques and terms.
- Students will increase vocabulary.
- Students will examine the meaning of the hero in literature.
- Students will write about the hero in literature.
- Students will learn about the author Ernest Lawrence Thayer.

### **Materials**

- Poem: "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer  
([http://www.cosmicbaseball.com/catb\\_1.html](http://www.cosmicbaseball.com/catb_1.html))
- Computers with Internet access
- Powerpoint: Poetry Terms Using *Casey at the Bat* (included)
- Handouts (attached)

### **Focus and Review**

Students will research and learn about baseball in the American culture and read a famous poem about baseball. Students will increase their knowledge of literary and poetic techniques and learn about the author and origination of the poem.

### **Activities/Procedures**

#### **Before Reading**

- Students will read about baseball as an American pastime using selected Internet sites.
  - Baseball Almanac
  - <http://www.baseball-almanac.com/>
  - A Brief History of Baseball: Part II: Professional Baseball's First Hundred Years
  - <http://www.baseball1.com/bb-data/e-hist-2.html>
  - Hall of Fame
  - <http://www.baseballhalloffame.org/>
- Directions for students: Write 10 questions based on the information on those 3 sites. Write Name, Date, and Class at the top of the file followed by Questions by and your

name. Trade seats with someone to answer that student's questions on his or her computer while that person answers yours.

- Students will write definitions of the following literary terms: *rhythm, rhyme, rhyme scheme, meter, couplet, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, diction, hero, tragic flaw, narrative poem, parody.*

Reference site: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl\\_litterms.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_litterms.html)

- Students will write definitions of vocabulary words: *patron, multitude, melancholy, doff, writhe, defiance, haughty, grandeur, unheeded, visage, tumult, bade.*

Reference site: <http://www.wordcentral.com/>

### **During Reading**

- Students will examine the first stanza to examine its rhythm, rhyme scheme, and meter
- Teacher will introduce the term *iambic heptameter* and other terms in a PowerPoint presentation: "Casey at the Bat" Introduction (included).
- Students will read the poem aloud, using popcorn method (students choose next reader)

### **Activities After Reading**

- Students will answer questions about the poem (Handout 1).
- Students will fill out a graphic organizer to determine if Casey is a hero (Handout 2).
- Discussion Question - Is Casey a hero? (Students may discuss this in small groups or as a whole.)
- Students will write an essay on whether or not Casey is a hero.
- Students will work in pairs to find examples of some of the literary terms they looked up prior to reading: *alliteration, assonance, couplet, onomatopoeia, rhyme*
- Students will read about Ernest Lawrence Thayer on web sites
- Suggested sites:
  - <http://www.sportingnews.com/archives/baseball/94640.html>
  - <http://www.historybuff.com/library/refcasey.html>
- Students will answer questions about the author (Handout 3)
- Students will read parodies of this poem and discuss why parodies are written.
  - Parody 1: <http://www.sportingnews.com/archives/baseball/94785.html>
  - Parody 2: [http://www.baseball-almanac.com/poetry/po\\_case7.shtml](http://www.baseball-almanac.com/poetry/po_case7.shtml)
- Students can participate in another online activity (optional):  
[http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/socialstd/FT/Casey\\_Act.html](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/curriculum/socialstd/FT/Casey_Act.html)
- Students can take an online quiz (optional):  
<http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz79338917ab8.html>

### **Assessment**

- Answers to questions about the poem
- Essay on Casey's status as a hero
- Answers to questions about author

### **Handouts**

On next pages

## Handout 1 for “Casey at the Bat”

Name:

Date:

Class:

### Poem Details

1. Where does this story take place?
2. What was the score of the game
3. What happened to Coons and Barrows?
4. Why did the crowd think that Casey would not get to bat?
5. What did Flynn and Blake do?
6. How many people were in the stands?
7. Why did the crowd shout “Fraud”?
8. What did Casey do?

Handout 2 for "Casey at the Bat"

Name:

Date:

Class:

**Is Casey a Hero?**

Casey's Heroic Qualities	Casey's Non-Heroic Qualities

Handout 3 for "Casey at the Bat"

Name:

Date:

Class:

### **Ernest Lawrence Thayer and "Casey at the Bat"**

Using the Internet, find answers to these questions about Ernest Lawrence Thayer and the poem, "Casey at the Bat."

An excellent resource of articles can be found at  
<http://www.sportingnews.com/archives/baseball/94640.html>.

1. Where and when did this poem first appear?
2. Who inspired the character of Casey in the poem by Ernest Thayer?
3. According to Leonard Koppett in an article written in 1998, there were 18 lines missing from the poem. How did those 18 lines change the story? Do you believe Koppett, or do you think he is making this up? Why?
4. Read the other articles to find out the original complete title and what pseudonym Thayer used.