



A **Vocabulary Baseball Game** will be a real hit with your students!

This game is a great way to incorporate baseball into your normal language arts curriculum.

- Divide class into 2-4 teams, depending on number of students and classroom size.
- Have each team come up with a team name inspired by the names of existing baseball teams that incorporates one of your vocabulary words. They can then cut out and pin their team's name badges to their clothes.
- While they are completing these tasks, place the printable "home plate," "pitching mound," "first base," "second base," and "third base" signs around the room, mimicking a baseball field, with "home plate" being at the front of the room. If you have four teams, you will need to set up two baseball fields

To begin, one team will be up to bat and the other team will be pitching. Each team lines up single file.

The **first player on the "batting" team** steps up to the front of the room onto the home plate printable. The **first player on the "pitching team"** stands across from him or her. The pitcher then "throws out" a vocabulary word and asks the student to either define it or use it in a sentence.

- The "batting" student has 30 seconds to respond correctly. If his or her answer is correct, the player gets to move on to first base.
- If the pitcher finds the student's answer problematic, the teacher (or another student playing the neutral umpire) can call the answer as a hit or a miss.
- If the answer is a miss, the student can take two more guesses as to the right definition or proper sentence.
- If the student misses three times, he or she has "struck out" and must return to the back of the line. **NOTE:** When baseball players return to the dugout after being at-bat they're often greeted with encouragement from their teammates. **Encourage students to encourage each other!**

Once the first batter has moved (either onto first base or back to the end of the line), the next batter steps up from the team line, as does the next pitcher from the other team. Again, the pitcher "throws out" a vocabulary word for the student to define or use in a sentence, and this second batter must answer accordingly.

If answered correctly, the second batter gets to move onto first base and the original player (if on first base), gets to advance to second base.

Stealing Bases: If you want, students can try to "steal bases," but such students must be "thrown" a quick vocabulary word from the pitcher and students only have 15 seconds to correctly use the word in a sentence or define it. If incorrect, the player is out and goes to the end of the team line. If correct, the student can advance one base. Only one attempt at stealing a base per student (or maybe per inning) should be allowed to keep the chaos to a minimum.

The game continues just like in baseball with a team "striking out" after three students have failed to correctly define or use a vocabulary word and then the pitching team becomes the batting team and vice versa. Students should remain in their ordered team lines to ensure that everyone has an equal chance to play.

You can play seven innings or fewer depending on the time constraints in your day—perhaps you play an inning every Friday and keep track throughout the spring and even have multiple games.

Pitcher's Mound, First Base, Second Base, Third Base



Home Plate



Team Badges



Sadlier and Sadlier® are registered trademarks of William H. Sadlier, Inc. Copyright © William H. Sadlier, Inc. All rights reserved. May be reproduced for education use (not commercial use).



Lessons in Community from Baseball

The National Baseball Hall of Fame program "Diversity in Baseball" emphasizes how players come from all over the world to be on teams and then need to adapt, learn to trust each other and work together. So what can students take away from that as they get ready for the "big game" of Vocabulary Baseball?

Build Skills

"Baseball is an ideal example of how every individual player contributes to the success of the team. With each player working hard to improve their hitting, base running, throwing, or fielding skills- the team is growing stronger and stronger ... Skilled baseball players know what to focus on and when's their time to shine. This should be the case with any team member, anywhere."

In the classroom: Individual vocabulary activities help students hone their skills so they can shine for their team.

Build Trust

"Baseball teams that can build trust are more successful. In fact, teamwork and trust often beats talent. In order to build trust, successful teams train and practice together for hours, learning about each other, and getting to know everyone individually. That helps the team thrive and move forward."

In the classroom: This is where your regular partner/team vocabulary practice activities come in.

No Pointing Fingers

"A team is not a team only when they're winning. A team's a team even during hardships and failure. And if the players don't support each other during a weak season, they're putting the team at risk. Successful baseball teams won't fall after a lost game. They won't look for someone to blame, even if an individual player made an obvious mistake that may have cost them their victory."

In the classroom: This is about setting expectations and you are probably already doing this every day. Encourage your students to be encouraging. When they feel like rolling their eyes or saying something unkind because they feel upset with a classmate who is struggling, remind them that it's okay to feel frustrated but to choose encouragement instead.