

ACTIVITY: BASEBALL FOR ALIENS



You are a tour guide for aliens who are visiting the earth and observing human life. You're riding along in a blimp, viewing the landscape, and you float over a baseball stadium.

One of the aliens looks down and is very confused by what he sees. You explain that there is a game going on.

What questions might the alien ask and what would your answers be?



Critical Thinking Exercise 1: Baseball for Aliens

Give 25 minutes for work, 10 minutes to share with the room, 5 minutes to debrief

This exercise provides an opportunity to think outside your normal way of thinking.

Pretend that you have been assigned the task of conducting a tour for aliens who are visiting the earth and observing human life. You're riding along in a blimp, viewing the landscape below, and you float over a professional baseball stadium. One of the aliens looks down and is very confused by what he sees.

You explain that there is a game going on.

What questions might the alien ask and what would your answers be?

i.e.

- What is a game?
- Why do people get so excited about watching other people play games?
- What is a team?
- Why can't the people in the seats go down on the field and join in?
- I thought a bat was a nocturnal flying mammal?
- Do they call it home because they live there?
- I thought you ate off of a plate?

Debrief

How difficult was this exercise?

As you consider the possible questions, what themes and complexities did you encounter? Were there questions that you missed because of your own understanding already that you didn't even consider? Then, as you try to answer the questions, it will quickly become apparent that we carry around certain assumptions, understandings and values that may not make as much sense to or be consistent with others. We understand certain vocabulary, have an idea of what games are all about, and support a certain team, for instance, because it makes us feel like we're a part of a community. This sense of community is a value that matters to some people more than others. Furthermore, when trying to explain team sports to an alien, you might have to explain the value we place on winning and losing.

What does Alien Baseball have to do with Critical thinking? When we think outside of assumptions and our own "subconscious" viewpoint, we are forced to take a deeper look at the things we do and things we value. Sometimes they don't sound logical from the outside looking in. By examining our own biases and understanding, and then taking a step back to see what is different or similar around us, we are opening our minds to gather information to help us make more balanced judgments.