



About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 20 Word Count: 1,372

Book Summary

A Big League for Little Players is an informational book about the history of Little League Baseball. It tells about the beginnings of baseball in America and how a league of young players was formed. Also highlighted is the Little League World Series, from its roots to the 2006 champions. Photographs support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask-and-answer-questions

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of asking and answering questions to understand text
- Identify the main idea and supporting details
- Understand and use possessive nouns
- Recognize and form closed compound words

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*A Big League for Little Players* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Ask and answer questions, main ideas and details, possessive nouns, compound words worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

Content words:

Story critical: *divisions (n.), goal (n.), league (n.), organized (adj.), pastime (n.), tournament (n.)*

Enrichment: *competitors (n.), eager (adj.), equipment (n.), feat (n.), scheduled (adj.), spectators (n.)*

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the words *Little League Baseball* on the board. Ask students to share what they know about the meaning of the phrase. Explain that Little League is a team organization for kids who play baseball.
- Invite students to share any experiences playing or watching Little League Baseball.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is and what it might be about.

- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask-and-answer-questions**

- Discuss how asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and enjoy reading the information in a book.
- Model asking questions.
Think-aloud: From what I see on the cover and title pages, it appears as though this book is all about kids playing baseball. I'm curious whether these kids are playing on a Little League team or a school team. When I look at the table of contents, I see that one section is titled "Baseball Begins." I know that there are all kinds of organized teams for baseball, such as Major League, Minor League, and Little League. This makes me wonder if all of these types of baseball teams began at the same time. Before reading, several questions often come to mind about the topic. As I read, I enjoy looking for answers to my questions, which often sparks further curiosities and questions to answer while reading.
- Introduce and explain the [ask-and-answer-questions worksheet](#) to students. Create a chart on the board similar to the worksheet. Ask students what about the topic they are curious about. Have them write their questions in the first column on their worksheet. Invite them to share some of their questions and write them on the class chart.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Main idea and details**


- Write the following list of words on the board: *baseball, football, basketball, soccer ball*. Ask students to tell what these words refer to (different types of balls). Point out that these words help to identify the main idea. (Different types of balls are used in sports.) The words *baseball, football, basketball*, and *soccer ball* are the details that support this main idea.
- Explain that sometimes the amount of information about a topic is so large that the information is grouped into sections, each section with its own main idea.
- Read pages 4 through 6 aloud to students. Model identifying the main idea and details of the introduction.
Think-aloud: As I read the introduction, most of the sentences are about events at a very important baseball game—the 2006 Little League World Series. I will underline this information. The sentences also include information which tells that the participating teams are from the United States and Japan. The United States team won the championship game. Based on what I've read, I think the main idea of the section is: The U.S. team won the 2006 Little League World Series championship over Japan.
- Write the main idea on the board. Ask students to identify the details from the book that support this main idea (Cody Walker hit a two-run home run that takes USA to a 2-to-1 lead, Kyle Carter has been at his best pitching for the U.S. team, and so on). Write these details on the board.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to talk about what they see in the photographs. Reinforce the vocabulary words they will encounter in the text.
- Write the following content vocabulary words on the board: *competitors, pastime, spectators, and tournament*.
- Explain to students that most of the time, good readers use context clues to help figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word in the text. However, sometimes they will not find enough context clues to clearly define the unfamiliar word. Model how students can use the glossary or a dictionary to locate a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *spectators* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 6 as you read the sentence in which the word *spectators* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.

- Point to the word *spectators* on the board. Reread the definition of *spectators* in the glossary. List examples of sports that have spectators, such as baseball and football. Ask students to give examples of other sports that have spectators. List them on the board.
- Have students locate each of the remaining content vocabulary words in the glossary. Read and discuss their definitions as a class.

Set the Purpose

 Encourage students to ask-and-answer-questions while reading. Remind students to also think about the main ideas and details of each section. Ask them to underline in their book important details within each section.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 7 to the end of page 12. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
- When students have finished reading, have them circle any questions on their ask-and-answer-questions worksheet that were answered.
- Model answering a question and filling in the second column of the chart on the board.
Think-aloud: Before reading, I had more than one question about this book. I was curious whether the kids were playing on a Little League team or a school team. I also wanted to know if the different types of baseball teams began at the same time. While reading, I happened to answer some of these questions. I found out that the book is about Little League Baseball. I also learned that the different types of baseball teams were not all formed at the same time. The American League was organized in 1865, the National League in 1876, and Little League baseball in 1939. I still don't know when Minor League Baseball was formed. I will write these answers on the ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board. The information I read sparked new curiosities about the topic. I found it interesting that Little League began with only three teams but grew to 94 teams by 1948. I wonder how many teams compete in Little League today. I'm also curious about whether the team that wins the championship game gets a special trophy. I will write these questions on the ask-and-answer-questions chart.
- Ask students to write answers for the circled questions and additional questions they raised on their worksheet. Invite students to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book. Write shared responses on the class ask-and-answer-questions chart on the board.
- Model identifying the main idea and details.
Think-aloud: As I read the section titled "Baseball Begins," most of the sentences mentioned something about how and when organized baseball came into being in the United States. I will underline this information. However, I also read about the American League, the National League, and the Civil War. I will underline this information, too. Based on what I've read, I think the main idea of the section is: Baseball became a popular game in the United States during the mid-1800s.
- Write the main idea on the board. Ask students to identify details that support this main idea (two leagues were formed: the American League and the National League, soldiers used it as a diversion and played it in their free time, it became known as the United States's national pastime, and so on). Write these details on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students review pages 9 through 12. Have them circle any questions on their worksheet that were answered. Ask students to write answers to any circled questions and additional questions they raised on their worksheet. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated while reading.

- Invite students to share any information they underlined in the third section, “History of Little League Baseball.” Write these details on the board. Have students work with a partner to identify the main idea from these details. (Carl Stotz formed Little League Baseball in 1939.) Discuss their responses as a class and write the main idea on the board.
- ✍️ Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their questions. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their worksheet as they read and underline in their book important information within each section.
- ✍️ Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read the word and figure out what it means.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and enjoy what they read.
- **Think-aloud:** *I wanted to know how many teams now compete in Little League Baseball and if the team that wins the championship game gets a special trophy. I learned that more than 100,000 teams now compete in Little League divisions. I also learned that eighty countries outside the United States compete in Little League, and that they all have a chance to play in the Little League World Series at the end of each summer. I didn’t find the answer to my question about the trophy. I’m still curious about this. I’m also curious about whether the kids that won the 2006 Little League World Series will play again next year. I will write the questions I’m still curious about on the ask-and-answer-questions chart.*
- Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions. Invite students to fill in the last column with information they still would like to know about Little League Baseball.
- Ask students to share questions they added to their ask-and-answer-questions worksheet while reading.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss how stopping to review the important details helped students remember the facts and better understand the information in the book. Ask them how the details they identified support the main idea.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [main-ideas-and-details worksheet](#). When everyone has finished working independently, review answers aloud.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about the dream of one man, Carl Stotz, who formed Little League Baseball. Now that you know this information, what does this tell you about the ability to achieve your dreams?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Possessive nouns

- Write the following sentence on the board: *Cody’s team went on to win the Little League World Series.* Read the sentence aloud, pointing to the word *team*. Ask a volunteer to explain whose team the sentence is referring to (*Cody’s*).
- Review or explain that words like *Cody’s* are called *possessive nouns*. A possessive noun is formed by adding an ‘s to the end of a word to show ownership, or possession.

- Direct students to page 15. Have them find a possessive word on the page (*Japan's*). Ask a volunteer to read the sentence containing the possessive noun *Japan's* aloud. Ask another volunteer to explain what belongs to Japan (their star player).
- Explain that there are exceptions to the rule of adding 's to a noun when creating a possessive noun. Write the following sentence on the board: *Children would rush home from school and huddle around a radio to listen to their favorite teams' games.* Circle the possessive noun (*teams'*). Ask students to tell what is different about this possessive noun (the apostrophe comes after the s). Explain that the noun *teams* is plural and ends in -s. When saying the possessive form of *teams* we add the apostrophe after the -s. Therefore, the possessive form of the word *teams* is spelled *teams'* and not *teams's*. Ask students what the teams have ownership of in the sentence on the board (*games*).
- Remind students that a contraction using 's is not the same as a possessive. For example, *it's* is a contraction for *it is* and does not show ownership.
- ✍️ **Check for understanding:** Have students circle the possessive nouns in the book and underline the word(s) to which each one shows ownership.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **possessive nouns worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: Closed compound words

- Write the word *mailbox* on the board. Ask students which two words they see in *mailbox* (*mail* and *box*). Explain that this word is called a *compound word*. A compound word contains two words that make up one word meaning. Explain that the definitions of the two separate words can help students figure out the meaning of the bigger word (a box where mail is placed).
- Have students turn to page 10. Read the fourth sentence aloud while they follow along: *His hope was that an organized league would teach boys the ideals of sportsmanship, fair play, and teamwork.* Have students identify the compound word in the sentence (*teamwork*). Ask them which two words are joined together in the word *teamwork* (*team* and *work*).
- Ask pairs of students to use the meaning of each separate word in *teamwork* to identify the meaning of the whole word (work completed as a team). Discuss their answers.
- ✍️ **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 5 and reread the page. Have them identify and underline the compound words (*weekend*, *teammates*). Ask students to circle the two words contained in each compound word and write the meaning of each word on the page. Discuss each word's meaning with students.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **compound words worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students share their KWLS charts with someone, explaining how it works and what they learned.

Extend the Reading

Social Studies Connection

Have students complete the *Explore More* activity on page 19. Provide computers and adequate time for students to visit and study the Little League Baseball website (<http://www.littleleague.org>) and read about the Little League World Series and its history at <http://www.littleleague.org/worldseries.html>.

Expository Writing Connection

After completing the *Social Studies Connection*, have students write a report about the history of the Little League World Series. Have them address questions such as: *How many years has the series been in existence? What teams have competed? Who were some of the standout players, and where are they now?* Have students present their written reports orally to the class.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently ask relevant questions about a topic prior to and during reading; locate answers to their questions and write them on a worksheet
- identify the main idea and supporting details to better understand the text through discussion and on a worksheet
- accurately identify possessive nouns in text and use them correctly; differentiate between a possessive noun and a contraction on a worksheet
- correctly identify and form closed compound words during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**