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BASEBALL DREAMS

Readers



Teen

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Book brief

- 1 Madison is a girl who lives in Brooklyn with her mother, Sara, and younger brother, James, in a small apartment. Her dream is to play baseball, but there is only a boys' team at her school.
- 2 She tries out for the team. However, some of the boys do not understand why she wants to play baseball. They believe she should do a "girls" activity, like cheerleading.
- 3 When Madison makes the team, some of her new teammates are not happy. They believe certain activities are for boys and others are for girls.
- 4 Madison's best friend, Sheila, encourages her in everything she does. Sheila is always ready to assist her friend when she needs help.
- 5 Main themes include friendship, solidarity, honesty, stereotypes and discrimination.

Contents

6	Main Characters	
8	Before you read	
10	Chapter 1	<i>Baseball is for BOYS!</i>
18	Activities	
20	Chapter 2	<i>The Tryout</i>
28	Activities	
30	Chapter 3	<i>Practice Makes Perfect</i>
38	Activities	
40	Chapter 4	<i>The Dilemma</i>
48	Activities	
50	Chapter 5	<i>A Great Idea</i>
58	Activities	
60	Chapter 6	<i>Baking Away</i>
68	Activities	
70	Focus on...	Baseball: The History of the Sport
72	Focus on...	2030 Agenda: Gender Equality Let's meet Marika Lyszczyk
74	Focus on...	Take me out to the ... Cinema! Baseball in Movies
77	Test Yourself	
79	Syllabus	

Main Characters



MADISON

15 year-old girl in her sophomore year of high school who really loves baseball.



SHEILA

Madison's best friend and biggest supporter.



**COACH
JOHNSON**

The junior varsity baseball coach.



JAMES

Madison's 12-year-old brother.



CHRIS

The team's catcher who isn't a great student.



BILLY

Madison's 15-year-old teammate and neighbor.



MRS. DILLON

Her high school guidance counselor.



MRS. JONES

Madison's mother, who supports her in everything she does.

Before you read

1 ☐



Vocabulary

1 Match the pictures to the words.

- a Baseball cleats
- b Baseball mitt/glove
- c Baseball helmet
- d Pitcher's mound
- e Ball
- f Home plate
- g Umpire
- h Base



2 ☐



3 ☐



4 ☐



5 ☐



6 ☐



7 ☐



8 ☐

Writing

2 Complete the rules of baseball with the missing words.

inning • corners • field • hit • run • wins • ball •
divided • game • center • hitting • turns

Baseball is a (1) _____ played between two teams of nine players each. It is played on a diamond-shaped playing (2) _____. It has four (3) _____.: first base, second base, third base and home plate. In the (4) _____ is the Pitcher's mound. The game is (5) _____ into nine innings. Each (6) _____ is divided in half. The players of one team take (7) _____ coming to bat. They try to (8) _____ the ball. If they swing three times without (9) _____ the ball,

they are “out” and their turn is over. If they hit the (10) _____, they run to first base, then second base, third base, and home plate. Every time they (11) _____ to all of the bases, they score a home run. The team with the most home runs (12) _____ the game.

Reading

B1 Preliminary

3 Complete the text with the correct words.

Baseball Dreams _____ is about a girl named Madison (1) _____ loves baseball. Her friend, Sheila, (2) _____ her to try out for the school baseball team. However, it is an all-boys (3) _____. She tries out (4) _____ the team and makes it. She (5) _____ sports equipment to play on the team. But how will she be able to pay for it?

- | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | A was | B does | C has | D is |
| 1 | A that | B which | C who | D does |
| 2 | A encourages | B makes | C loves | D likes |
| 3 | A squad | B team | C group | D field |
| 4 | A to | B at | C for | D by |
| 5 | A does | B gives | C likes | D needs |

Speaking

21st
Century
Skills

4 For each of the following statements, write agree (A) or disagree (D). Compare your answers with your partner and explain why.

- | | A | D |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 There should only be all-female or all-male sports teams. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 Men are physically stronger than women, but women are more intelligent. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 Like sports, certain jobs are only for women and others for men. | ☐ | ☐ |

Chapter 1

Baseball is for BOYS!

2 Madison put on her dad's old baseball mitt and began to throw the ball in the air. She was lying on her bed, thinking about her father and the time he took her to Yankee Stadium. They sat closely together watching the Bronx Bombers¹ destroy their longtime rivals², the Boston Red Sox. That's where her love for baseball began.

Madison is thinking about her father who gave her her love of baseball.

Suddenly, her 12-year-old brother, James, came into the room. "That's my ball!" he yelled³.

"Don't you know how to knock?" she asked, without looking at him.

Her brother wants the ball she is using.

"Come on, give it to me! My friends are waiting for me in the park!" He tried to grab⁴ it while it was up in the air, but Madison was too quick for him. She caught it, stood up, and walked towards the living room with James following behind her.

"MOM! Maddy won't give me the ball!" James screamed to his mother, who was busy getting dinner ready in the kitchen. Madison didn't want to annoy her mother, so she threw the ball over her shoulder and said, "Take it..."

1 **Bronx bombers** another name for the New York Yankees baseball team

2 **rivals** people competing with others for the same objective

3 **yell** shout loudly

4 **grab** take



Madison is deep in thought and doesn't want to be bothered.



Madison's brother, James, tells her that baseball is a sport for boys, not girls.

James caught it and said, "Besides, baseball is for BOYS, not GIRLS!" Madison stopped. She quickly turned around and looked at her brother. *That's what YOU think!* she thought, then walked out of their tiny apartment and ran down the stairs and into the street.

It wasn't the first time she'd heard that, but every time she did, it hurt just the same. Baseball was Madison's first love ever since her father had taken her to the park to toss¹ the ball around for the first time. When she was a child, they used to sit in front of the television every time the Yankees played. She knew the names of all the current players as well as the Hall of Famers² that her dad had loved as a kid. Unfortunately, he wasn't here anymore... he'd died two years ago. Now Madison only had her brother, her mom and her best friend, Sheila, to share her passion with.

Madison walked in the chilly³ February air, trying to avoid the ice and leftover⁴ snow that had fallen two days before. At the corner of the street, Sheila was waiting with her hands on her hips, then started pointing to her watch.

1 **toss** throw lightly

2 **Hall of Famers** baseball players who are in the Hall of Fame, which honors excellent players

3 **chilly** cold

4 **leftover** remaining

She is thinking about her father who died two years ago. He is the reason she loves baseball.

Baseball Dreams

“Am I late?” Madison asked softly.

“Is my name Sheila?” Sheila started laughing at her own joke. “Yes, of course you are!” Sheila could never be angry for long, especially with her best friend. They met in elementary school when Sheila introduced herself. Madison was the new girl and didn’t know anyone. She thought Sheila was so different from her, so open and friendly, while she was shy and quiet. The two girls had been best friends ever since. She joined arms with Madison and said, “Let’s hurry so we don’t miss them!”

James Madison High School’s baseball team was one of the best in the city. Madison dreamed of playing for them. Like most high school baseball teams, however, it was all-male¹. Sheila persuaded Madison to speak to the coach and see if she could try² out for the team. They were practicing today after school, and Sheila saw it as the perfect opportunity to talk to the coach.

When they arrived, they looked through the fence and watched the players throw the ball around—catcher³ to shortstop⁴ to outfielder⁵.

Madison and her friend, Sheila, meet. They are going to the school to talk to the baseball team coach. Madison wants to try out for the team.

Madison and her friend, Sheila, see the players practicing.

- 1 **all-male** only boys
- 2 **try out** compete for a place on a team
- 3 **catcher** the player who receives the pitcher’s ball

- 4 **shortstop** the field player who tries to stop balls between second and third base
- 5 **outfielder** the player who plays far out on the field

Coach Johnson clapped his hands and offered words of encouragement. The season started in about three weeks, but the team would begin training¹ as soon as tryouts were finished.

Coach Johnson blew his whistle². He called the players over to him, and they stood together as Coach gave them some feedback³, then told them they could go home. The players shouted and ran for the locker rooms as the coach and his assistant began to collect the equipment.

“Here’s your chance,” Sheila whispered⁴ as she pushed Madison onto the field. Madison turned around and made a face at her friend, but continued walking towards Coach Johnson.

“Um, excuse me, Coach Johnson?” He was picking up a ball and slowly turned around.

“Yes?”

“Um, hi, I’m Madison Jones, a ... a sophomore⁵ here at James Madison...”

“Hello, young lady ... can I help you with something?” he asked with a smile on his face.

“Yeah, I hope so. I was wondering if I ... um ... ” She looked back at her friend for a bit of courage.

Sheila encourages Madison to speak with Coach Johnson about joining the team.

Madison introduces herself to Coach. She asks him if she can try out for the team.

1 **training** practice

2 **whistle** 

3 **feedback** information to help you improve

4 **whisper** speak very softly

5 **sophomore** in your second year of high school

Baseball Dreams

Sheila said quietly, “Go for it!” Madison continued. “Yeah, I want to try out for the team...”

Coach Johnson couldn't hide the surprise on his face. “Madison Jones ... You're Danny Jones' daughter, the all-star? The one who made Brooklyn high school baseball famous?”

“Um ... yes, sir. My father played for Sunset Park,” she shyly answered.

“He didn't just play ... he was their star player!” He seemed lost in thought for a moment, then said, “What position do you play?”

“Pitcher¹, sir,” Madison said as she looked at her feet on the ground.

“Like your dad ...” Coach Johnson laughed to himself and smiled. “He struck² me out more than once! I remember him well. Here,” he threw the ball he had just picked up at Madison who caught it.

“Let's see you throw.” The coach picked up a mitt that was on a bench³ in the dugout⁴, walked slowly behind the plate and waited for Madison to get on the pitcher's mound.

The coach remembers her father.

An all-star is a member of a team made up of a group of the best players around.

Coach Johnson asks Madison to throw some pitches.

1 **pitcher** the player who throws the ball for a batter to hit

2 **struck out** failed (batter) to hit three balls the pitcher threw

3 **bench** where players sit during a game, while not playing

4 **dugout** where a baseball team sits while waiting to play

Madison ran slowly towards it and seemed worried for a moment. She looked at Sheila, who was smiling at her. Coach Johnson got into the catcher's position and shouted at her, "C'mon, give me your best shot." She threw the ball at him as fast as she could, and he almost fell over. He had a shocked look on his face and stood up. They threw the ball back and forth¹ for a while². The coach asked Madison for different types of pitches³ and she did her best. After about 10 minutes he said, "Friday at 3:30. Don't be late." He turned around and walked towards the locker room⁴.

Madison is very happy and goes to Magnolia's Bakery to celebrate with her friend, Sheila.

Madison ran off the field towards Sheila, who was jumping up and down. "Did you see that, Sheila? He almost fell over!! Every pitch he asked for, I gave him. He seemed happy, didn't he?"

"He sure did! Told you you'd be great! Let's go celebrate at Magnolia's Bakery. I'll get you your favorite cupcake⁵... Chocolate with cream cheese icing⁶, right?"

"You got it!" 

Think

Do you have any brothers or sisters?
Do you like the same things?

- 1 **back and forth** (here) from one to the other
- 2 **for a while** for a short time
- 3 **pitches** the throws of a baseball

- 4 **locker room** a place to shower and change your clothes after doing sport
- 5 **cupcake** small cake made in cup-shaped paper
- 6 **icing** a cream that is put on top of cakes, cupcakes and cookies



Madison is invited to try out for the team.



Speaking

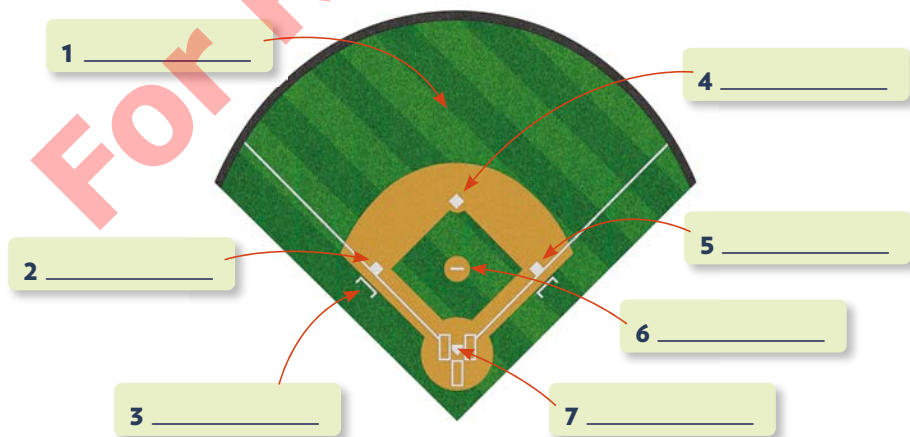
1 In Chapter 1, we meet Madison, a girl who loves baseball, and her best friend, Sheila. She wants to join an all-male baseball team at her school. Discuss these questions with your partner.

- 1 Have you ever tried something new that you have never done before?
- 2 Do you have a best friend? How long have you known him / her?
- 3 Madison's favorite sport is baseball. What is your favorite sport?
- 4 Madison has a younger brother. Do you think she has a good relationship with him?
- 5 Sheila, Madison's best friend, persuades Madison to talk to the coach about the team. Have you ever helped a friend do something important?

Vocabulary

2 Label the baseball field with the correct terms.

dugout • first base • home plate • pitcher's mound •
second base • outfield • third base



Writing

- 3** Write a short paragraph about your best friend (about 100 words). How did you meet? Why is she / he your best friend?

Before-reading Activity

Listening

- 3** **4** Listen to the beginning of Chapter 2 and complete the sentences with one word.

Madison has a Yankees baseball cap.

- 1** Madison walked to school with Sheila, her best _____.
- 2** Madison's brother, James, was _____ video games in the living room.
- 3** Sheila took the _____ to her aunt's house.
- 4** The team's catcher is called _____.
- 5** Billy is the team's first _____.
- 6** Brian is leaving the team because his _____ have gone down.



Focus on...

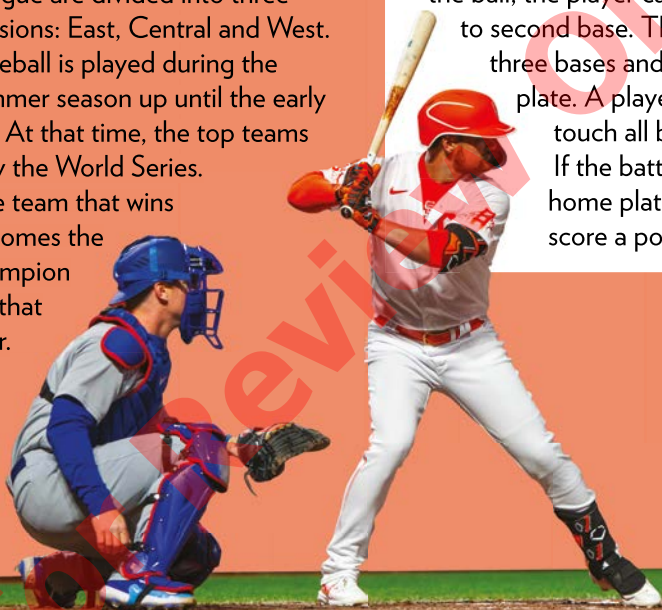
Baseball

The Major Leagues

Major League Baseball in the United States is divided into two professional leagues with 30 teams from around North America. The National and American League are divided into three divisions: East, Central and West. Baseball is played during the summer season up until the early fall. At that time, the top teams play the World Series. The team that wins becomes the champion for that year.

The History of the Sport

Baseball is one of the United States' most popular sports. It is played with two teams on a field, or "baseball diamond". There is a pitcher who throws a ball to a catcher, and a batter (from the other team) who tries to hit it. If the batter hits the ball, the player runs to first base. If the next batter hits the ball, the player can run to second base. There are three bases and home plate. A player must touch all bases. If the batter crosses home plate, they score a point.



Cooperstown, New York

Home of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum

Cooperstown is a place that baseball lovers from around the country like to visit. Why? Because it is home to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum! This historic place was established in 1939. Its motto is "Preserving History, Honoring Excellence, Connecting Generations."





Derek Jeter

Famous Players

Baseball lovers can see baseball-related exhibits, as well as all of the players, managers, umpires, executives and pioneers who are honored members of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Some famous members are Jackie Robinson—the first African-American member, Babe Ruth and, more recently, Derek Jeter—both of the New York Yankees. There is also a woman in the Hall of Fame—Effa Manley. She was an African-American baseball executive. With her husband, she owned the Newark Eagles of the then-Negro National League.

The Seventh-Inning Stretch

Every baseball game usually has nine innings—nine turns at bat for each team. Between the

two halves of the seventh inning, baseball fans watching in the stadium stand up

and stretch their arms and legs. Sometimes they also walk around. In most stadiums where professional teams play, they play “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” and encourage the crowd to sing along. It is a magic moment where everyone in the stadium feels part of the game!



Did you know...?

- The baseball is made of either cork or rubber, to make it bounce. It is covered in leather to give it its round shape.
- The first professional major-league baseball team was the Cincinnati Red Stockings, in 1869. The team still exists and is now known as the Cincinnati Reds.
- Pitchers can throw balls fast—really fast...up to 100 miles (about 161 kilometers) an hour!

Task – Presentation

Choose a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame and research that person. Then give a presentation about them and why they are in the Hall of Fame to your classmates.

Test Yourself

1 Put the events in the order that they happened in the story.

- 1 ☐ Madison tries out for her high school baseball team and becomes one of its pitchers, but some of the boys aren't very happy.
- 2 ☐ Coach Johnson tells her she doesn't need to quit the baseball team.
- 3 ☐ One day, Madison and her best friend, Sheila, go to the high school to ask the baseball coach, Coach Johnson, if she can try out for the team.
- 4 ☐ She wants to play for the high school team, which is a boys' team.
- 5 ☐ Chris, Madison's teammate, asks her to tutor him in English.
- 6 ☐ Madison finds out that she needs a new pitcher's mitt and cleats if she wants to play for the team.
- 7 ☐ Madison refuses to write Chris's paper.
- 8 ☐ Sheila's bake sale is a success, and she tells Madison that she will have enough money to buy her baseball equipment.
- 9 ☐ Madison tells Coach Johnson that she can no longer be on the baseball team.
- 10 ☐ She is worried because she doesn't have the money for her baseball equipment and can't ask her mother.
- 11 ☐ Madison decides to earn money as an English tutor.
- 12 ☐ Sheila and Mrs. Dillon organize a bake sale to raise money for Madison so she can buy her baseball glove and cleats.
- 13 ☐ Madison doesn't know what to say to Chris because she knows it is wrong but really needs baseball equipment.
- 14 ☐ Madison is a girl who really likes baseball.
- 15 ☐ Chris offers to buy Madison a new baseball glove if she writes his English paper.

Now, using the sentences, write a summary of *Baseball Dreams*. Try to use your own words when possible.

Vocabulary

2 Write the words for these definitions from the story.

1 The act of cooking sweet things like cakes and cookies in an oven.

2 A group of teams that play each other for a championship.

3 The ability to do something well.

4 Surprised, usually in a negative way, and upset.

5 A place where you can borrow a book for free.

Poster

3 Imagine *Baseball Dreams* as a movie and create a poster for it. Then, share and compare with your classmates!

**BASEBALL
DREAMS**

