

"Analysis of Baseball" by May Swenson

Annotated Copy

Use the questions below, or questions like them, to guide class discussion. Focus students' attention on the effective use of onomatopoeia, looking closely at placement and meaning of sound words.

It's about
the ball,
the bat,
and the mitt.

Ball hits
bat, or it
hits mitt.

(What is happening right now? What do you know about the point of view from which this poem is being told?)

Bat doesn't
hit ball, bat
meets it.

(What is happening right here? Ask what onomatopoetic word might fit here?)

Ball bounces
off bat, flies
air, or thuds
ground (dud)
or it
fits mitt.

(What do expect to happen? What does the word dud placed after ground represent? How does it add to the meaning of the poem?)

Bat waits
for ball
to mate.
Ball hates
to take bat's
bait. Ball
flirts, bat's
late, don't
keep the date.

(What comparison does the poet make with the image "ball flirts, bat's late"?)

Ball goes in
(thwack) to mitt,
and goes out
(thwack) back
to mitt.

(What is happening right now? How does the word "thwack" add to the poem? What do you imagine when you hear the word "thwack"?)

Ball fits
mitt, but
not all
the time.
Sometimes
ball gets hit
(pow) when bat

(Paraphrase this line. Why doesn't the ball fit into the mitt all of the time?)

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meets it,
and sails
to a place
where mitt
has to quit
in disgrace.

(Explain this sentence. How does the word "pow" add to the meaning and where do you think the ball was hit? How do you know? Why does the mitt quit in disgrace?)

That's about
the bases
loaded,
about 40,000
fans exploded.

(Add an example of onomatopoeia here to add to the meaning of fans exploding. Examples may vary depending on what team they are cheering for during the game.)

It's about
the ball,
the bat,
the mitt,
the bases
and the fans.
It's done
on a diamond,
and for fun.
It's about
home, and it's
about run.

(What does this section mean? How does this make you, as a reader, feel?)

May Swenson, "Analysis of Baseball" from *New and Selected Things Taking Place* (Boston: Atlantic/Little Brown, 1978). Copyright © 1978 by May Swenson.