

# The History of Baseball

Baseball wasn't invented by one person; it grew out of popular games that immigrants brought to America from Europe. Most people agree that it is most similar to a game from England called Rounders, but it also contains elements of "stick and ball" games from countries like Russia, Germany, and France. Baseball was easy for almost anyone to play—you didn't have to be especially strong, tall, or clever to play the game well. The first official team to play the game with the rules we use today were the New York Knickerbockers (*NICK-er-bock-ers*) in 1845. In the next few years, a baseball craze swept New York City. Players in the area began to form clubs and teams. Stadiums began being built so fans could watch their favorite teams play.

When "Casey at the Bat" was published in 1888, professional baseball had just been born. The National League was established in 1876, and fans across the country were starting to spend their free time watching their favorite teams play each other in stadiums.

1. Name three countries that baseball came from.

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2. What was the name of the first team to play baseball by the rules we use today?

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3. When was "Casey at the Bat" first published?

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4. Why was baseball so popular?

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5. It's 1880 and you've just heard that a professional baseball team is starting in your town. Would you want to be on the team or watch the games as a fan? Write three sentences that explain your answer below.

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ANSWERS: 1. England, Russia, Germany, France 2. The New York Knickerbockers 3. 1888 4. It was easy for all kinds of people to play. 5. Answers will vary.