

Act it Out:

“Casey at the Bat”

There’s so much drama in “Casey at the Bat.” Acting out the poem is a great way to better understand the poem’s characters and plot. Grab some friends or classmates and put on a show!

Before you start, you may want to set up a small baseball diamond. Use pillows, books, pieces of cardboard, or anything you have on hand as bases. Borrow some baseball caps, gloves, and jerseys for costumes. If you’re outdoors, you can play the game along with the poem.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

COONEY
BARROWS
FLYNN
BLAKE
PITCHER
UMPIRE
NARRATOR
CROWD
CASEY



(Tip: If there are a lot of kids, try breaking up the Narrator’s lines between a few people.)

CASEY AT THE BAT: A Reader’s Theater Script

SETTING: Mudville, USA, 1888.

(CROWD cheers)

NARRATOR:

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day:
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play.
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,

(COONEY and BARROWS run to first base, then leave)

A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

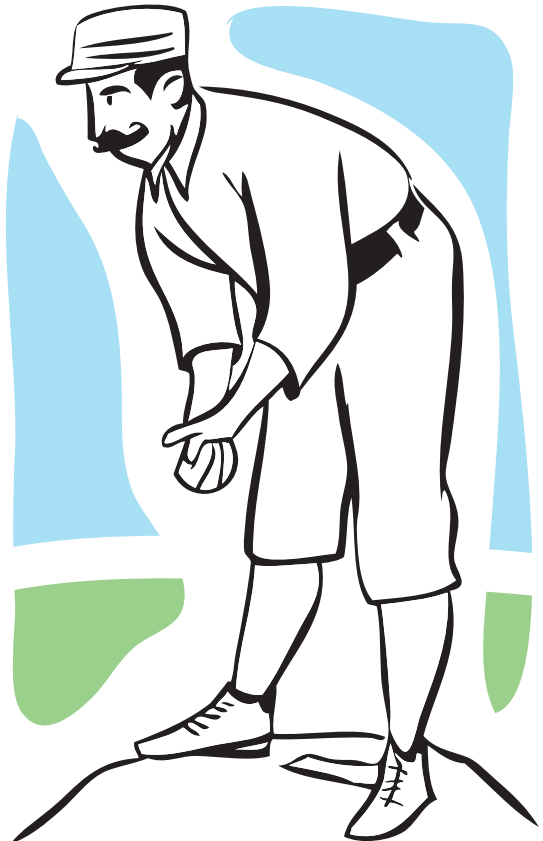
(CROWD goes quiet)

NARRATOR:

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest

(Some of the CROWD leaves)

Clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
They thought



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CROWD:

If only Casey could get but a whack at that -
We'd put up even money, now, with Casey at the bat.

NARRATOR:

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,

(FLYNN and BLAKE go up to bat)

And the former was a lulu and the latter was a cake;
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat.

NARRATOR:

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,

(FLYNN runs to first base)

And Blake, the much despis-ed, tore the cover off the ball;

(BLAKE swings hard)

And when the dust had lifted, and the men saw what had occurred,
There was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

(FLYNN runs to third base, BLAKE runs to second)

NARRATOR:

Then from 5,000 throats and more there rose a lusty yell;

(CROWD cheers loudly!)

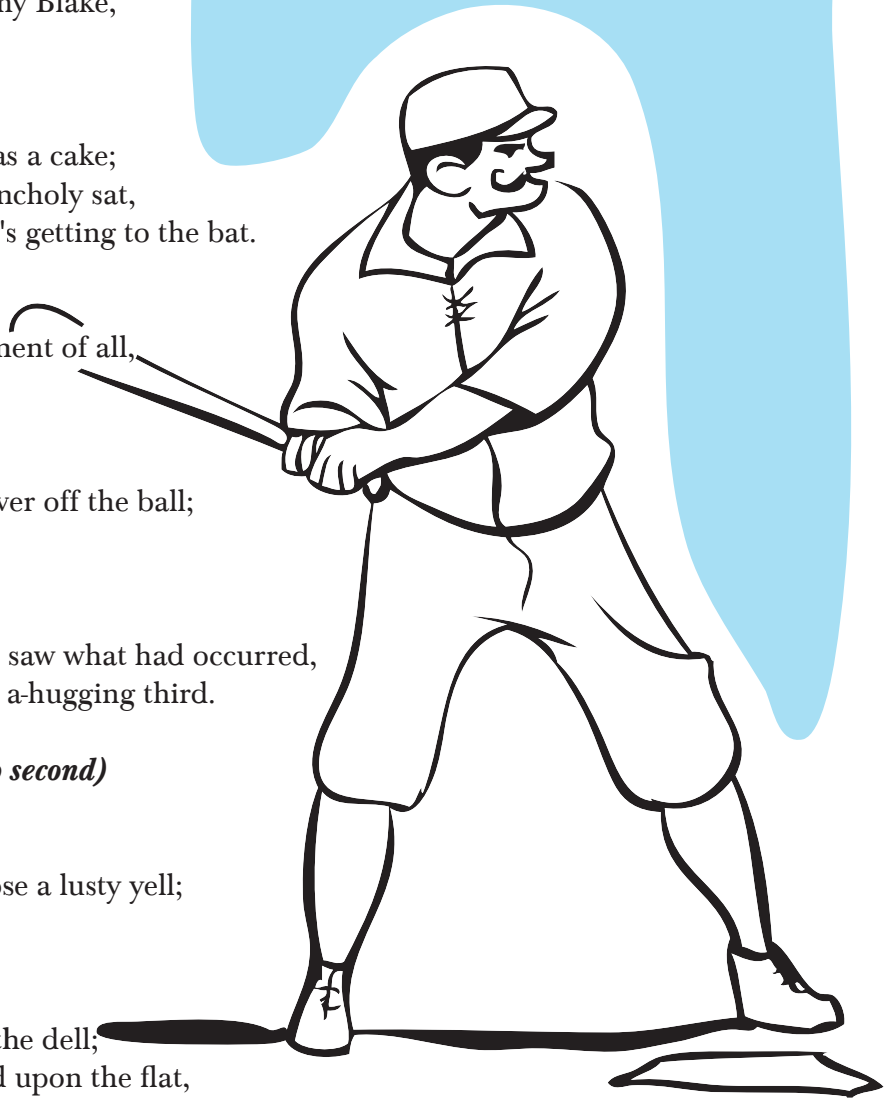
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;
It knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

(CASEY steps up to bat)

NARRATOR:

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face.
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,

(CASEY takes off his hat)



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No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

NARRATOR:

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;

(CASEY leans down and pretends to rub dirt on his hands)

Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt.

(CASEY wipes his hands on his shirt)

Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,

(PITCHER pretends to hold the ball to his hip)

Defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

NARRATOR:

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,

(PITCHER pretends to throw the ball)

And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped-

CASEY:

That ain't my style

NARRATOR:

said Casey

UMPIRE:

Strike one!

NARRATOR:

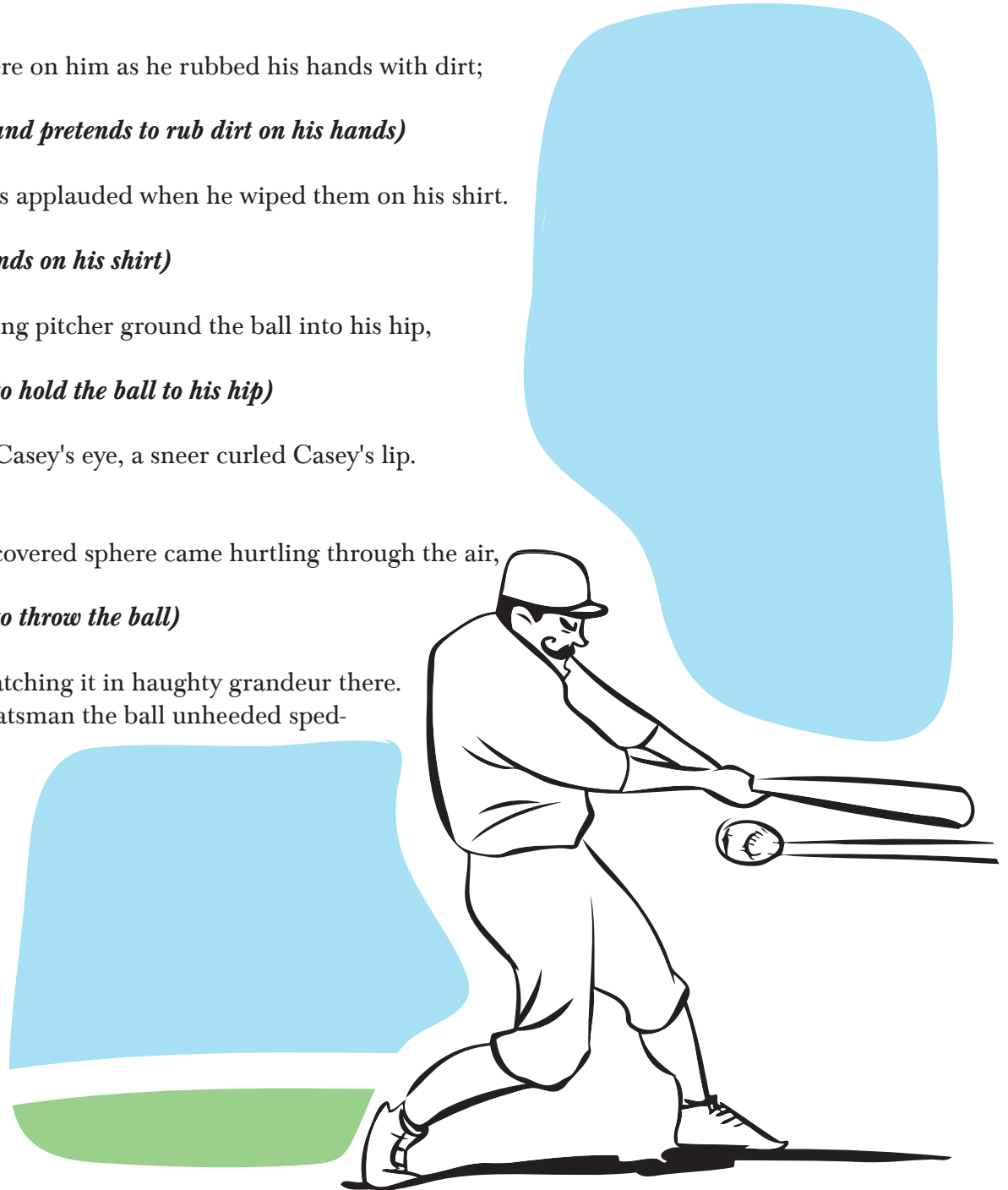
the umpire said.

NARRATOR:

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar,
Like the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore.

CROWD:

Kill him! Kill the umpire!



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NARRATOR:

shouted someone on the stand;
And it's likely they'd a-killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

(CASEY raises his hand)

NARRATOR:

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the spheroid flew;
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said

UMPIRE:

Strike two!

CROWD:

Fraud!

NARRATOR:

Cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered fraud;
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

NARRATOR:

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate;
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate.

(CASEY pounds the bat on the ground)

And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,

(PITCHER throws the ball)

And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

(CASEY swings. ALL freeze in place except the narrator)

NARRATOR:

Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright;
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light,
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout;
But there is no joy in Mudville - mighty Casey has struck out.

