

# THE GLASSHOUSE GANG

An illustration of a brown leather baseball glove with a blue baseball inside, set against a background of blue stars.

## Companion Teaching Activities to the Newspaper Serialized Story

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# Baseball Basics: Lingo

Here are some terms and phrases from the ballpark.

**ace** -- A team's best starting pitcher.

**alley**-- The section of the outfield between the outfielders. Also "gap."

**around the horn**-- A double play going from third base to second to first.

**backdoor slider** -- A pitch that appears to be out of the strike zone, but then breaks back over the plate.

**bag** -- A base.

**Baltimore chop** -- A ground ball that hits in front of home plate (or off of it) and takes a large hop over the infielder's head.

**bandbox**-- A small ballpark that favors hitters.

**bang-bang play** -- A play in which the baserunner hits the bag a split-second before the ball arrives or vice versa.

**basket catch** -- When a fielder catches a ball with his glove near belt level.

**Bronx cheer** -- When the crowd boos.

**brushback** -- A pitch that nearly hits a batter.

**bush** -- Also "bush league." An amateur play or behavior.

**can of corn** -- An easy catch by a fielder.

**caught looking** -- When a batter is called out on strikes.

**cellar** -- Last place. Also "basement."

**cheese** -- Also "good cheese." Refers to a good fastball.

**chin music** -- A pitch that is high and inside.

**circus catch** -- An outstanding catch by a fielder.

**closer** -- A team's relief pitcher who finishes the game.

**cutter** -- A cut fastball (one with a late break to it).

**cycle** -- When a batter hits a single, double, triple and home run in the same game.

**ding** -- A home run.

**dish** -- Home plate.

**fireman** -- A team's closer or late-inning relief pitcher.

**fungo** -- A ball hit to a fielder during practice. It's usually hit by a coach using a "fungo bat," which is longer and thinner than a normal bat.

**gap** -- See "alley." A ball hit here is a "gapper."

**gopher ball** -- A pitch hit for a home run, as in "go for."

**heat** -- A good fastball. Also "heater."

**high and tight** -- Referring to a pitch that's up in the strike zone and inside on a hitter. Also known as "up and in."

**hill** -- Pitcher's mound.

**homer** -- A home run. Other terms include: blast, dinger, dong, four-bagger, four-base knock, moon shot, tape-measure blast and tater.

**hot corner** -- Third base.

**in the hole** -- The batter after the on-deck hitter.

**jam** -- When a hitter gets a pitch near his hands, he is "jammed." Also when a pitcher gets himself in trouble, he is in a "jam."

**leather** -- Refers to how good a player plays defensively or handles the glove. Ex: "He flashed some leather on that play."

**meatball** -- An easy pitch to hit, usually right down the middle of the plate.

**Mendoza line** -- A batting average of around .200.

**moon shot** -- A very long, high home run.

**nail down** -- As in "nail down a victory." Refers to a relief pitcher finishing off the game.

**on the screws** -- When a batter hits the ball hard.

Also "on the button."

**painting the black** -- When a pitcher throws the ball over the edge of the plate.

**pea** -- A ball traveling at high speed, either batted or thrown.

**pepper** -- Pepper is a common pre-game exercise where one player bunts brisk grounders and line drives to a group of fielders who are standing about 20 feet away. The fielders try to throw it back as quickly as possible. The batter hits the return throw. (Some ballparks ban pepper games because wild pitches could land in the stands and injure spectators).

**pick** -- A good defensive play by an infielder on a ground ball. Also a shortened version of "pick-off."

**pickle** -- A rundown.

**punchout** -- A strikeout.

**rhubarb** -- A fight or scuffle.

**ribbie** -- Another way of saying RBI. Also "ribeye."

**rope** -- A hard line drive hit by a batter. Also "frozen rope."

**rubber game** -- The deciding game of a series.

**run-down** -- When a baserunner gets caught between bases by the fielders.

**Ruthian** -- With great power.

**seeing-eye single** -- A soft ground ball that finds its way between infielders for a base hit.

**set-up man** -- A relief pitcher who usually enters the game in the 7th or 8th inning.

**shoestring catch** -- A running catch made just above the fielder's shoetops.

**southpaw** -- A left-handed pitcher.

**sweet spot** -- The part of the bat just a few inches from the barrel.

**table setter** -- Batter whose job is to get on base for other hitters to drive him in. Usually a leadoff or No. 2 hitter.

**tape-measure blast** -- An extremely long home run.

**tater** -- A home run.

**Texas Leaguer** -- A bloop hit that drops between an infielder and outfielder.

**tools of ignorance** -- Catcher's equipment.

**touch 'em all** -- Hitting a home run (touching all the bases).

**twin killing** -- A double play.

**Uncle Charlie** -- Curve ball.

**utility player** -- A player who fills in at many positions.

**wheelhouse** -- A hitter's power zone. Usually a pitch waist-high and over the heart of the plate.

**wheels** -- A ballplayer's legs.

**whiff** -- Strikeout.

**yakker** -- Curve ball.

# Chapter 1 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. What does the "J" and "H" stand for in Dean's name?

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2. Dialect is a specific way of speaking that varies by the region where a person lives. Dialect is sometimes used to help build a character's personality. Find examples of Dizzy Dean's dialect in this chapter.

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3. Dean said he was "...ready to take on this big world." Support that statement with specific facts from the chapter.

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4. What makes Dizzy Dean the "greatest pitcher in the world?"

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5. The Farm System is the process of building up Major League Baseball players by having them first gain experience through the ranks of Minor League Baseball. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast Major and Minor League Baseball.

For more information about the Farm System, visit:  
<http://fivethirtyeight.com/datalab/baseballs-best-farm-systems-how-much-do-they-matter/>  
<http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/minor-league-baseball-team.htm>

*Learning Standards: I can identify author's techniques, I can find supporting evidence, I can compare and contrast.*

# Chapter 2 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. How did Dizzy Dean get his nickname?

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2. Create a timeline to sequence five important events from this chapter.

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3. Dean had to adjust to gaining popularity and living a lifestyle with luxuries. Give a specific example of this adjustment.

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4. What did Dizzy Dean do to impress his future wife?

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5. Predict one event that you think will happen in the next chapter.

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For more information about hupmobiles, visit:  
<http://classiccars.about.com/od/classiccarsaz/a/Hupmobile.htm>  
<http://auto.howstuffworks.com/hupmobile-cars.htm>

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can sequence events, I can make predictions.*

# Chapter 3 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. Describe the gashouse gang members.

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2. How did the gashouse gang get its name?

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3. "Novus Scofus" is an example of dialect. It is the way Dizzy Dean pronounces Nova Scotia. How does this technique enhance the writing?

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4. What word would you use to describe Dizzy Dean? Why?

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5. What was Pepper Martin's nickname? How did he earn it?

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For more information about the Gashouse Gang visit:

[www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-gashouse-gang-wins-the-world-series](http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-gashouse-gang-wins-the-world-series)

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can describe author's technique, I can use supporting details.*

# Chapter 4 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. What does "put a squash on all our fun" mean? How do you know?

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2. Give an example of some of the "fun" Dizzy Dean and Pepper Martin enjoyed.

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3. What does it mean when Dean says the manager "conceded" by letting Pepper Martin hear one more song?

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4. How did Dean and Martin entertain their fans?

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5. What bit of mischief did Dean and Martin keep secret?

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For more information about midget racers, visit: [hwww.quartermidgets.org/sport](http://hwww.quartermidgets.org/sport)

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can identify meanings of unknown words by using context clues.*

# Chapter 5 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. Why was the chairperson reluctant to have Dean speak at the Democratic National Convention?

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2. What promise did Dean make to the kids in the hospital?

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3. What lucky superstitions did Dean have?

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4. Dean says he had a "yarn to spin." What does that mean?

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5. What happened during the armed robbery in St. Louis?

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For more information about Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democratic National Convention, visit:  
<https://fdrlibrary.wordpress.com/tag/democratic-national-convention>

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can explain author's word choice.*



# Chapter 6 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. How did Paul Dean get the nickname "Daffy?"

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2. How did Paul and Dizzy's personalities differ?

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3. Why did the Dean brothers go on strike?

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4. How did Paul and Dizzy lose their older brother, Elmer? How did they find him?

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5. How did Dizzy and Paul prove they were the dynamic duo?

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For more information on Babe Ruth, visit: [www.baberuth.com](http://www.baberuth.com)

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can use supporting details.*

# Chapter 7 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. How did Dizzy Dean "jinx" Hughie Critz? Why did he think this was necessary?

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2. Do you think Dizzy Dean was easily coachable? Use specific evidence to support your opinion.

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3. Do you think Dizzy and Paul Dean were competitive with each other? Why or why not?

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4. What was noteworthy about the 1934 season?

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5. Why did the young boy place ice on the pitcher's mound?

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Visualize it: Dizzy Dean mention's the reporter's flashbulbs. Cameras were much different at that time than they are now. Use the internet to research what a reporter's camera looked like during the 1930s.

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can state and support my opinion, I can draw conclusions.*

# Chapter 8 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. What did Babe Ruth's retirement mean for Dizzy Dean?

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2. What did Dizzy Dean do at the Tiger's stadium to inspire his brother and Pepper Martin to join him in an Indian war dance?

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3. "Si-kology" is another example of dialect. What is the correct spelling of this word?

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4. What does "kleptomaniac" mean? How was it misused?

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5. Why did Dean feel honored to dine with Henry Ford?

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For more information about Henry Ford, visit: <http://www.thehenryford.org/exhibits/hf/>

*Learning Standards: I can draw conclusions, I can evaluate author's technique.*

# Chapter 9 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. Why did Game 4 not go well for the Cardinals?

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2. Dean said there was a "hullabaloo." What does that mean?

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3. What did Detroit fans do to intimidate the Cardinals? Was it effective?

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4. "The throw that floored Dizzy Dean would have knocked down two elephants" is an example of hyperbole, which is an intended exaggeration. Why did the author choose this technique?

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5. Find evidence in the text to support the claim that Dizzy Dean is proud of his brother Paul.

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Listen Up: Use the internet to listen to "Tiger Rag."

*Learning Standards: I can evaluate word choice and find supporting details.*

## Chapter 10 Activities - “The Gashouse Gang” Newspaper Serial

1. In paragraph two, Dean said they were “expecting fireworks”. What does that mean?

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2. Find three examples of abbreviated words or creative spelling used to display Dean’s speaking voice?

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3. Why did the fans become upset? What did they do to show their dissatisfaction?

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4. Dizzy Dean often says it isn’t bragging if you can back it up. Can you find evidence to back up the reporters’ statements that the Cardinals were the “most astonishing ball club?”

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5. Why did the reporters think this series was such an exciting championship?

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For more information about the 1934 World Series: [www.baseballalmanac.com/ws/yr1934ws.shtml](http://www.baseballalmanac.com/ws/yr1934ws.shtml)

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can use supporting details, I can evaluate word choice.*

## Chapter 11 Activities - "The Gashouse Gang" Newspaper Serial

1. The Gashouse players were described as a "motley crew." What does that mean?

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2. Who was Jackie Robinson and why is he significant?

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3. Joe Medwick told the Pope he used to be a Cardinal. In this case, "cardinal" has a double meaning. Explain.

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4. How did Leo Durocher help to create an equal opportunity for baseball players?

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5. Which players were nominated for the Hall of Fame?

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For more information about Jackie Robinson, visit: [www.jackierobinson.com](http://www.jackierobinson.com)

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can use supporting details, I can draw conclusions.*

## Chapter 12 Activities - “The Gashouse Gang” Newspaper Serial

1. What did Paul Dean do in his retirement?

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2. How did Dizzy Dean earn money by endorsing products?

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3. What made Dizzy Dean a unique broadcaster?

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4. What did Dean mean when he said everything was “hunky dory?”

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5. How did Dizzy Dean prove he had made something of himself?

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Buyer Beware: Celebrity endorsements are still a popular advertising technique. Use the internet to find examples of celebrities and products that they endorse.

*Learning Standards: I can recall information, I can evaluate word choice.*

## Newspaper In Education Baseball Activities

Use the newspaper to complete these baseball themed activities that will strengthen reading and writing skills across the curriculum.

Compare a fictional story of baseball to newspaper coverage of a real game using a graphic organizer. Remember to give the graphic organizer a title and labels.

Make a baseball crossword puzzle using words from a newspaper story.

Create a newspaper advertisement to promote ticket sales and/or television viewership of a baseball game.

Look in today's newspaper and tally the number of sports articles featuring women athletes compared to male athletes. Write a paragraph sharing your reaction to the presence or lack of presence of female athletes. Repeat this activity with national sports vs. local sports vs. college/high school sports coverage.

Find images of baseball in the newspaper or in magazines. Select several images to use to illustrate a brief story written for a younger student.

Complete a baseball-themed scavenger hunt in the newspaper. Locate the following items:

- A picture of sports equipment used by a baseball player
- A picture of a baseball player
- The temperature in the city of your local team's baseball stadium
- Something you would find at a ballpark
- The name of an opposing baseball team
- An article about a sports injury
- A word that means 'win'
- The name of a sport other than baseball
- An upcoming sports event
- A dateline on the sports page
- Figurative language used to describe a sporting event



## Extension Activities—Baseball Across the Curriculum

### ***Health and Nutrition:***

Create a menu for your local ballpark and cook one of the foods advertised.

Analyze the nutritional value of ballpark foods offered in your town.

### ***Math:***

Watch a baseball game and calculate the batting average for the players. Use the formula:  $\text{number of hits} / \text{number of times at bat} = \text{batting average}$ .

Who is your favorite baseball player? Survey your classmates and create a graph with the information.

Baseball includes many types of statistics. Research baseball statistics and the formulas that are used.

Research the salaries of 10 baseball players. What is the average salary? Did you notice any correlations between the age of the player and the salary? The position played and the salary? The geographical region and the salary?

### ***Science:***

Investigate the relationship between number of home runs hit and the dimensions of the stadium.

Research the following questions: What is the purpose of a slide? How does a player throw a ball to make it go farther? How is the curve ball (or knuckle ball) thrown? Create your own questions to add to this list to investigate.

The following website is a good resource for this information: [www.exploratorium.edu/baseball](http://www.exploratorium.edu/baseball)

### ***Social Studies:***

Create a timeline of the history of baseball.

Use a map to locate the cities your baseball team will travel to this season. Which is the nearest? The farthest? What is the average distance? What is the total number of miles that will be traveled?

### ***Visual and Performing Arts:***

Create a piece of art that conveys a message about baseball. The artwork could be a tribute to a specific athlete, a design of a new team jersey, or a mural that could be displayed at your local ballpark. Include a reflection about the meaning of the created work.

Design and build a new baseball stadium with written descriptions of all aspects of the design.

Create an original editorial cartoon that explains your opinion on baseball in our history and our lives today.

Compose and perform a song that can be played at your local ballpark to entertain the crowd.

Design a postal stamp to commemorate an athlete from your local baseball team. Explain your choice of athlete.

Perform the skit “Who’s on First?” or reenact a scene from a baseball game.

### ***Physical Education:***

Learn about preventing and treating injuries in baseball. Compile the results of your research into a brochure, poster, prezi, popplet, thinglink, etc.

Research methods to improve your baseball performance—how can you catch more effectively? How can you quicken the amount of time it takes to get around the bases?

Play a game of baseball with your classmates!

### ***Character Education:***

Explain what it means to have good sportsmanship. Why is good sportsmanship important?

Who are some of the heroes of baseball? What criteria did you use to determine their status of “hero?”

## Writing for a Variety of Purposes and Audiences

### ***Writing to Persuade:***

Imagine you are the Commissioner of Baseball, and make your decision about Dizzy Dean's eligibility for election into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Write your decision supported by facts in the form of a press release to the newspaper and other media.

Write an editorial that supports a position about the importance of baseball in the lives of our ancestors and our lives today.

Many different types of statistics are used in baseball today. Which statistics (if any) should the broadcasters include in their coverage of the game? Defend your opinion with specific details.

### ***Writing to Inform:***

Write a feature story for the newspaper that explains how baseball has reflected the cultural, historical, economic, and political changes in America since it began in the 1840s.

Develop a "Beginner's Guide to Baseball," complete with terms and diagrams.

Write a letter to a baseball player using the correct business letter format.

### ***Writing to Entertain:***

Find cartoons about baseball in the newspaper or in magazines. Remove all of the dialogue and write new dialogue.

Sports writing often contains figurative language (similes, metaphors, idioms, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, etc.). Set a timer for 10 minutes. Your task is to write a descriptive account of a baseball game. Include as many examples of figurative language as possible. Underline those examples in your writing.