

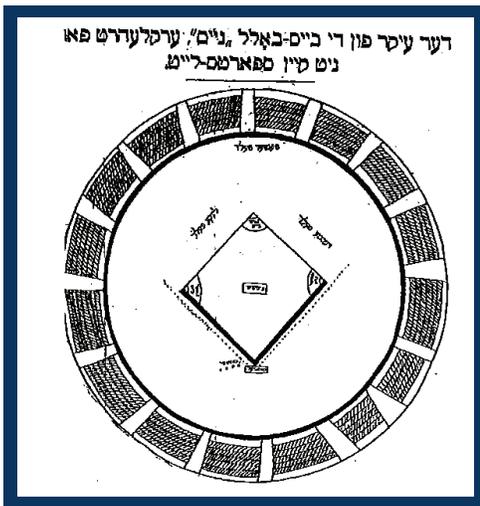
The Four Sides of a Baseball Diamond: Identity, Diversity, Integration, and Community

1. The diagram depicted in the article called “The Fundamentals of the Base-Ball ‘Game’ Described for Non-Sports Fans,” from the *Jewish Daily Forward*, August 27, 1909, p.4 (Primary Resource 6). (*The Forward* was the preeminent Yiddish language newspaper in New York in the early 20th century.)

What do you notice about the image? What do you think the picture represents? Take a guess. This diagram was published more than a hundred years ago explaining baseball for Jewish immigrants who were not familiar with the game. This is an excerpt from the article:

UPTOWN, ON 9TH Avenue and 155th Street is the famous field known as the “Polo Grounds.” Every afternoon, 20 to 35 thousand people get together there. Entrance costs from 50 cents to a dollar and a half. Thousands of poor boys and older people go without some of their usual needs in order to pay for tickets. Professional teams play baseball there and the tens of thousands of fans who sit in row after row of seats all around the stadium, go nuts with enthusiasm. They jump, they scream, they simply go wild when one of “their” players does well or, they are pained or upset when they don’t succeed.

To us immigrants, this all seems crazy however, it’s worthwhile to understand what kind of craziness it is. If an entire nation is crazy over something, it’s not too much to ask to try and understand what it means.



- ☐ Why do you think a Jewish newspaper felt it was important to explain baseball to its immigrant readers?
- ☐ What do you think baseball represented to the newcomers?

“The Fundamentals of the Base-Ball ‘Game’ Described for Non-Sports Fans,” from the *Jewish Daily Forward*, August 27 1909

2. **Put yourself in someone else’s shoes!**

Imagine someone has come to your school from a different country. Everything you do is new to this person. Choose one activity or event in your culture that you think it would be important for this person to understand, and write a short explanation to him or her. Examples might include American Halloween customs or local playground games and activities. Be as specific as possible in describing all the details and what the newcomer should know.

- ☐ Why did you choose this event or activity? Why did you think it would be important for the newcomer to understand this particular aspect of life here?
- ☐ Do you think your description will give the person all the info they need? Are there some things you can’t get from a written description?
- ☐ What must it be like to come to a new land where you don’t speak the language or understand the customs and culture? What would you do if you were in that situation?
- ☐ Revisit the question: Why do you think baseball has been important to so many immigrants?