

Did baseball create a sense of place in Nebraska towns and cities?



Wallace Rood, Father of Norman, Glen, and Irving Rood. Photo taken in 1910's.
Looking Glass town baseball team.

Supporting Questions

1. What were some common past times in early 20th century Nebraska towns and cities?
2. How was a sense of community pride and identity supported through baseball in Nebraska?
3. How is community pride evident or not evident in sports in Nebraska?

Nebraska Baseball Inquiry

Did baseball create a sense of place in Nebraska towns and cities?

Nebraska Social Studies Standards	SS 12.4.2 (WLD) Students will analyze and evaluate the impact of people, events, ideas, and symbols upon world history using multiple types of sources.
Staging the Compelling Question	While thinking of hometowns or cities, discuss how people created a sense of pride or identity in their communities.

Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
What were some common past times in early 20 th century Nebraska towns and cities?	How was a sense of community pride and identity supported through baseball in Nebraska?	How is community pride evident or not evident in sports in Nebraska?
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Write a paragraph describing historical pastimes in Nebraska.	Make a list of words, phrases, and or sentences that indicates a sense of community pride.	Create a poster on how communities are represented or misrepresented through sports in their community.
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources
Source A: Alliance Herald, 1914 Source B: The Daily Nebraskan, 1913 Source C: Omaha Daily Bee, 1913	Source A: 1940's Article from Genoa, Nebraska newspaper Source B: Photo of Wallace Rood Source C: Photo of Wallace Rood and team Source D: Photo of Norman and team Source E: Photo of Norman, Wallace and Glen Rood Source F: Photo of Jesse and Norman Rood	Source A: Seward County Independent Source B: Winnebago WIFR article Source C: 1011 News Report article

Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT: Construct an argument that responds to the compelling question and explains if baseball created a sense of place for Nebraska towns and cities historically.
	EXTENSION: Write their local newspaper and explain the importance of sports in fostering a sense of place for communities.
Taking Informed Action	UNDERSTAND: Identify a current hometown sport that supports a sense of pride and identity. ASSESS: Determine how that sport helps build up or does not build up community pride. ACT: Have students create a public presentation the role of sports to a town's sense of place in Nebraska.

**Featured sources are suggested and links are provided. It may be that these links are broken and we apologize in advance for the inconvenience.*

Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of the ways that baseball and other activities have shaped culture in small American towns. Today, sports seem to be an integral part of everyday life. From youth leagues, to school, and with professionals, sports permeate our everyday life. It's also big business. This inquiry asks about how one sport, baseball, in particular has shaped local communities in history.

Baseball has been thought of as the American national pastime. Of baseball, no less an authority on America than Walt Whitman said, "That's beautiful: the hurrah game! well—it's our game: that's the chief fact in connection with it: America's game: has the snap, go, fling, of the American atmosphere—belongs as much to our institutions, fits into them as significantly, as our constitutions, laws: is just as important in the sum total of our historic life." With this inquiry, we can test out Whitman's claim.

It is important to note that this inquiry requires prerequisite knowledge of Nebraska history and some understanding of small town culture in early and mid 20th century America.

Note: This inquiry is expected to take six or seven 40-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (e.g., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, featured sources, writing). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiry to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. This inquiry lends itself to differentiation and modeling of historical thinking skills while assisting students in reading the variety of sources. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question, "Did baseball create a sense of place in Nebraska towns and cities?" students examine newspaper articles and photographs from one family's experiences playing baseball in Nebraska. The supporting questions focus on the ways that baseball and other sports help small town communities to build up and maintain local cultural traditions. The inquiry expands to focus on other sports and their impact on small town life in the early 20th century, while leaving open the possibility that sports may not have as big an impact on community culture as we are sometimes led to think.

Staging the Compelling Question

In staging the compelling question, students imagine their hometowns or cities. This inquiry is about small towns, but students can talk about their local community if they live in a big city. Ask students to discuss the things that helps to create a sense of pride or identity in their communities. Have the students list the things that created community identity and pride and discuss them as a class.

Supporting Question 1

The first supporting question, “What were some of the most common past times in early 20th century Nebraska towns and cities?” expands the focus of this inquiry to other sports that were historically popular in Nebraska. As a formative performance task, students write a paragraph describing historical pastimes in Nebraska. In preparing the paragraph, students should take note of activities that are different from what would be seen today. In a second paragraph, students might also describe how these common past times could create a community identity.

The following sources were selected to help students in completing the task.

Featured Source A is a newspaper article community picnic.

<http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/lccn/2010270501/1914-09-10/ed-1/seq-1.pdf>



Featured Source B is a newspaper article on sports and other activities in Lincoln, Nebraska at <http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/lccn/sn96080312/1913-05-08/ed-1/seq-1.pdf>



Featured Source B is from the Omaha Daily Bee, May 11, 1913 at <http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/lccn/sn99021999/1913-05-11/ed-1/seq-56.pdf>



Supporting Question 2

The second supporting question asks about how a sense of community pride and identity can be developed through baseball. In the formative performance task, students make a list of words, phrases, and or sentences that indicates a sense of community pride. The featured sources for this question include a newspaper article and several photographs of one family's experiences over time with baseball in their local community.

Featured Source A is a 1940's Genoa Nebraska Newspaper article about a baseball game at the Nance County Fair.

**Ten Innings Decide
1-0 Victory For Genoa
At County Fair**

In what many fans believe to be the best game of the season, and perhaps the best game ever played before a Nance county fair crowd, Genoa defeated a "spiked up" Fullerton club 1 to 0 in a ten-inning tussel, before a sell-out crowd, it being Genoa day at the fair and all stores in Genoa were closed.

The pay-off blow and the only score of the game came in Genoa's half of the tenth inning when "Kenny" Reeg caught hold of one of Horacek's "Sunday pitches" and slammed it far over the fence in left field for a home run. Everyone knw that one was "gone" before it was seen to dissappear among the automobiles in the parking lot north of the fair grounds.

It was a hard-fought battle all the way—each side gave their pitcher errorless support which in itself is noteworthy for a ten inning game and neither pitcher issued a base on balls.

Genoa plays Newman Grove here to a night game Thursday (tonight) Better come out.

Box score

Genoa—	AB	R	H
Jarecke, 2b	4	0	0
Theel, lf	4	0	0
Czapla, cf	4	0	1
Hansen, 1b	4	0	0
Reeg, c	4	1	1
Yokley, 3b	4	0	0
Elm, ss	4	0	0
Boss, rf	2	0	0
Christensen, rf in 8th	1	0	1
Rood, p	3	0	1
TOTAL	34	1	4
Fullerton—	AB	R	H
J. Mahoney, 2b	5	0	1
E. Mahoney, ss	4	0	2
Denton, 3b	4	0	0
Nesbit, lf	4	0	1
Conant, cf	4	0	0
Horacek, c	4	0	0
Gdowski, 1b	4	0	2
Syslo, rf	2	0	2
Frenzen, rf in 8th	2	0	0
D. Horacek, p	4	0	1
TOTAL	37	0	10

Score by innings—
 Genoa 0-0-0 0-0-0 0-0-0 1-1
 Fullerton 0-0-0 0-0-0 0-0-0 0-0

Winning pitcher—Rood; Losing pitcher—Horacek; At bat off—Rood 37, Horacek 34; Hits off—Rood 10, Horacek 4; Struck out by—Rood 5, Horacek 2; Double play—Elm to Reeg to Hansen; Earned runs—Genoa 1; Home run—Reeg; 2-base hit—Gdowski; Umpires—Nichols and Whitney; Scorer—Munday; Reporter—Theel.

Featured Source B - Wallace Rood, Photo taken in 1910's. Looking Glass town baseball team.



Featured Source C - Wallace Rood third from the left. Looking Glass town team in the 1920's.



NEBRASKA HUB AND C3 TEACHERS

Featured Source D - Norman Rood, 2nd Row third from the right, 1940's Genoa town team.



Featured Source E - From left to right: Norman, Wallace, Glen Rood at the family home in Genoa Nebraska.



Featured Source F - Photo of Jesse and Norman Rood (Great Uncle) in 2014, Genoa, Nebraska.



Supporting Question 3

The third supporting question asks, “How is community pride evident or not evident in sports in Nebraska?” In response to the question, students complete a formative performance task where they create a poster on how communities are represented or misrepresented through sports in their community.

The following featured online sources were selected to help students respond to the supporting question. Other sources maybe needed for students to get a full sense of how much sports impacts communities.

Source A: Seward Independent E-Article

https://www.sewardindependent.com/sports/sports_news/junior-yellow-rally-for-first-round-win/article_6eb4a55e-cdf5-11e1-8d85-001a4bcf6878.html

Source B: Winnebago E- WIFR article

<http://www.wifr.com/content/news/Winnebago-residents-cheer-on-basketball-team-476435913.html>

Source C: 1011 NOW News Report article

<http://www.1011now.com/content/news/Small-town-teams-bring-big-crowds-for-girls-basketball-tournament-415278083.html>

Summative Performance Task

At this point in the inquiry, students have examined multiple sources related to baseball, culture, and Nebraska history. Students should be expected to demonstrate the breadth of their understandings and their abilities to use evidence from multiple sources to support their claims. In this task, students construct an argument and create a presentation for the class that explains how baseball and other sports created a sense of place for Nebraska towns.

Students’ arguments will likely vary, but could include any of the following:

- Baseball helped people in the past connect to one another through shared experiences but is not as powerful an experience today.
- For the last century, different sports have helped communities define themselves.
- Some people in communities may find purpose and meaning through sports, but communities are much bigger and more complex than what is often represented through sports.

To extend their arguments, students can write their local newspaper and explain the importance of sports in fostering a sense of place for communities.

Students have the opportunity to Take Informed Action by identifying ways that sports in their community can support a sense of pride and identity. They can assess this issue by determining how that sport helps build up or does not build up community pride. Students can then act by creating a public presentation that explains the importance of sports to people in Nebraska.