



How I Learned English

1: Answer Key (p. 47)

Checkpoints

1. The poet himself is telling the story and it takes place on a baseball field (in “an empty lot”) in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.
2. He means that he is a newcomer to the US and that he is not accustomed to the culture yet.
3. The narrator is out in the outfield and he thinks no one can hit a ball that far. He is day-dreaming when the ball does come and is hit in the head.
4. They laugh because he used the wrong word.
5. He says “shin” instead of “forehead” or “head”
6. This incident made him feel like one of the group. They were all laughing at the same thing. It was also important that Joe Barone asked how he was and helped him up.
7. Baseball expressions:
 - o Pitching, pitch – the pitcher throws the ball to the batter – the throw is the pitch
 - o Whiff – a swing at the ball with a bat that hits nothing but air
 - o Outfield – the part of the field outside of the bases (right field, left field, center field)
 - o Talking it up - chatter to make the batter nervous; “Swing batter”
 - o Flies – ball that goes high into the air
 - o Pop-ups – a ball that goes straight up
 - o Grounders – a ball that is hit low, along the ground

Viewpoints

1. Language learning is done in many different ways, we learn most when we use it in everyday activities. It is through interaction with native speakers this happens. Language is also much more than just vocabulary words. It is all the aspects of culture: How to say things, when to say them, which words to use, and how you act.
2. Baseball is an American game, whereas soccer is a European one. Through understanding this game you gain much cultural understanding.
3. He needs to learn “the moves” and perhaps the rules of the game.
4. (Have the students try to talk about a sport they play.)
5. (We all have situations that make us learn very quickly. Think of a situation where you said something totally wrong, the reaction that you got and why you have never forgotten. Personal note – I once used the wrong verb in German and said that King Olav had been murdered instead of died (getötet/gestorben). I have never forgotten the difference.)