

## Touch All The Bases - Sample Page

“Hey, Dad, just **hang loose**. With all this noise you won’t be able to hear the guys at the office anyway.”

Sammy was right. Jey snapped shut his cell phone. He could bemoan the fact that he had so much work to do and was wasting time in a noisy stadium watching unknown teams play a sport he knew so little about. Or, he could listen to his son, and **take a breather** from the stress of work. The fans seemed to be able to unwind. Why couldn’t he?

Jey became curious as to what millions of Americans, for over 150 years, found so satisfying in the game being played on the bright green grass below. The scientist in him suddenly saw a question for investigation. Jey leaned forward. He was a life-long learner. Perhaps there was something to be learned by observing the game of baseball.

As players came to the plate in the first inning, Sammy studied the Program for **stats** on the players. Jey was pleased by Sammy’s sudden interest in players’ **batting averages**, number of runs scored, the percentage of hits with men in scoring position, and a dozen others statistics. Jey hoped his



**Hang loose** – v. slang for “take it easy”, relax

- “The lab experiment failed, but let’s just **hang loose** and try to think of what went wrong.”

**Take a breather** – v. take a break, relax

- “We’ve been working for ten hours straight. Let’s **take a breather** and listen to some music.”

**Stats** – n. short for statistics; in baseball various measurements of performance by ball players

- “We need the **stats** on assembly line defects so that we can address the process and fix the problem.”



A graphic showing baseball statistics for Joe DiMaggio during a 56-game streak. The graphic includes a photo of DiMaggio in a batting stance and a table of stats.

JOE DIMAGGIO DURING THE 56-GAME STREAK	
HITS	91
MULTI-HIT GAMES	22
THREE-HIT GAMES	5
FOUR-HIT GAMES	4

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**Batting average** – n. performance of hitters obtained by dividing the number of hits by the total number of times at bat; performance

- “Our company’s **batting average** is slipping; they haven’t released many new products this year.”

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son was finally **showing a talent for** mathematics. In school Sammy excelled in geography and English, but his math grade, to Jey's shock and disappointment, was just above average.

Jey **looked over Sammy's shoulder** at the Program. Mentally he calculated who on the opposing team was likely to get a hit. Baseball, he realized, could be seen as **a numbers game**. Jey considered the number 3, a prime number: three strikes before a batter was called out; three outs before teams changed sides;  $3 \times 3 =$  nine innings of play.

But there were also plenty of "fours": four balls thrown by the pitcher allowed the hitter to get on base; four bases set out in geometric harmony of 90 degree angles [a diamond] to form a 360 degree whole, a challenge to a player who had to round those bases and get "home" in order to score. The dynamism of 3, and the completeness of 4. How elegant and balanced the game of baseball was, Jey thought.

The dual of opposites was also evident in every play: pitcher against batter. One man's job was to pitch the ball with sizzling precision and keep it away from the batter; the other man's task was to make contact with that small, speeding ball and hit it where no one would catch it.



**Show a talent for** – v. exhibit innate talent or potential

- “John **shows a talent for writing**; his first story was printed in a major magazine.”

**Look over someone's shoulders** – v. scrutinize, pay close attention to; micro-manage

- “I always make mistakes when someone **looks over my shoulder**.”

**A numbers game** – n. slang for a way of looking at betting, games, or life by figuring out the odds

- “The life insurance industry is really **a numbers game**; premiums are figured on the average of how many people will die in a given time span.”