

A black and white photograph of a baseball field, viewed from a low angle near home plate. The field's base paths and pitcher's mound are clearly visible. In the background, there are several tall stadium light towers and some trees under a clear sky. The entire image is framed by a thick, hand-drawn black border.

# CASEY AT THE BAT

Common Core Close Reading Activities



# CASEY AT THE BAT

*by Ernest Lawrence Thayer*

The outlook wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day:  
The score stood four to two, with but one inning more to play,  
And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same,  
A pall-like silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest  
Clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast;  
They thought, "If only Casey could but get a whack at that—  
We'd put up even money now, with Casey at the bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did also Jimmy Blake,  
And the former was a hoodoo, while the latter was a cake;  
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,  
For there seemed but little chance of Casey getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all,  
And Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball;  
And when the dust had lifted, and men saw what had occurred,  
There was Jimmy safe at second and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from five thousand throats and more there rose a lusty yell;  
It rumbled through the valley, it rattled in the dell;  
It pounded on the mountain and recoiled upon the flat,  
For Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place;  
There was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile lit Casey's face.  
And when, responding to the cheers, he lightly doffed his hat,  
No stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at the bat.

Ten thousand eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt;  
Five thousand tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt;  
Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip,  
Defiance flashed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air,  
And Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there.  
Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped—

"That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one!" the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar, Like  
the beating of the storm-waves on a stern and distant shore;  
"Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone on the stand;  
And it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone;  
He stilled the rising tumult; he bade the game go on;  
He signaled to the pitcher, and once more the dun sphere flew;  
But Casey still ignored it and the umpire said, "Strike two!"

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and echo answered "Fraud!"  
But one scornful look from Casey and the audience was awed.  
They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain,  
And they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate,  
He pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate;  
And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he lets it go,  
And now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, somewhere in this favoured land the sun is shining bright,  
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light;  
And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout,  
But there is no joy in Mudville—mighty Casey has struck out.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# CASEY AT THE BAT

## Close Reading Activity – Envision the Setting of the Poem

Choose one or two stanzas of the poem that have good showing details, and then list them below.


Use these showing details to draw the picture of the setting that you see in your mind.

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Describe the picture that you drew, then explain what clues in the text helped you picture this moment. "I drew a picture of \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# CASEY AT THE BAT

## Close Reading Activity – Summarize the Plot of the Poem

Use pictures or words to summarize what is happening in each stanza.

Stanza 1	Stanza 4	Stanza 7	Stanza 10
Stanza 2	Stanza 5	Stanza 8	Stanza 11
Stanza 3	Stanza 6	Stanza 9	Stanza 12

Stanza 13

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# CASEY AT THE BAT

## Close Reading Activity – Determine Characters' Moods in a Poem

Reread the first through the fifth stanza of the poem. Use the clues in the text to help determine what kind of mood the **crowd** has. Add showing details from the text on one side of the chart, and describe the feeling the **crowd** has on the other side of the chart.

Example:

<b>Text</b>	<b>Mood/Feeling</b>
<i>muffled roar</i>	<i>shocked or surprised</i>

<b>Text</b>	<b>Mood/Feeling</b>	<b>Text</b>	<b>Mood/Feeling</b>

How does the crowd's mood change from the first stanza to the fifth stanza? Use clues from the text and your own thinking.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# CASEY AT THE BAT

**Close Reading Activity** – Determine the Theme in the Poem

Use examples from the text to show what challenges Casey faced.

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Use examples from the text to show how he responded to his challenges.

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**SYNTHESIZE: What message can we learn** from the way that Casey responded to his challenges in this poem?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Use the interactive lessons from LearnZillion to help teach these lessons.

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