Guided Practice

Model and Apply

- Remind students that **mock-heroic poems** mimic the language and structure of epic poems to create a comic effect.
- Have students read the first two stanzas of the poem (lines 1–8). Point out the poet's use of formal language in lines 5–6: ". . . the hope which springs eternal in the human breast."
- Explain that these lines imitate the grandiose language used in epic poetry. Tell students that Thayer uses this technique to exaggerate the emotions of the crowd in a humorous way.
- **Turn-and-Talk** Tell students to read the next two stanzas. Have them discuss in pairs how these stanzas exemplify mock-heroic poetry.

Casey at the Bat

by **Ernest Lawrence Thayer**



Illustrations by Dan Sayre Groesbeck (1912).

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 so, when Cooney died at first, and Burrows did the same,
A sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest
Clung to the hope which springs eternal in the human breast;
They thought, if only Casey could but get a whack, at that,
They'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 pudding, and the latter was a fake;
So upon that stricken multitude grim melancholy sat,
For there seemed but little chance of Casey's getting to the bat. A

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 they saw what had occurred,
There was Jimmy safe on second, and Flynn a-hugging third.

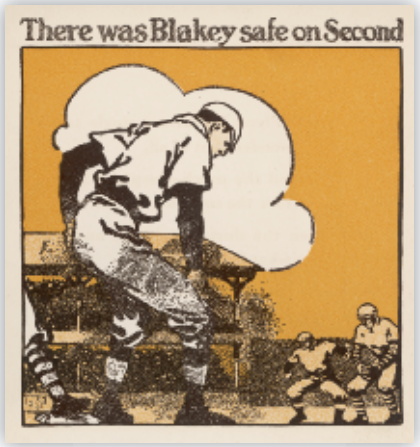
A **Read and Discuss** What is happening so far? What is the crowd thinking?

Differentiating Instruction

English-Language Learners

Give students some basic information about baseball to help them understand the poem.

- A complete game consists of nine innings. During an inning, one team bats while the other team fields. After three outs, the fielding team comes in to bat. Batters hit in a preset order.
- A batter attempts to hit a ball thrown over home plate, and then to advance as far as possible to first, second, and third base and then home. Fielders try to get the batter out, either by catching his or her ball in the air or by throwing the ball to the base to which the player is running. By getting a hit, a batter allows teammates who are on base to advance farther around the bases.
- The pitcher throws the ball to the catcher, and the hitter either lets it go by or attempts to hit it. If the ball is not thrown over home plate and the hitter does not swing at it, it is called a "ball." If the ball is thrown over the plate or if the hitter swings at the ball and misses, it is called a "strike." If a hitter receives four balls





Then from the gladdened multitude went up a joyous yell;
It bounded from the mountaintop, and rattled in the dell;
It struck upon the hillside, 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 on 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 gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip. Ⓒ

Ⓑ **Read and Discuss** How have things changed?

Ⓒ **Reading Focus** **Re-reading** Re-read this stanza. What impression of Casey do you get?

Vocabulary **defiance** (dih FY uhns) *n.*: willingness to fight; rebellious feelings.

Think About/Talk About

Comprehension

Ⓐ Read and Discuss

Possible response: *The crowd is thinking that Casey could save the day if only he could get up to bat, but the chances of that seem unlikely as the there are two outs and the players before him in the line-up are weak.*

Ⓑ Read and Discuss

Possible response: *Because two other batters got on base, Casey is now able to come to the plate.*

Ⓒ Reading Focus

Possible response: *Casey is proud and confident.*

Extend the Discussion

Interpreting What can readers infer about Casey after reading through line 20 of the poem? ***Possible response:*** *Readers can infer that Casey is considered by far the best player on the team.*

Predicting What do you predict will happen? ***Possible response:*** *Casey will score a big enough hit to bring two runners in and tie the game, or maybe hit a homerun.*

before receiving three strikes, he or she is allowed to advance to first base. If the hitter receives three strikes, he or she is "out."

Learners with Diverse Needs

Play the recording of "Casey at the Bat" from the **Holt Audio Library.** Pause the recording every two stanzas and summarize the events for students and allow them to ask questions.

Differentiating Instruction

Verbal Learners

Organize the class into small groups, and tell students to imagine that they are sportscasters giving the highlights of the game described in "Casey at the Bat." Discuss with students the style of reporting used in most sportscasts. Then, tell students to re-read the poem to summarize the main events of the game. Have students present their sportscasts to the class.

Guided Practice

Model and Apply

- Review the concept of **diction**. Tell students that poets choose their words carefully, based on the subject and genre of their poems.
- Tell students to analyze diction as you read aloud lines 29–32. Point out that in lines 29–31, Thayer uses formal language such as "leather-covered sphere" (line 29), "haughty grandeur" (line 30), and "unheeded" (line 31). Explain that this formal type of language is typical of mock-heroic poems.
- Then, call students' attention to the dialogue in line 32: "'That ain't my style,' said Casey. 'Strike one,' the umpire said." Tell students that this informal language seems more suited to the setting of a baseball game.
- **Turn-and-Talk** Have students discuss with a partner how Thayer's diction enhances the poem's humor.





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 spheroid flew;
But Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."

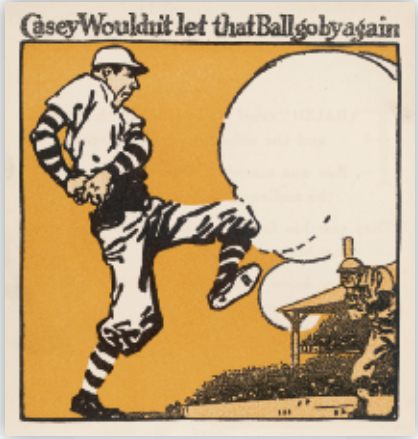
"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and the echo answered, "Fraud!"

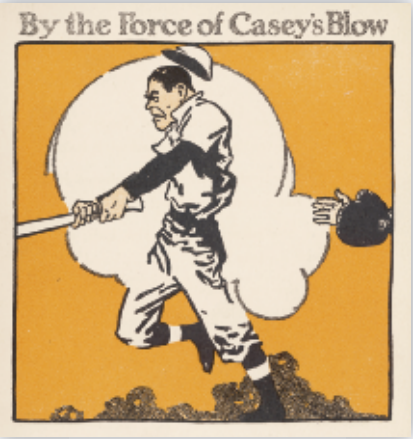
Ⓓ **Read and Discuss** What does this information tell us about Casey as a person and a player?

Developing Oral Fluency

Have students give dramatic readings of the last three or four stanzas of the poem. First, present your own reading of part or all of the poem, or play the recording from the **Holt Audio Library.** Then, tell students to think about how they can add to the effectiveness of their own readings by acting out the events described in the story and emphasizing the dramatic twists and turns of the poem orally.

Paired activity Students should practice their readings with a partner who can provide constructive feedback. They may wish to incorporate props or other students as actors in their dramas, or they may rely solely on their own vocal performance to present the story. When students are prepared, ask several volunteers to perform their readings. Have able students present the poem from memory.





But a 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 lips, 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 favored 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! Ⓕ

Ⓔ **Literary Focus** **Epic Poem** How are Casey's actions similar to those of a hero in an epic like *Beowulf*?

Ⓕ **Read and Discuss** What just happened? Discuss the irony—the unexpected outcome—of the poem's ending.

Think About/Talk About

Comprehension

Ⓓ Read and Discuss

Possible responses: *He is very confident in his own abilities. He may intentionally be adding to the drama; he knows that he is popular and that his instruction to the crowd will be followed.*

Ⓕ Read and Discuss

Possible response: *Casey strikes out, ending the game in a loss for his team. This ending is ironic because readers expect the hero to win, but Casey fails in his role.*

Analysis

Ⓔ Literary Focus

Possible response: *The crowd admires Casey. He is confident, physically strong, and carries the responsibility for the outcome. Some heroes have a tragic flaw, as does Casey.*

? Extend the Discussion

Making Judgments Do you think Casey should have swung at the first two pitches? Why or why not?
Possible response: *Yes; I think he should have swung because that would have increased his chances of getting a hit and possibly winning the game.*

Review

Independent Practice

Reading Focus

Answers:

1. *Both are heroes because of their achievements, but Casey does not ultimately fulfill the hero's role.*
2. *Students' comments should reflect understanding gained from repeated readings.*

Vocabulary Check

3. *c* **4.** *a* **5.** *b*

Literary Focus

Possible Responses:

6. *None are as strong as Beowulf.*
7. *Beowulf wants to appear as brave as Grendel. He thinks his victory will prove that God is on his side.*
8. *Casey usually hits the ball well.*
9. *Yes; it captures the emotions of the spectators and gives the sport an epic quality.*
10. *Like modern sports stars, Casey revels in the adoration of the crowd and is extremely confident.*
11. Beowulf *includes elegant, formal language, a hero, and a quest.*
12. *Both describe a hero's quest. Beowulf is a great warrior who fights monsters; Casey is a small-town baseball player. Beowulf succeeds while Casey fails.*
13. *Words such as "Strike one" are fitting for a baseball poem. Formal words such as "haughty grandeur" are fitting for an epic.*

Writing Focus

Alternative Prompt for Writers Gaining Proficiency Students may struggle to write a descriptive paragraph. Invite them to list five action verbs and use each in a sentence.

What Do You Think Now?

Have students think about the following questions: How did Beowulf and Casey each express his confidence? Did it advance their causes to do so? What is the purpose of expressing confidence in oneself?

Applying Your Skills

SKILLS FOCUS **Literary Skills** Analyze the characteristics of epics and the mock-heroic poem; analyze diction. **Reading Skills** Re-read to understand and analyze a poem. **Writing Skills** Use verbs to write vividly.

from Beowulf / Casey at the Bat

Respond and Think Critically

Reading Focus

Read with a Purpose

1. How well do Beowulf and Casey fill the role of a hero? Explain.

Reading Skills: Re-reading

2. Once you've finished these poems, add a final comment about each to your chart.

Poem Title	My Comments
First Reading	
Second Reading	
Third Reading	

My Final Comments:

Vocabulary Check

Match the Vocabulary words with their definitions.

3. purge	**a.** obvious disrespect or dislike
4. scorn	**b.** rebellious feelings
5. defiance	**c.** get rid of

Literary Focus

Literary Analysis

6. **Infer** What can you infer about Hrothgar's warriors in *Beowulf*?
7. **Hypothesize** Why does Beowulf want to fight Grendel without a sword or shield? What would defeating Grendel prove?
8. **Draw Conclusions** In "Casey at the Bat" what can you conclude about Casey's usual performance at the plate?
9. **Evaluate** "Casey at the Bat" is often cited as the most famous baseball poem ever written. Do you feel it deserves such an honor? Explain.
10. **Compare** What associations can you make between Casey and sports stars of today? Support your ideas with details from the poem.

Literary Skills: Epic and Mock-Epic Poems

11. **Analyze** List three characteristics of epic poetry that you find in *Beowulf.*
12. **Compare and Contrast** What similarities can you find between *Beowulf* and "Casey at the Bat"? What key differences do you see?

Literary Skills Review: Diction

13. **Classify** A writer's or speaker's choice of words is called **diction.** Which words in "Casey at the Bat" are appropriate for describing a baseball game? Which words are formal and more appropriate for an epic?

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

Use It in Your Writing Using strong, active verbs, write a short paragraph about a heroic action you have witnessed, heard about, or performed yourself.

What Do You Think Now? How do you feel about people who express great confidence in themselves?

SKILLS FOCUS **pp. 734–735**

Literary Skills
- Analyze the characteristics of epics and the mock-heroic poem.
- Analyze diction.

Reading Skills
- Re-read to understand and analyze a poem.
- Paraphrase a poem.

Vocabulary Skills
- Demonstrate knowledge of literal meanings of words and their usage.

Writing Skills
- Use verbs to write vividly.
- Write to explain.
- Collaborate with writers to compose a text.

Wrap Up

Poetry and Storytelling

Vocabulary Development

Precise Meanings

A poet's words must sound right in the poem and convey an exact—precise—meaning. Notice the words Thayer uses in "Casey at the Bat":

> "A straggling few got up to go in deep despair."

If Thayer had instead used the words a *few sad fans left* instead of "a straggling few" and "deep despair," the reader would have much less information about the fans' emotions.

Your Turn

Use a dictionary to find a more precise word or phrase to replace each boldface word below.

1. Paul Revere's friend **goes** through town toward the Old North Church.
2. Stonewall Jackson **strongly** commands his troops not to shoot Barbara Frietchie.
3. Sam McGee **dislikes** the **cold** Yukon weather.
4. The fans are **sad** when Casey strikes out.

Language Coach

Language Conventions: Spelling The sound /uh/ in English can be spelled in different ways. Note the spellings in these words: *cousin, blood, hunting.*

Now, use a dictionary to help you fill in the blanks with the correct vowels for the following words:

__cquire	(uh KWYR)
strenu__s	(STREN yoo uhs)
dang__r	(DAYN juhr)
weap__n	(WEHP uhn)

CHOICES

As you respond to the Choices, use these **Academic Vocabulary** words as appropriate: intent, evoke, associations, interpretation.

REVIEW

Paraphrase a Well-Known Poem

Partner Work With a partner, choose a short poem in this collection. Each of you should paraphrase it in your own words. Exchange your paraphrase with your partner's. Note the differences in your paraphrases, and discuss the reasons for your word choices.

CONNECT

Write About Leaders

Timed Writing Are there any other people like Paul Revere, in history or in the present, who have rallied their people with cries "of defiance and not of fear"? Choose a leader, and explain the intent of his or her message. How did he or she evoke in people a desire for action? Give examples to support your ideas.

EXTEND

Discuss What Makes a Hero

TechFocus Using an online discussion board, collaborate with classmates to define the qualities of a hero. Start by discussing Beowulf's and Casey's qualities. Then, add your interpretations about what makes a hero. Ask classmates to contribute their opinions. Review all of the responses, and use them to create a set of criteria, or standards, for heroism. Share your completed list with the class.

Independent Practice

Choices

Review: Paraphrase a Well-Known Poem Homework

- Students accurately paraphrase a poem from the collection.
- Partners identify differences in paraphrases and the reasons behind word choices.

Connect: Timed Writing 40-50 minutes

- Students explain the intent of a leader's message and how the leader inspired people to act.
- The paragraph supports arguments with detailed evidence, examples, and reasoning.

Extend: Discuss What Makes a Hero Homework

- All students participate meaningfully in a discussion about what defines a hero.
- Students create a detailed, logical, and well-organized set of criteria for heroism.

Assess

Collection 7 Resources, Selection Test, p. 26

ThinkCentral Online Assessment, Selection Test

Teacher One Stop™, editable Selection Test

Reteach

To reteach **forms of poetry**, see **Reteaching Lessons**, p. 975A.

ThinkCentral Online Remediation

Vocabulary Development

Your Turn

Possible responses:

1. *races; speeds*
2. *vehemently; sternly*
3. *despises, frigid; loathes, freezing*
4. *despondent; miserable*

Language Coach

Answers: *acquire; strenuous; danger; weapon*