As librarians, we are ideally suited to create instructional games for use in educational settings. Our training as information specialists provides us with the skills to introduce activities that challenge learners of all ages and abilities.

Many students who struggle with academics often succeed in other areas, such as athletics. By tying sports to classroom learning, we can encourage these students to take a chance at academic success. The baseball article on page 2 uses sports-based reading to interest students in learning. After reading the article, have students use their newly acquired knowledge to play the game on page 4.

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Additional Reading

Page 4 Answer Key

Related Web Sites
Sports Activities:
- www.kidzpage.com
- www.learn4good.com/games/sports.htm
- www.highlights.com

Sports History:
- www.factmonster.com
- www.worldalmanacforkids.com
- slikids.com
Baseball is a Hit!

The U.S. Congress has designated baseball as America’s national pastime. Baseball is a team sport. Typically there are nine players on a team: the catcher; the pitcher; the first, second, and third basemen; the right, center, and left fielders, and the shortstop. When a team is not in the field, the players are at bat. One at a time, batters attempt to hit a ball thrown by the pitcher on the opposing team. Batters run around the bases in order, trying to reach home plate and score runs. A batter is “out” when he or she is tagged with the ball, when a batter’s ball is caught before hitting the ground, or when a batter fails to hit the ball in fair territory. The batter has only three chances, or “strikes,” to hit a ball that is pitched within the batter’s strike zone. Three outs make an inning and nine innings a game. The team scoring the most runs wins.

Basketball was invented in the mid-1800s in the United States. Today, it is played throughout the world. Some of the best-known players are Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, and Hank Aaron. Baseball is played by people of all ages. There are various versions, such as T-ball, coach pitch, and softball. In the U.S., professional baseball consists of the American and National Leagues who play games throughout a season with the best teams competing in a championship called the World Series.

Basketball Is a Slam Dunk!

Basketball was invented by James Naismith in 1891. The sport quickly became popular and the first collegiate game took place in 1897. Today, basketball is played by kids, adults, amateurs, and professionals.

Basketballs are made of rubber or leather. Teams typically consist of five players who move the ball up and down a wooden court by dribbling, passing, then shooting the ball through a hoop for points. Depending upon the distance and whether a penalty was involved, each basket is awarded one, two or three points.

Basketball is played in driveways, parks, schools, colleges, professionally and at the Olympics. Some of the greatest players have been Wilt Chamberlain, Julius Erving, Larry Bird, Michael Jordan and Shaquille O’Neal. The National Basketball Association hosts an elimination season where top teams meet in playoffs that end in the championship title.
Football Kicks Off

Football officially began in the U.S. in 1869 when Princeton and Rutgers played the first intercollegiate game. In the 1880s, Walter Camp formalized the rules that define modern football. The National Football League began in 1922 and the American Football League in 1960. The first Super Bowl was played between the leagues in 1967.

The game is played on a 100-yard field by two opposing teams. The object is to move the ball down the field by running, passing, catching and kicking. Teams earn points by scoring touchdowns, kicking extra points, kicking field goals, making 2-point conversions, or tackling an offensive player in his own endzone. Dan Marino, Joe Montana, Ed Jones, Jim Brown and Knute Rockne are considered football superstars.

Soccer Scores Big with Fans!

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world and has been played in various forms for centuries. Modern soccer was born in Great Britain in the mid-1800s when the rules were set by the London Football Association. The game is played on a rectangular field by two opposing teams of 11 players who move the ball to opposing goals using only their feet, knees or head.

Pelé, Mia Hamm, and David Beckham are considered superb players. Every four years, the best team in the world is determined at the FIFA World Cup. Also, teams compete internationally at the Summer Olympics. A match is won by the team that scores the most goals.

Volleyball Serves up FUN!

William Morgan invented volleyball at a YMCA in 1895. The game is played by two teams on a rectangular court divided by a net. The court can be made of wood, rubber, sand, or grass. The goal is for each team to hit or spike the ball over the tall net using 3 shots or less. When one team fails to return the ball, the other wins the point. Although scoring varies, often the winning team must earn 25 points.

Worldwide, volleyball is played by half a billion people and governed by the International Volleyball Federation. Prized tournaments include the Olympics and the annual World Championships. Similar sports include netball, tennis and badminton. Karch Kiraly, Ron Zwerver, Misty May-Treanor, and Steve Timmons are some of the best Olympic players of the sport.
Unscramble the letters below to discover words that appeared in the sports stories you just read. Then, choose three of these words to include in a paragraph that you write at the bottom of the page about your favorite sport. Why do you like it? How does it challenge you? Which players do you especially respect?

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My Favorite Sport

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(continue on reverse if you need more room)