



Kokoyakyu: High School Baseball

Classroom Activity: Baseball as an Expression of Culture

Purpose: To explore Japanese and American values using baseball as a metaphor.

Activity: Ask students to take a still or video camera to a school sporting event (ideally a baseball game) to “capture” the experience. Back in class, divide students into groups and explain that sports can be seen as an expression of culture and a transmitter of values. Have them share their pictures or video with members of their group and ask them to discuss what about American culture was expressed at the documented event(s)? What American values are conveyed through such experiences?

Then, show them *Kokoyakyu*,* the 52-minute film about Japanese high school baseball, or have them read an [excerpt from Robert Whiting's “The Concept of Wa”](#) on P.O.V.'s *Kokoyakyu* website. Based on what they have seen or read, what can be learned about Japanese culture from the way baseball is played in Japan? What values are transmitted? Have students use examples from their pictures or video and from the film or book excerpt to compare and contrast Japanese and American culture.

* P.O.V. documentaries can be taped off-the-air and used for educational purposes for up to one year from the initial broadcast. In addition, P.O.V. offers a [lending library of DVD's and VHS tapes](#) that you can borrow anytime during the school year — FOR FREE!

Additional Resources: For websites, films and books related to Japanese baseball, please see the [Delve Deeper reading list](#) (PDF) produced in collaboration with the American Library Association for this film.

[Baseball in Japan](#)

Access a list of websites related to high school, Pro Yakyu (pro baseball), and articles about famous Japanese ballplayers on U.S. teams, particularly Matsui and Ichiro.

[Koshien and Youth Baseball](#)

Find links to statistics and other general information about Koshien stadium and the annual high school championships held every August.

[PBS & NPR](#)

Links to PBS programs and NPR news stories about baseball, the 2006 World Baseball Classic (what some would argue is the real world series — Japan won), Japanese baseball players playing in the U.S. and more.

Related Standards:

Geography

Standard 6: Understands that culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Standard 10: Understands the nature and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.