

# The Baseball Primer

By Hugh S. Fullerton

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Baseball means a Webster and a standing-reserve board to keep the dictionary of the game up to date. The sport is building its own language so steadily, that unless some step soon is taken to check the inventive young men who coin the words that attach themselves to the pastime, interpreters will have to be maintained in every grand stand to translate for the benefit of those who merely love the game and do not care to master it thoroughly.

Joe Campbell, the Chaucer of baseball literature, was sitting in his office one evening, lamenting to me that his paper (The Washington Post) would not permit him to write as he pleased, but insisted that he confine his writings to straight English. I reached over and took the sheet he had just finished. "And Annie Rustle," he made a Srengral pass in front of Charlie Kelly's lamps and he carved three nicks in the weather? "What could be plainer or more obvious of the fact that Rustle had hypnotized Kelly into striking out? Or what could be more graphic than Lennie Mashburn's description of a ball that was hit hard and instead of bounding, 'hugged the dirt,' as the players say, and tore its way through the grass.

The following does not pretend to be a complete dictionary of the baseball language. It merely lists the words containing some of the commonest words and phrases, with an explanation of their meaning.

**AD**—Verb—Excited, unnered. A term used to describe the condition of a pitcher who loses his courage or presence of mind at critical stages of a contest.

**Bean** (N)—The head of a player (V) to bean—to pitch or throw and hit the batter in the head (see Lima).

**Bean Ball**—I fast ball pitched at or near the head of a player who is standing too close to the plate with intent to drive him back from the plate, after which the pitcher usually throws a fast curve.

**Big One** (The)—The third strike. After two strikes are called the "big one" is left. The percentage of success made by batters after two strikes are called is extremely high, and the term probably arose from that fact.

**Bingoes**—A clean base hit, the ball being driven clean over the pitcher's shoulder without presenting a chance for any possible play.

**Bite**—A term applied to batters who are weak in that they cannot resist the temptation to strike at a curve ball, especially at a slow curve. The message "He will bite" passed through a league among the players generally means the end of the usefulness of that player.

**Blacksters**—Uncovered field seats on baseball parks. Term originated in the south where the colored spectators were forced to sit in the sun, and were "bleached."

**Boner**—A stupid play, a blunder in the selection of the game. "Tender" adapted to mean a stupid play, or a making a stupid play has a head composed entirely of ossous tissue.

**Bomb-head**—A player noted for making stupid plays; "use another bomb-head of a player's head as his 'armored turret.'"

**Boo**—An error in the making of which the player fumbles with his hands and allows the ball to bound off his feet or legs, kicking or "booting" it. "Who dows he waste his efforts booting baseable," inquired the manager of a new infielder, "when you lay morning the lack of a punter?"

**Bunt**—The turning point of a game of ball; the critical play which starts a stupor of the defeated team and a fusillade of hits by the attacking club. Also "the breaker" are used to express the luck of the catch.

**Break**—A ball struck with the bat with the intention of dropping or rolling into a safe, or ground, and within a short distance, forcing the infielders to

**Charge**—A player or manager who, from the coach's boxes back of first and third bases, endeavors to guide and advise batters and base runners, warning them of the movements of the enemy and flashing the manager's signals to players, as orders for certain plays. In the early days the catcher's duties of coacher were to play clown, make noise and strive to excite or anger opposing players. The coacher in the modern game usually is quiet, studying the movements of the opposing pitcher and catcher and assisting base runners.

**Control**—Ability to throw a baseball where it is directed to be thrown, and to pitch it over the plate between the batter's knees and shoulders when necessary. Control is the pitcher's principal stock in trade, as a pitcher who can throw the ball over a fence he wants it to go needs few curves and not much speed.

**Crab**—A crabbed player, a "grouch." The verb "crab" means to show a quarrelsome or complaining spirit. Many of the worst "crabs" in baseball are known as "crab" players.

**Crab**—A clean base hit, the ball being driven clean over the pitcher's shoulder without presenting a chance for any possible play.

**Crow**—A term applied to batters who are weak in that they cannot resist the temptation to strike at a curve ball, especially at a slow curve. The message "He will bite" passed through a league among the players generally means the end of the usefulness of that player.

**Crush**—Verb—To stand close to the home plate when batting, the purpose being to hamper the pitcher and sometimes to force him to hit the batter. The team that "crushes" persistently is a hard team to beat, as in many cases batters will pitch and miss times pitchers, or even, through fear of hitting them, will pitch outside the plate and give them bases on balls.

**Curve**—In professional baseball the only curve spoken of as such is the fast breaking ball, pitched overhead, and tucks in down and out from the hand. Other curves are classified as sidearm, overhand, and underhand.

**Double**—A two base hit, or "two bager."

**Double Play**—A play in which two runners are retired or put out, before the ball comes to move, or in one continuous play. The commonest double play is from the short stop to the second baseman to the first baseman.

**Double Steal**—A steal of bases by two runners simultaneously on a double and second is seldom called a double steal. Also "the breaker" are used to express the luck of the catch.

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Writer Declares That He Is "The Ball of the Earth."  
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She can hitch the horse to the bug, and drive him, too; she can row on the ocean that have broken through

ners on first and third bases for the reserve clause was placed in competition to prevent from first base and quickly and turns as if to go back. If the catcher releases from the throwing position, he starts for second at top speed and the slow runner, the runner at third starts for the plate. The success of the play depends upon the element of surprise and execution. The catcher and cool-headed catchers it is likely to be more effective than the double steal made in the ordinary manner.

**Fastaway**—A slow curve ball that loses speed suddenly as it approaches the batter and falls, or "rides away" at an unusual angle. The fastaway is accomplished by a jerking and holding motion of the fingers upon the ball at the moment of releasing it. The pitcher usually has previously developed the "fader" into its highest state of perfection.

**Groove**—An imaginary passage from the pitcher's hand over the center of the home plate. When a ball comes "down the groove" it is pitched at the natural angle (that is, "without anything out" or "without anything in" and therefore is easy to hit. Grooves also are the spaces between the fingers and between the fingers and the ball, through which the ball is usually passed out of the possible reach of the players.

**Hit and Run**—One of the most effective styles of attack devised in baseball. The object is concerted action on the part of the batter and base runners, warning them of the movements of the enemy and flashing the manager's signals to players, as orders for certain plays. In the early days the catcher's duties of coacher were to play clown, make noise and strive to excite or anger opposing players. The coacher in the modern game usually is quiet, studying the movements of the opposing pitcher and catcher and assisting base runners.

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**CHANGED MIND ABOUT MULE**  
Lieutenant's Ideas as to Kindness and Firmness Vanished Soon After the Animal Got Busy.

There is a lieutenant in an Ohio regiment who believed that mules were stupid, and that if he would treat a mule well he would be obedient. In his own company was a mule with a bad reputation, and the lieutenant wanted to tame him. "I will show you how this mule should be treated," said the officer. "So he had the mule brought in front of his tent, secured him without assistance or protest, and patted him kindly on the neck. "He looked up at me as though I were a new man," said the lieutenant. "When he mounted the mule, which walked six steps, danced three steps, executed an original hop, step and jump with each leg, and then projected the lieutenant into the air and into the corner of a bunk. "Catch that brute and kill him," roared the lieutenant, as the hospital corps assisted him to his tent. The mule caught the lieutenant and killed him. He was just as good as any other mule.

**Selected Pickles**  
This extra frost put up the fall home-made pickles and relishes. Only the best Pickles and Condiments there is real economy in buying.

**Spanish Olives**  
Every one from Seattle, long famed as the home of the finest olives. Only the pick of the crop is offered to the public under the Libby label. Beware of cheap imitations.

Libby's Pickles and Relishes. Libby's Spanish Olives. Libby's Pickles and Relishes. Libby's Pickles and Relishes. Libby's Pickles and Relishes.

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**BEECHAM'S ELECTROTYPES**  
Save Time! Time lost because of headaches, lassitude and depressions of biliousness, is worse than wasted. Biliousness yields quickly to the safe, certain home remedy—BEECHAM'S ELECTROTYPES