

FOCUS➤

STRIKING WITH LONG IMPLEMENTS (BATS)

Subfocus➤

Space Awareness

Grades 2, 3

Standard 1

The physically literate individual demonstrates competency in a variety of motor skills and movement patterns.

Grade-Level Outcomes

- Strikes a ball off a tee or cone with a bat using correct grip and side orientation/proper body orientation (S1.E25.2)
- Strikes a ball with a long-handled implement (e.g., hockey stick, bat, golf club), sending it forward, while using proper grip (S1.E25.3)

Note: Use batting tee or ball tossed by teacher for batting.

Critical Elements for Striking With Long Implements (Sidearm Pattern)

- Bat up and back in preparation for the striking action.
- Step forward on opposite foot as contact is made.
- Coil and uncoil the trunk for preparation and execution of the striking action.
- Swing the bat on a horizontal plane.
- Wrist uncocks on follow-through for completion of the striking action.

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- Stand in readiness for striking, with side to target
- Strike a ball off a batting tee, sending it forward
- Strike a ball tossed by the teacher, sending it forward (grade 3)

Safety Concern

Ensure that outdoor space is adequate for striking and retrieving balls safely.

Materials and Equipment

- Batting tees or large marker cones
- Wiffle balls, many
- Large plastic bats
- Carpet squares or domes to match number of bats
- Wiffle balls suspended on strings, stretch ropes, standards
- Bases for Just Home Runs (grade 3)

Introduction

Earlier in the year, we worked on striking with rackets and paddles, which are short implements. I asked you to think of the paddle or racket as an extension of your arm. Now the extension is much longer—a bat. Keeping your eyes on the ball will be important when practicing this skill.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: READINESS FOR STRIKING

Arrange batting tees outdoors with sufficient space for swinging; arrange students so everyone is batting in the same direction or in an outward-facing circle so that all balls travel away from the core.

Place a carpet square or dome beside each tee, to be moved from side to side depending on whether the student is left-handed or right-handed. Place a second carpet square 4 to 5 feet (120 to 150 cm) behind the tee where the second and third students in the group can wait safely.

The Grip

Standing on the carpet square beside the batting tee on the side opposite the writing hand, students hold the bat with the nonwriting hand near the end of the bat; the writing hand should be just above the nonwriting hand so that the hands almost touch.

Side-to-Target Stance

Demonstrate the correct grip and side-to-target stance in preparation for hitting the ball. Have all students hold a pretend bat and assume a ready stance for striking a ball, emphasizing side-to-target body position. Observe students for correct grip and side-to-target position based on left- or right-handedness.

- On your signal, student 1 hits the ball off the tee, sending it across the field. After the first hit, another ball is placed on the tee and hit in response to your signal. After all three balls have been hit, each student in the group retrieves a ball and batter 2 is ready for the signal to strike the ball.

Cue: *Side to target.*

Bat Up and Back

After the first hit for each student, introduce the position of the bat in readiness for striking action; model while giving the cue “bat up and back.” Continue practice of batting from the tee and give reminders of preparation cues: grip, stance, bat.

Cue: *What is the cue that never goes away? Watch the ball.*

- Challenge students to strike the ball so that it travels a distance from the tee.

Cue: *Swing through.*

Demonstrate the difference in a level swing and a chopping, downward action, matching each with distance (cognitive engagement).

When you practiced striking with paddles or rackets, we talked about shifting your weight from the back foot to the front foot for extra force. If you want the ball to travel really far, shift your weight as you contact the ball.

Cue: *Extra muscle, extra force, extra distance.*

- Students continue practicing batting from tee, emphasizing the transfer of weight from back foot to front foot.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: SUSPENDED BALLS

Use a station format or divide the class into two groups, depending on equipment, space, and students' acceptance of responsibility for safety. Use Wiffle balls suspended from stretch ropes with sturdy yarn or string or stretch ropes anchored to standards, trees, or basketball poles at height of batting tees. Standing beside the suspended ball, student hits the ball, sending it forward.

Cue: *Watch the ball.*

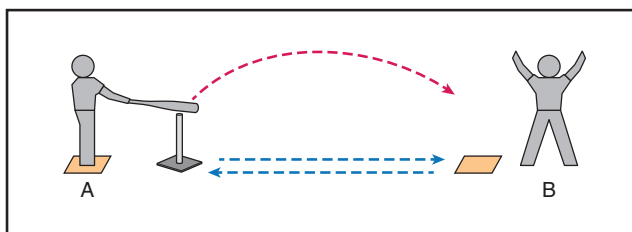
- Provide several minutes of practice, observing for proper stance, readiness of bat, and level swing. Students get three hits each, attempting to achieve a perfect batting average. (Stop the ball after each hit; check body and bat readiness, swing.)

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: COMBINING LOCOMOTORS AND BATTING

Students select a partner and return to the batting tees. Partner A stands on the carpet square at the batting tee as before. Partner B stands on a carpet square 12 to 15 feet (3.5 to 4.5 m) from the batter.

This activity combines batting, running, and retrieving; we will call it Hit and Run.

Partner A, the batter, strikes the ball off the tee, sending it as far as possible. Partner A immediately runs to the carpet square and back to the batting tee. As soon as the ball is hit, partner B retrieves it and runs to replace it on the tee. Partners then switch positions.



Cue: Side to target. Bat way back. Level swing, no chop.

Safety Check: Ensure that batters drop the bat before they run; they must not throw it. Both partners are running, so students must be careful.

Grade 3

After students have performed successful striking off the tee, demonstrated awareness of safety concerns, and are positioned with adequate spacing, introduce them to striking a tossed ball. With you as the pitcher, the batter hits the ball for maximum distance and then immediately runs the bases for a home run. Students positioned in the field retrieve and throw the ball to you—no outs, just home runs. The runner continues to run the bases regardless of the force of the hit or the activity in the field. We call the activity Just Home Runs!

Cue: Watch the ball.

Assessment

Observe critical elements of striking.

Closure

- What new skill did we introduce in our lesson today?
- Model as students explain readiness for batting: body position, correct grip, readiness of bat, swing action.
- How will the ball travel if the swing is level? Where will the ball travel if the swing is a chop?

Reflection

- Do the students display the correct grip and side orientation for batting?
- Are they successful in contacting the ball off the tee?