

FOCUS➤

STRIKING WITH LONG IMPLEMENTS (BATS)

Subfocus➤

Space Awareness, Weight Transfer

Grades 4, 5

Standard 1

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

Grade-Level Outcomes

- Strikes an object with a long-handled implement (e.g., hockey stick, bat, golf club, tennis or badminton racket), while demonstrating three of the five critical elements of a mature pattern for the implement (grip, stance, body orientation, swing plane and follow-through) (S1.E25.4)
- Strikes a pitched ball with a bat using a mature pattern (S1.E25.5a)
- Combines striking with a long implement (e.g., bat, hockey stick) with receiving and traveling skills in a small-sided game (S1.E25.5b)

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:

- Strike a ball with force
- Strike a ball with intent of direction

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, one per student
- Large plastic bats, one for each group of three students
- Carpet squares or domes, five for each group of three students

Introduction

As second and third graders, you learned the basics of striking with a bat. Pretend you have a bat and show me the proper grip. (Observe for proper hand position and spacing.) Turn to a neighbor and share two critical elements you learned about batting (bat up and back, side to the field, watch the ball, level swing). Today, we are going to focus on how to use the body to hit the ball really far and how to direct the placement of the hits.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: REVIEW OF BATTING

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

- 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. Repeat with batter 3. (Observe critical elements: bat position up and back, side to target or field, watching the ball, and level swing.)
- Students continue practice with emphasis on hitting the ball as far as possible. Demonstrate the rotation (coil and uncoil) and have students practice. Demonstrate the transfer of weight to front foot and have students continue to practice.

Cues: Rotate, coil, and uncoil. Transfer weight to front foot for extra muscle, extra force.

When older students complain about striking off a tee, remind them that professional baseball players use a tee to revisit their swings. Hitting off a tee is the best way to establish proper batting form.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: PLACING THE HIT

Students are in groups of three. Place three bases in diamond formation and one at the shortstop position. See illustration.

Student C stands at the shortstop position. Student A hits three balls, purposely hitting them toward student C. Student B (catcher) places the next ball on the tee. After three hits, students rotate positions: The catcher becomes the batter, the batter moves to the field, and the fielder becomes the catcher.

Cues: Transfer weight toward target. Front foot steps toward target.

- Repeat the activity with fielder between second and third base.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: COMBINING BATTING, RUNNING, THROWING, AND CATCHING

Now you will attempt to direct the ball away from the shortstop, to the open spaces (to the left, to the right). We call this activity Hit, Run, Throw. You will not only be directing the hit to open spaces but also adding three more skills to batting: running, throwing, and catching.

Partner A, standing at the batting tee as before, hits the ball really hard away from partner C and then run the bases for a home run. The batter runs all the bases and doesn't stop.

Cues: Open spaces. Run as fast as you can. Remember to step on all the bases.

Safety Concerns

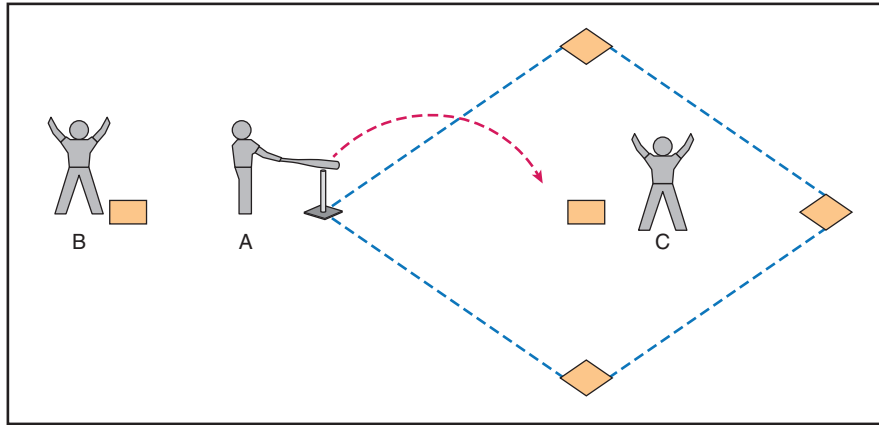
- Batters must drop the bat before running; they must not throw it.
- Two players are running, so students must be careful.

Partner C collects or catches the ball and then throws it to home base, where partner B is waiting to catch it. Partner C must stand behind the midfield carpet square until the ball is hit. As soon as partner B collects or catches the ball, he or she places it on the batting tee.

- Even if the fielder catches the ball, the action is the same: The fielder throws the ball home, and the batter runs all the bases.

Batter, for every base you touch before the ball is on the tee, give yourself a point. For a home run, you get a bonus point for a total of 5.

- After each play, the catcher becomes the batter, the batter moves to the field, and the fielder comes to the safety square (home base) behind the tee.



Assessment

- Observe critical elements of striking.
- Students self-assess ability to place the ball, hit with intent, and so on.

Closure

- What new batting challenge was introduced in the lesson today?
- What did you learn today that will help you hit the ball really far?
- How will you position the front foot for hitting to right field? Left field?

Reflection

- Do the students transfer weight from back foot to front foot by coiling and uncoiling the body?
- Are they successful in placing the ball?

Grade 5

Students in grade 5 are typically ready to be challenged with other batting experiences as well as more game-like opportunities. Following achievement of mastery of the critical components in the previous activities, the following are appropriate challenges:

- Batting a self-tossed ball.
- Batting a pitched ball. Encourage students in the role of pitcher to use “friendly” pitches, either underhand or overhand, that allow batter to be successful.
- Playing 3v3 softball with own team pitching (or using the tee). Defense: catcher, two fielders. Offense: pitcher, two batters. Teams rotate after five minutes regardless of “outs” recorded. Modify rules to promote success (e.g., after three pitches, switch to the tee or give students choice of pitch or tee).