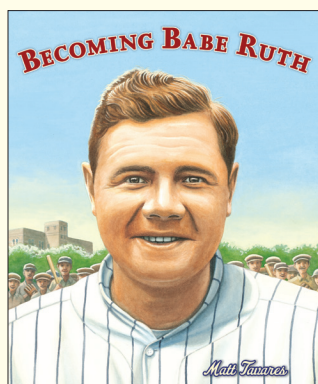


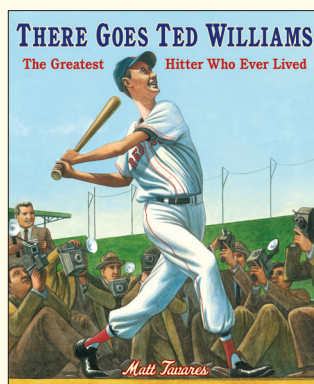
# Matt Tavares Baseball Biographies



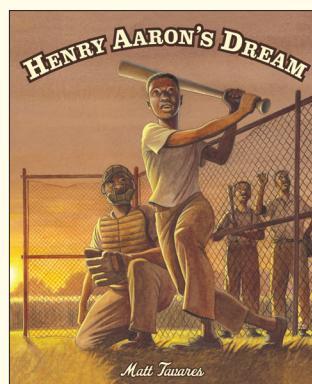
Matt Tavares brings his passion for baseball to four biographies of some of the best-known players of all time. These stories will ignite curiosity in your students as they learn about the childhoods and backgrounds of these famous men who overcame obstacles to reach the highest levels of athleticism. With vivid illustrations and clear affection for his subjects, Matt Tavares sheds light on the stories of four men who traveled different paths to reach their goals and who learned early on that life is what you make of it.



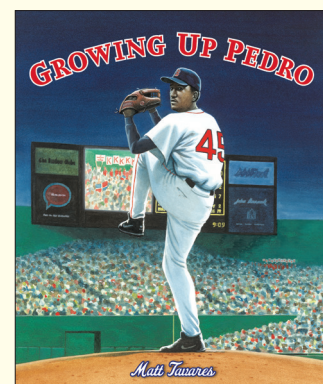
**Becoming Babe Ruth**  
HC: 978-0-7636-5646-1



**There Goes Ted Williams**  
HC: 978-0-7636-2789-8  
PB: 978-0-7636-6557-9  
*Candlewick Biographies*  
HC: 978-0-7636-7655-1  
PB: 978-0-7636-7656-8



**Henry Aaron's Dream**  
HC: 978-0-7636-3224-3  
PB: 978-0-7636-5820-5  
*Candlewick Biographies*  
HC: 978-0-7636-7653-7  
PB: 978-0-7636-7654-4

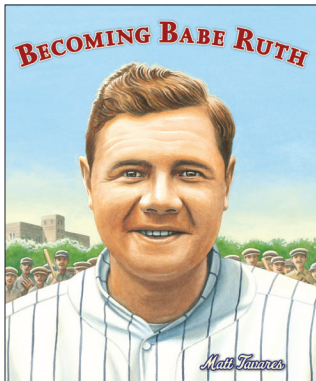


**Growing Up Pedro**  
HC: 978-0-7636-6824-2  
**Llegar a ser Pedro**  
HC: 978-0-7636-7980-4

## Common Core Connections

Use these books to introduce your students to the time in history when each of these men lived. Focus on their shared stories of perseverance, setbacks, and hard work. This teachers' guide, with connections to the Common Core, includes an array of language arts activities, book discussion, vocabulary instruction, mathematics, and more to accommodate the learning needs of your students. Students are called on to be careful readers without jeopardizing the pleasure they gain from reading. It is best to allow students to read the entire story before engaging in a detailed study of the work.

For more information on specific standards for your grade level, visit the Common Core website at [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).



# BECOMING BABE RUTH

## About *Becoming Babe Ruth*

Before he is known as the Babe, George Herman Ruth is just a boy who lives in Baltimore and gets into a lot of trouble. But when he turns seven, his father brings him to the gates of Saint Mary's Industrial School for Boys, and his life is changed forever. At Saint Mary's, he's expected to study hard and follow a lot of rules. But there is one good thing about Saint Mary's: almost every day, George gets to play baseball. Here, under the watchful eye of Brother Matthias, George evolves as a player and as a man, and when he sets off into the wild world of big-league baseball, the school, the boys, and Brother Matthias are never far from his heart.

## Activities

1. With your students, make a cause-and-effect map showing how the poor decisions George Ruth made when he was younger affected his life. After making the map, have students reflect on what changes he could have made and how those changes would have altered his life.

**CAUSE** → **EFFECT**

2. News spread differently in the early twentieth century. Discuss with your students the way news about Babe Ruth was spread during his lifetime and have students find examples in the text. Then have them discuss the way news is spread digitally nowadays. Invite the class to debate the pros and cons of digital news.
3. Have your students research the 1915, 1916, and 1918 World Series, looking specifically at Babe Ruth's part in the Red Sox's wins. Ask students to write an opinion piece stating whether or not they think the Red Sox would have won if Babe Ruth had not been on the team. Have them include details supporting their opinion.
4. One dollar in 1920 would equal \$12.13 in 2014. Babe Ruth was sold for \$125,000. Have your students determine how much Babe would have been sold for today. Then ask them to convert some current prices back to 1920 values. Here are two examples:

A bag of roasted peanuts: \$2.99

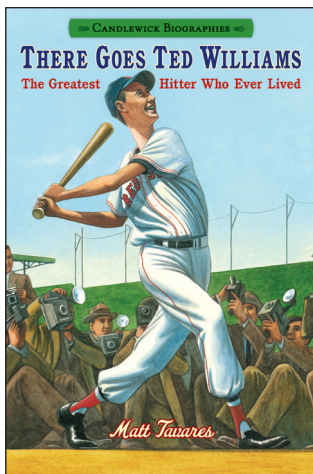
Twenty-five packages of Cracker Jack: \$20.64



## Discussion Questions

Use these questions for whole class discussions, reading check-ins, or as writing prompts for *Becoming Babe Ruth*.

1. How would learning all the positions on the field help you become a better baseball player?
2. How did Babe Ruth's life change when he left Saint Mary's to play for the Orioles?
3. When Saint Mary's burned down, Babe Ruth ultimately made it possible for the school to be rebuilt. Based on his actions after the fire, what can you infer about Babe's personality?
4. Although Babe Ruth was not an orphan, he allowed people to assume he was. Why did he do this? Do you agree with his decision?



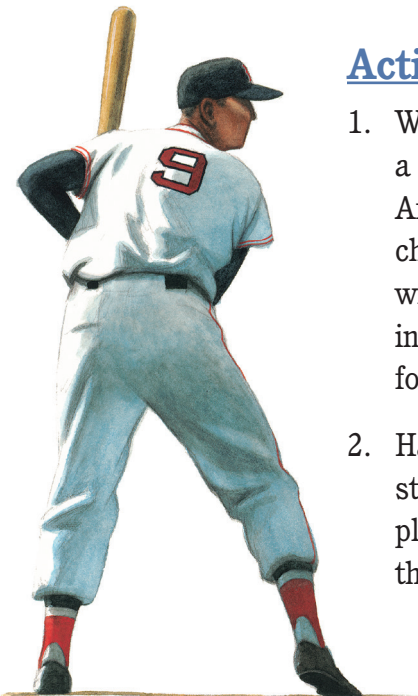
## **THERE GOES TED WILLIAMS** **The Greatest Hitter Who Ever Lived**

### *About There Goes Ted Williams*

Ted Williams lived a life of dedication and passion. He was an ordinary kid who wanted one thing: to hit a baseball better than anyone else. So he practiced his swing every chance he got. He did fingertip push-ups. He ate a lot. He practiced his swing again. And then practiced it some more. From his days playing ball in North Park as a kid to his unmatched .406 season in 1941 to his heroic tours of duty as a fighter pilot in World War II and Korea, the story of Teddy Ballgame is the story of an American hero.

### Activities

1. When Ted Williams's plane was hit, he had to make a tough choice. As a class, make a pro-and-con list of his two options: crashing or ejecting. After making the list, have students pick which action they would have chosen and write a persuasive paragraph stating their side, backing it with support from the class discussion. To extend this activity, you might invite students to take part in a debate about which choice was the best for Ted Williams.
2. Have students write down Ted Williams's batting average and home run stats as well as those of two other Hall of Famers. After comparing the players' stats, have students write a paragraph discussing whether or not they believe that Ted Williams is the best hitter ever.

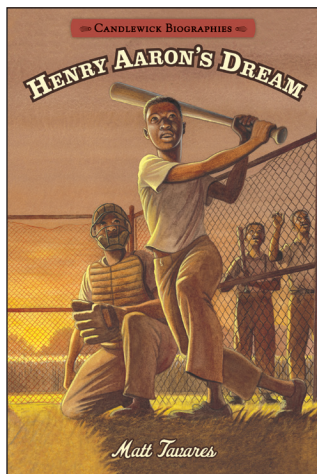




## Discussion Questions

Use these questions for whole class discussions, reading check-ins, or as writing prompts for *There Goes Ted Williams*.

1. How did Ted Williams's childhood perseverance help him become a professional baseball player?
2. Ted Williams put as much work into V-5 training program as he did into baseball. What does this tell you about his character?
3. In both the navy and in baseball, Ted Williams overcame the odds against him. How did he do so?
4. In 1946, Ted Williams returned to baseball after World War II. How do you think he felt when he hit the home run at his first at-bat in front of President Truman? How do you think he felt when he hit the home run on the first Ted Williams Day?
5. Why did everyone think April 30, 1952, might be Ted Williams's last day in the major leagues?
6. In the author's note, we learn that Ted Williams also had a very bad temper. Does this take away from what a great baseball player he was?

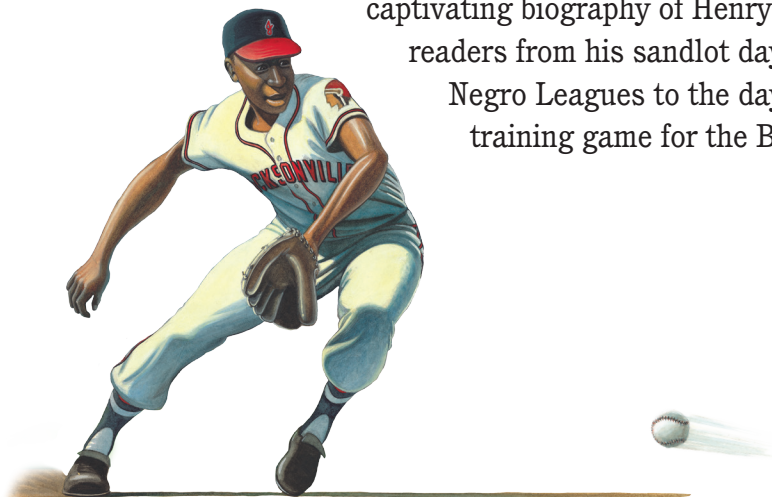


## HENRY AARON'S DREAM

### About *Henry Aaron's Dream*

Before he was Hammerin' Hank, Henry Aaron was a young boy growing up in Mobile, Alabama, with what seemed like a foolhardy dream: to be a big-league baseball player. He didn't have a bat. He didn't have a ball. And there wasn't a single black ball player in the major leagues. But none of this could stop Henry Aaron.

This is the inspiring story of one of baseball's all-time greats, a kid from the segregated South who would become baseball's home-run king. This captivating biography of Henry Aaron's young life takes readers from his sandlot days through his time in the Negro Leagues to the day he played his first spring-training game for the Braves.



## Activities

1. Share the history of segregation in the United States with your students. Have students create time lines incorporating the major events during the civil rights era that led to integration. They should be sure to include Jackie Robinson on their time lines.
2. With your class, visit the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum website and read about the history of the Negro Leagues, its teams, and players. Assign each student a star player from the Negro Leagues to research, then share their research with the class.
3. Baseball began integrating before all cities in the United States had ended segregation. As a class, discuss how this reality affected black players on major-league baseball teams and how black players' trips to segregated cities differed from those of their white teammates. Then, with

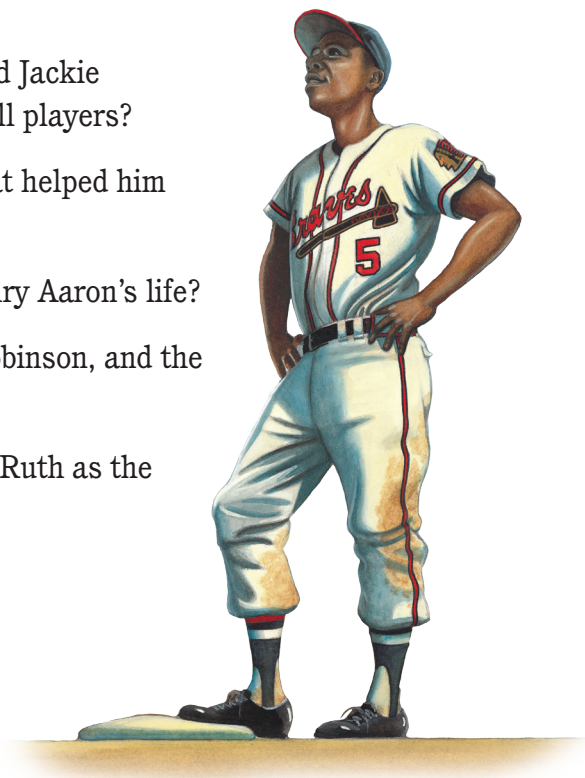


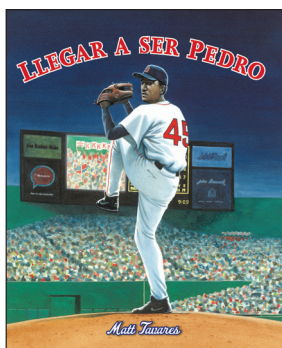
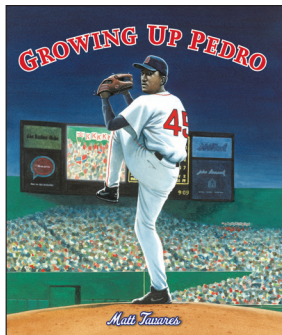
your students, complete a graphic organizer comparing and contrasting the life of white and black baseball players during Hank Aaron's lifetime. Invite students to write an essay about how life has changed for players of color over time.

## Discussion Questions

Use these questions for whole class discussions, reading check-ins, or as writing prompts for *Henry Aaron's Dream*.

1. Why do you think Matt Tavares chose to start the book with a "Whites Only" sign on a chain-link fence? What tone is he setting for the book?
2. How did Jackie Robinson influence Henry Aaron? What did Jackie Robinson's accomplishments mean for other black baseball players?
3. How did the racism in the South affect Henry Aaron? What helped him overcome any feeling of defeat?
4. How did the bad luck of some Braves' players change Henry Aaron's life?
5. What did baseball players like Henry Aaron and Jackie Robinson, and the integration of the MLB, mean to black Americans?
6. Why were people angry that Hank Aaron surpassed Babe Ruth as the all-time home-run leader?





# GROWING UP PEDRO

## About *Growing Up Pedro*

Before Pedro Martínez pitched the Red Sox to a World Series championship, before he was named to the All-Star team eight times, before he won the Cy Young Award three times, he was a kid from a place called Manoguayabo in the Dominican Republic. Pedro loved baseball more than anything, and his older brother Ramón was the best pitcher he'd ever seen. He'd dream of the day he and his brother could play together in the major leagues. This is the story of how that dream came true, examining both Pedro Martínez's improbable rise to the top of his game and the power that comes from the deep bond between brothers.



## Activities

1. Pull up a map of North America. Have students mark all the different places that Pedro played: the Dominican Republic, Montana, Montreal, and so on. Ask students to determine the miles between each location. Which place was the farthest from Pedro's home? Which place was the closest?
2. Have students write a journal entry as Pedro Martínez. Invite them to write, from Pedro's point of view, what it feels like to move so far away from home when he is so young. Does he miss his family? Is he sad, happy, or excited to be in Montana?
3. After reading about Pedro Martínez, have students brainstorm a list of adjectives that describe him. As a class, discuss the way Pedro's personality would affect the mood of a ball team. Have each student write a response stating whether or not they would want to have a player like Pedro on their team. Students should include the class-generated adjectives and use text evidence to support their answer.
4. Pedro Martínez imagines himself as "a lion fighting for his food" when he is pitching. Discuss metaphors with students and the difference between figurative and literal language. To show the difference, draw a picture of a literal lion fighting for food and the figurative Pedro Martínez fighting for food. After showing the example, have students think of other metaphors, then draw their literal and the figurative meanings.
5. After reading, have students debate which they think meant more to Pedro: playing in the majors with his brother or being the highest-paid baseball player. Students should use text evidence to support their position.



## Discussion Questions

Use these questions for whole class discussions, reading check-ins, or as writing prompts for *Growing Up Pedro*.

1. Where is the Dominican Republic located? Where on the island is Manoguayabo? Campo Las Palmas? What are the demographics of the Dominican Republic? What language is spoken there?
2. How does Pedro feel about his big brother Ramón?
3. Pedro and Ramón's family lives in poverty, yet the two boys never give up. How does their situation push them even more to want to be successful?
4. When Ramón gets signed to a big-league team he has a very hard time in the United States. Why? What do you think would be the hardest thing about moving to a new country?
5. How does Pedro practice his English?
6. Why does the trade to Montreal end up being a good thing for Pedro?
7. What are some different types of pitches? What do pitchers have to change in order to throw these different types?
8. How did the love between the two Martínez brothers propel them toward becoming two of the best pitchers in baseball history?



## Vocabulary

Review the list of vocabulary words below. First ask students if they can guess the words' meanings by rereading each word in the context of the books, then have them look up each definition in the dictionary. Invite students to use each word in a sentence of their own. You may wish to make this a homework assignment.

### *Becoming Babe Ruth*

Clobbers  
Flock  
Magnificent  
Pigeon-toed  
Saloon  
Strides  
Upper-cut

### *There Goes Ted Williams*

Aerodynamics  
Doubleheader  
Golden  
Navigation  
Preliminary  
Raging

### *Henry Aaron's Dream*

Determined  
Exhibition  
Mesmerized  
Opposing

### *Growing Up Pedro*

Adjusting  
Anticipation  
Devastated  
Reliever  
Starting rotation



# CONNECTING ALL FOUR TITLES

After reading all four books, you can use these activities with your students to extend their understanding of the material. Be sure to share the back matter of each book, which includes an author's note, career statistics, and a bibliography.

## Activities

1. Show students the formulas to determine an ERA, WHIP, AVG, and SLG. Then give students stats on different players and have them determine these numbers.
  - **ERA:** Earned Run Average  
 $(\text{Runs given up} \times 9) \div \text{innings pitched}$
  - **WHIP:** Walks plus hits per inning  
 $(\text{Hits} + \text{walks}) \div \text{innings pitched}$
  - **AVG:** Batting average  
 $\text{Hits} \div \text{at bats}$
  - **SLG:** Slugging percentage  
 $([\text{Singles}] + [\text{Doubles} \times 2] + [\text{Triples} \times 3] + [\text{Home runs} \times 4]) \div \text{total times at bat}$
2. During each of these players' lifetimes, historic events were happening in the United States and the world. Split the class into groups centered on each of the four baseball players. Each group will create a time line of their player's life, including chronologically placed historic events.
3. Have students compare the pitching stats of Babe Ruth and Pedro Martínez found in the back of each book. Students must then present their answers to the following questions: Who do you think is the best pitcher? Why? Which stat do you think is more important when determining which pitcher is the best: wins/losses, ERA, WHIP, or strikeouts/walks?
4. Have students compare the batting stats of Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron, and Ted Williams found in the back of each book. Students must then present their answers to the following questions: Who do you think is the best batter? Why? Which stat do you think is the most important when determining which batter is the best: batting average, home runs, runs, hits, slugging?
5. After reading the four biographies, have a discussion about theme with your students. The four biographies all have a similar underlying theme. As a class, come up with a list of similarities found in each of the four biographies and discuss what trends run through all the books. Have students use this information to write a paragraph stating what they believe to be the underlying theme of all of the books. Make sure they include text evidence from each book to back up their position.
6. Many different baseball teams are mentioned in the four biographies. As you read each of the books, keep a running list of all the teams that are mentioned. Have students, in groups, pick one of the teams mentioned and research its history. Students should then present to the class the way that team has changed since the time period mentioned in the book.



7. Some aspects of the players' childhoods were similar. As a class, brainstorm a list of similarities among the ballplayers, focusing specifically on their personality traits. When done with the list, have each student pick one of those similarities and write a short paragraph stating the way that aspect of the players' childhoods could have affected their success. Students should use examples from each of the four books to back up their response.

## Discussion Questions

Use these questions for class discussions or as writing prompts after reading *Becoming Babe Ruth*, *There Goes Ted Williams*, *Henry Aaron's Dream*, and *Growing Up Pedro*.

1. Most of the baseball players had a mentor or idol that he looked up to and learned from. How did these mentors or idols help guide the players into becoming the greats they are?
2. Each of the baseball players helped a charity that was close to his heart. Who did each player help? Why did players choose the charity they did?

## Common Core

Here are examples of English Language Arts Common Core Anchor Standards that can be met with these activities and discussion questions.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## About Matt Tavares

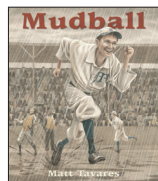


Matt Tavares has been writing about baseball since his senior year in college. His passion for the game and the players comes through in his biographies and stories, and he brings that passion to many schools around the country. About these visits, he notes: "When I set out to be a children's book author-illustrator, I had no idea I'd end up spending so much time talking in front of large groups of people. And as someone who used to dread getting up in front of the class to speak, I never imagined how much I would enjoy it."

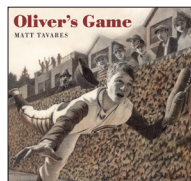
Matt Tavares's books have received numerous starred reviews and have won many awards. His artwork has been exhibited at the Museum of American Illustration at the Society of Illustrators, the Brandywine River Museum, and the Mazza Museum of Picture Book Art.

Matt Tavares lives in Ogunquit, Maine, with his wife, Sarah, and their two daughters.

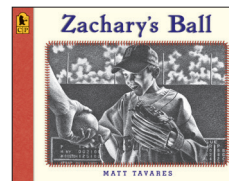
### Other baseball books by Matt Tavares



**Mudball**  
PB: 978-0-7636-4136-8



**Oliver's Game**  
HC: 978-0-7636-1852-0  
PB: 978-0-7636-4137-5



**Zachary's Ball**  
HC: 978-0-7636-5033-9  
PB: 978-0-7636-5977-6

*Teachers' guide written by Kellee Moyer, a reading teacher and coauthor of the Unleashing Readers blog.*