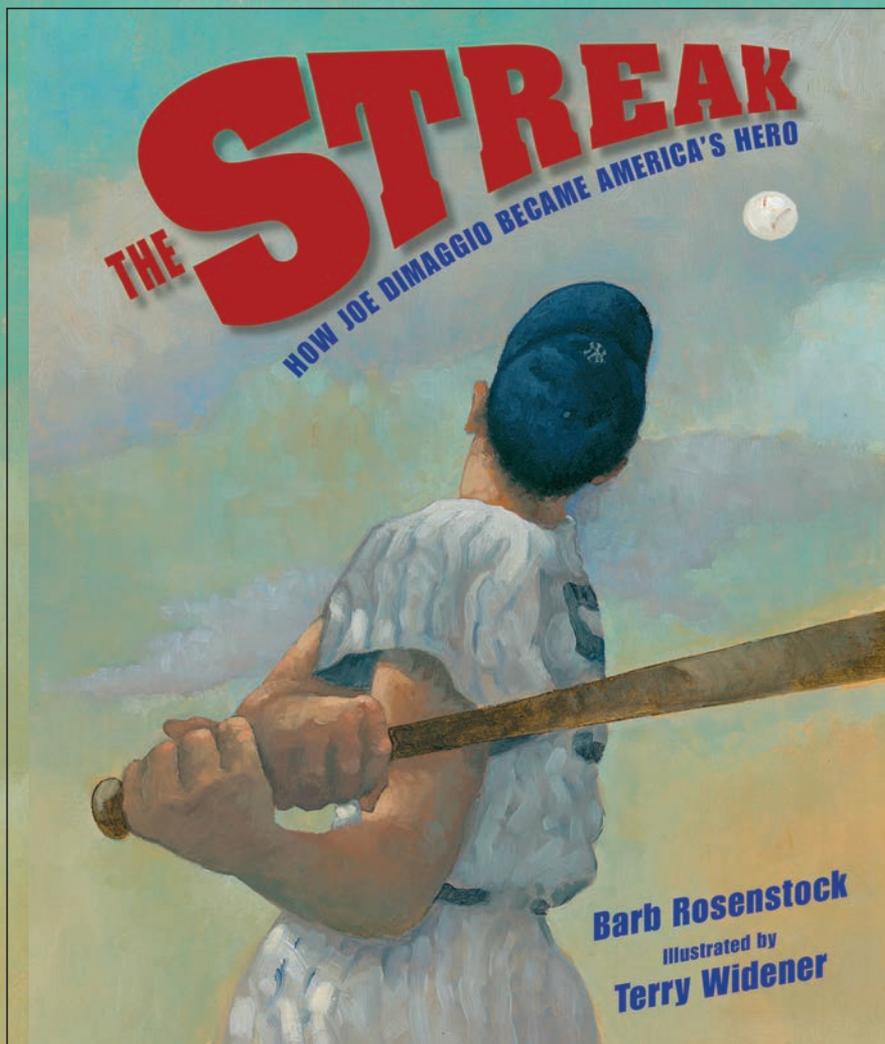


# Educator's Guide



 CALKINS CREEK

 BOYD'S MILLS PRESS



**With  
Common Core  
State Standards  
correlations**

## About the Book

In the summer of 1941, Yankee center fielder Joe DiMaggio and his favorite bat, Betsy Ann, begin the longest hitting streak in baseball history. But when Betsy Ann goes missing, will DiMaggio keep hitting?

Set on the brink of World War II, this is a spellbinding account of a sports story that united the country and made DiMaggio a hero, at a time when one was profoundly needed. Barb Rosenstock's action-packed text and Terry Widener's powerful illustrations capture DiMaggio's drive as well as his frustration.

The book also includes headlines, quotes, stats, and a detailed bibliography.

## Introduction to the Guide

Baseball! What could be more American? And sports heroes! What could be more inviting? Elementary students will be swiftly drawn into this picture book biography of Joe DiMaggio, one of America's greatest sports legends. Students will learn some history as they read, too, because the 1941 season of DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak coincided with the inexorable drumbeats of World War II as they grew louder across the globe. Rosenstock and Widener deftly combine sports and history in a way that draws young readers into both.

This guide incorporates Common Core State Standards in Reading: Informational Texts (RI); Speaking and Listening (SL); and Writing (W). Connections are noted with each activity. To read the complete Common Core State Standards, visit [corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy](http://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy).

## Quick Questions: What Does the Text Tell You?

(Grades 2–3) Ask students to answer the following questions, drawing on key details in the text for their answers. **(RI 2.1, 3.1)**

*Explicitly Stated*

- **Who** was Joe DiMaggio?
- **What** is Joe DiMaggio most famous for?
- **What** team did Joe DiMaggio play for during his hitting streak?
- **What** was the name of Joe DiMaggio's "ball bat"?
- **Where** did Joe DiMaggio grow up?
- **Where** did Joe DiMaggio live as a professional baseball player?
- **When** was Joe DiMaggio's hitting streak?
- **How** did Joe DiMaggio behave each time he came up to bat?

(Grades 4–5) Students should answer the previous questions and then consider the following questions. Ask them to refer to key details and examples when explaining what the text says explicitly and what it leaves

open for inference. Additionally, ask fifth graders to quote from the text when answering questions. **(RI 4.1, 5.1)**

### *Implicitly Communicated*

- **Why** was Joe DiMaggio's 1941 streak especially important to Americans?
- **How** did Joe respond when Betsy Ann went missing?
- **What** kind of person was Joe DiMaggio?

## **A War Spreading Like a Fever**

Students may have little knowledge about World War II before reading *THE STREAK*. Prepare students with information about this war. Consider using “World War II: An Overview” at the Scholastic Teacher website: [scholastic.com/teachers/article/world-war-ii-overview](http://scholastic.com/teachers/article/world-war-ii-overview).

Ask students to:

- Think about the connection between DiMaggio's hitting streak during the summer of 1941 and the war in Europe. **(RI 2.3, 3.3, 4.3, 5.3)**
- Describe how each influenced the mood of America.

**(RI 2.3, 3.3, 4.3, 5.3)**

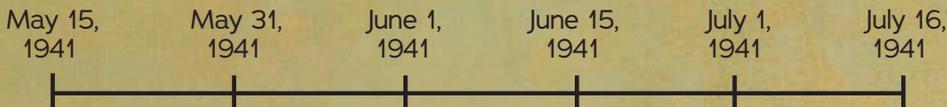
## **Placing Joe in History**

As with most biographies, *THE STREAK* is arranged chronologically. However, underlying the story is the drumbeat of World War II, which was happening simultaneously in Europe. Invite students to:

- Discuss the parallel events of the summer of 1941 as they are presented in the book. **(RI 4.5)**
- Uncover further details about the war during the time period of May 15 through July 16, 1941. Use the graphic organizer below to create a timeline that interweaves the dates of DiMaggio's games with the events of the war. A useful online source for this activity is the World War II timeline of events at The History Place: [historyplace.com](http://historyplace.com). **(RI 5.5)**



*Place Joe DiMaggio's games and statistics above the line chronologically. Place events of World War II below the line chronologically.*



## What Might the Author Say?

What was author Barb Rosenstock's purpose in writing *THE STREAK*? Engage students in a conversation by asking them to imagine that they are sitting down in a face-to-face meeting with the author before reading the book. What questions might they ask her that would have led her to tell them this story? **(RI 2.6)**

## The Way I See It

The author's point of view is an important aspect of this story. Before reading *THE STREAK*, ask students to share information they may already possess about Joe DiMaggio. Then, read a short print or electronic encyclopedia article about DiMaggio. What are the students' opinions of the baseball star? Next, read *THE STREAK* aloud and discuss Barb Rosenstock's opinion of Joe DiMaggio as communicated in her text and her Author's Note. Ask students to identify portions of the text and note that support their claims about her opinion. Do your students' opinions vary from Rosenstock's? **(RI 3.6)**

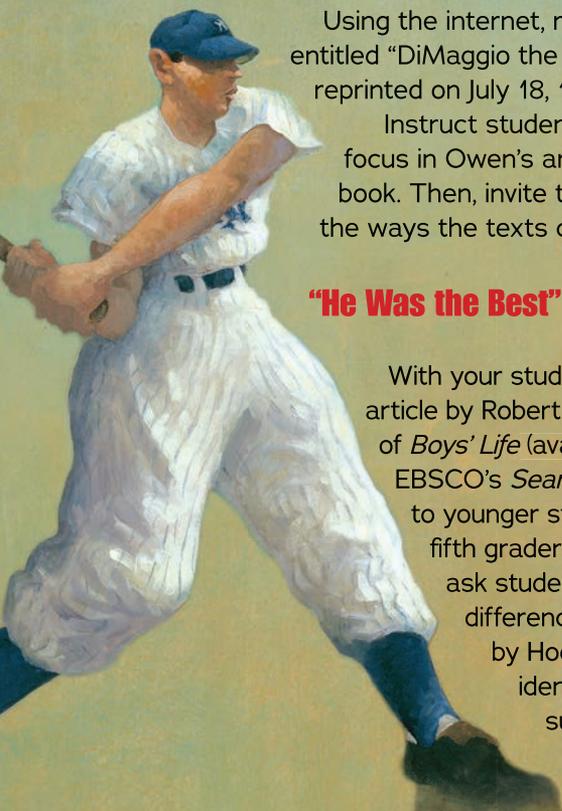
## A Present Encounter vs. a Look Back

Using the internet, read the *New York Times* article entitled "DiMaggio the Unruffled" by Russell Owen, reprinted on July 18, 1941, in the *Milwaukee Journal*.

Instruct students to evaluate the difference of focus in Owen's article compared to Rosenstock's book. Then, invite them to describe the differences in the ways the texts characterize DiMaggio. **(RI 4.6)**

## "He Was the Best"

With your students, read "He Was the Best," an article by Robert E. Hood from the July 1999 issue of *Boys' Life* (available through databases such as EBSCO's *Searchasaurus*). This can be read aloud to younger students or printed for fourth and fifth graders for independent reading. Then, ask students to identify similarities and differences in the points of view expressed by Hood and Rosenstock. Ask them to identify key sentences in both texts to support their claims. **(RI 5.6)**



## Reasons and Evidence

(Grades 2–5) Consider this statement from the book: “This was the United States of Baseball and Joe DiMaggio was its President” (page 14). What does this sentence mean? Ask students to identify other sentences in which author Barb Rosenstock offers reasons and evidence to support this statement. **(RI 2.8, 3.8, 4.8, 5.8)**

(Grade 3) Challenge students to identify the sentences that show DiMaggio’s progression toward the hitting record, matching it, and then breaking it. **(RI 3.8)**

## The Summer of Baseball: 1941

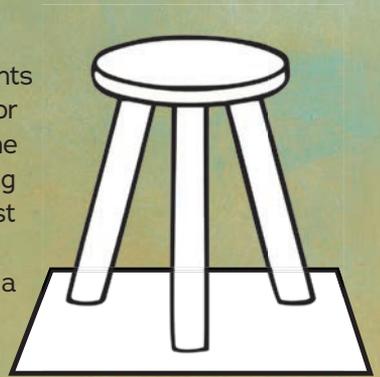
(Grades 2–3) Share another book about baseball in the summer of 1941 with your students: *The Unforgettable Season: Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams and the Record-Setting Summer of 1941* by Phil Bildner (Putnam, 2011). Engage students in a discussion of the similarities and differences between the main points in the two books. Ask third graders to compare key details as well. **(RI 2.9, 3.9)**

(Grades 4–5) Have fourth and fifth graders read *The Unforgettable Season: Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams and the Record-Setting Summer of 1941* by Phil Bildner (Putnam, 2011). Invite students, in small groups, to prepare a brief oral presentation that incorporates information from both books. Provide additional sources for fifth graders to use in their presentations. **(RI 4.9, 5.9)**

## President of the “United States of Baseball”

With careful attention to the grade-specific requirements of Writing Standard 1, invite students to compose a brief opinion piece about whether or not Joe DiMaggio should have been considered the President of the “United States of Baseball” during the summer of 1941. Remind them that they must specify reasons for their opinion, supply linking words to connect reasons and opinion, and offer a strong conclusion. Have students preplan this written opinion piece using the Three-Legged Stool graphic organizer.

**(W 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, 5.1)**



Write your opinion on the seat of the stool, one reason on each leg, and your conclusion on the rug below.

## All the Boys of Summer

Read several other picture book biographies of baseball players, including any of the following:

- *All Star!: Honus Wagner and the Most Famous Baseball Card Ever* by Jane Yolen (Philomel, 2010)
- *Becoming Babe Ruth* by Matt Tavares (Candlewick, 2013)
- *Hank Aaron: Brave in Every Way* by Peter Golenbock (Harcourt, 2001)
- *Louis Sockalexis: Native American Baseball Pioneer* by Bill Wise (Lee & Low, 2007)
- *No Easy Way: The Story of Ted Williams and the Last .400 Season* by Fred Bowen (Dutton, 2010)
- *Satchel Paige* by Lesa Cline-Ransome (Simon & Schuster, 2000)
- *Something to Prove: The Great Satchel Paige vs. Rookie Joe DiMaggio* by Robert Skead (Carolrhoda, 2013)
- *There Goes Ted Williams: The Greatest Hitter Who Ever Lived* by Matt Tavares (Candlewick, 2012)
- *When Jackie and Hank Met* by Cathy Goldberg Fishman (Cavendish, 2012)
- *You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?!* by Jonah Winter (Schwartz & Wade, 2009)



Then, as a group, complete the research matrix below. Enlarge the matrix to wall or bulletin board size and assign various columns or rows to small groups of students.

Player's Name	Nickname	Birth/Death Dates	Dates as a Player

When this project is complete, invite students as a whole group (Grade 2), in small groups (Grade 3), or individually (Grades 4–5) to choose a single baseball player who is featured in one of the books you have shared to research. Challenge fourth- and fifth-grade students to focus their investigations on particular aspects of the athlete's life and times, such as obstacles overcome, special skills, or social and political events during the player's career.

**(W 2.7, 3.7, 4.7, 5.7)**

## I'll Tell You Why

After students have read *THE STREAK* and one of the other titles listed above in the **All the Boys of Summer** activity, ask each student to select a favorite book to re-read. Have them choose a particular element of the story they would most like to share with the class in a brief oral presentation. Emphasize the inclusion of appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details for each grade. Emphasize organization of material for fourth graders and logical sequencing for fifth graders. Watch for audibility (Grade 2), clarity of delivery (Grade 3), pacing (Grade 4), and clarity combined with pacing (Grade 5).

**(SL 2.4, 3.4, 4.4, 5.4)**

## About the Author and Illustrator

**Barb Rosenstock** has written several award-winning picture books, including *The Camping Trip that Changed America* and *Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library*. She lives outside of Chicago with one baseball-loving husband, two baseball-playing sons, and two big poodles, who can catch better than most major-leaguers. Visit her at [barbrosenstock.com](http://barbrosenstock.com).

**Terry Widener** loved to play baseball when he was young and often dreamed he would make it in the big leagues. He could do everything a baseball player needed to do, except hit. Today, Terry is the award-winning illustrator of many picture books on great baseball hitters: Gehrig, Mays, Ruth, and now DiMaggio. He lives in McKinney, Texas, with his wife, two dogs, and one cat. He is the father of three grown children. Reach him at [terrywidenerart.com](http://terrywidenerart.com).

Most Well Known For	Awards and Accomplishments	Obstacles Overcome



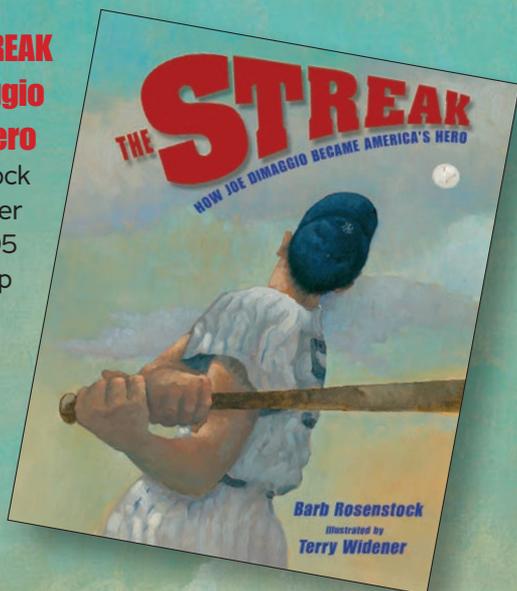
**THE STREAK**  
**How Joe DiMaggio**  
**Became America's Hero**

Written by Barb Rosenstock

Illustrated by Terry Widener

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Ages 8 and up • Grades 3 and up



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This guide was prepared by Toni Buzzeo, M.A., M.L.I.S., author, educational consultant, and school librarian. [tonibuzzeo.com](http://tonibuzzeo.com)