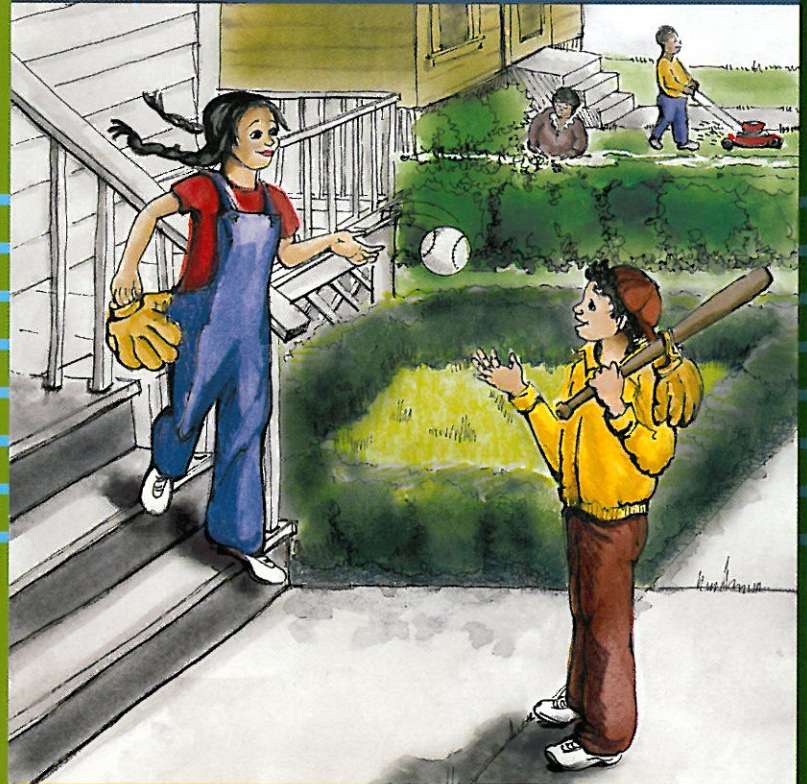


# Play Ball!



**By Frances Bloom and Deborah Coates**

Illustrated by Mary Geiger

**The Alphabet Series, Volume 3 Features:**

Book 37 Play Ball!

VCV and VCe spelling rules  
ew as in grew, few  
eu as in feud, neutral  
eigh as in eight  
ei as in vein, ceiling  
ue as in rescue, true  
ie as in chief

Book 38 The Book of Records

Three-syllable words  
Schwa /ə/  
tion as in action  
sion as in division, mansion

Book 39 The Cave Adventure

ow as in snow  
ea as in head  
oo as in good  
ou as in group  
ch as in school  
ch as in machine  
final s as in is  
Spelling with affixes

Acquisitions/Development: Bonnie Lass

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Senior Editorial Manager: Sheila Neylon

Cover illustration: Mary M. Geiger

Design: Karen Lomigora

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Printed in USA

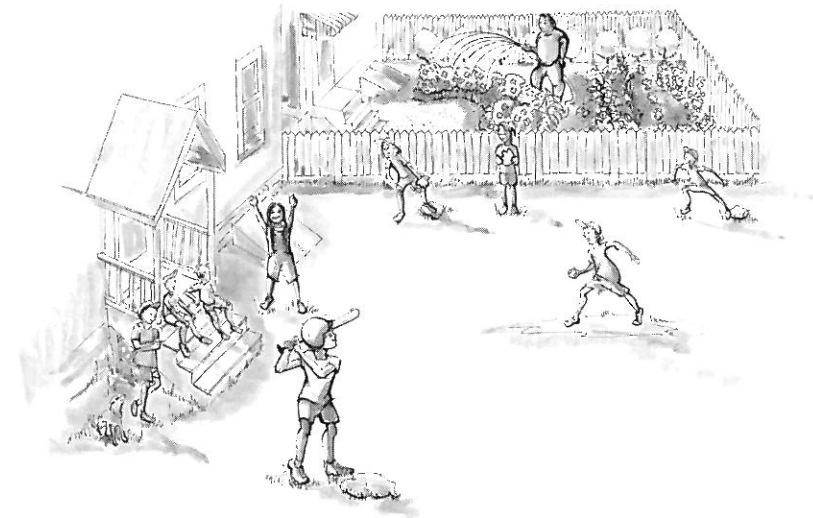
ISBN 978-0-8388-8753-0

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## Chapter 1

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I clutched the bat and kept looking at the pitcher. “Hey batter, batter, batter . . . swing batter, batter, batter . . . swing batter, batter, batter . . . swing Freddie,” they yelled. I swung.

The ball flew past the infielders. “Touch them all!” hollered my team. “Catch it,” shrieked the kids in the outfield. But the ball flew over the fence, into the yard of Mr. Grump and his wife Mrs. Grump.

“Game’s over,” groaned Ellie, as she threw down her mitt and looked sadly over the fence. “That must be the twentieth ball we hit over the fence this week.”

I didn’t argue with her. Ellie is our best hitter, but it was really only the sixth ball we had lost. It was also the sixth time we had had to face Mr. Grump telling us to stop hitting balls into his yard and to play somewhere else.

It’s not really true that our neighbors are Mr. and Mrs. Grump. We call them that because they always seem to be in a bad mood! Their real names are Mr. and Mrs. Newton. The problem is that we spend our extra time playing baseball in *my* yard, and they spend their extra time in *their* yard.

They’re always digging, planting, and potting. Their whole yard is just one big garden that no kids can go into, not even to get a ball.

Well, not exactly. In order to retrieve a ball, we have to ask Mr. or Mrs. Newton if they will go into the yard with us and find the ball. They hate being interrupted when they are in their garden, so they are never nice about helping us find our baseballs. While we look for the baseball, they always lecture us about finding another place to play.

I wish we didn’t have to play in my yard, but it’s the biggest backyard on Brewster Avenue. We’ve always played there. But we do have a plan. Well, it’s really Ellie’s plan.