
Unit 1 - Bottom of the Ninth

1A Introduction

This song tells a dramatic story that is familiar to any baseball fan. The home team is losing by one run in the bottom of the ninth inning in an important game. The stadium is packed; the crowd is going crazy. The team has one more chance to tie the game. In this case, that chance goes by the name El Gato.

1B Song Lyrics

*I like the way you swing.
I like the way you play the game.*

Everybody was charged like a battery,
The stadium was filled to **capacity**.
The **maximum** amount of fans, not the minimum,
The most. The whole crowd was cheering 'em.
They were rocking in their seats,
While in the city, they were bopping in the streets.
The crowd was **boisterous**, making noise for us,
Rough, wild, loud enough, these boys are tough.

Bottom of the ninth inning, and the score was tight,
Five to four. I'm sad to report we weren't winning.
Usually, the other team was **inept** at pitching,
They lacked skill in it like the park lacks ceilings.
But today, they had held back and **restrained**
From throwing too many balls away.
But next up to the plate (or "plato")
Was the hero of our team, El Gato.

The **commentary** came from an announcer
Named Dave, who commented upon the game.
He had a low voice, and he said:
"Next up, the cat with bat, El Gato!"
The whole crowd marveled at this **marvel**,
They watched him in astonishment like a model.
He was a big **factor** in our winning streak,
He was the reason the men and the women shrieked.

Hook

He was sweating, and the **cumulative** effect
Of many hours in the sun: His brow was wet.
The pitcher tried to **intimidate** and scare him up,
He had the face of a bear and the smell of a skunk.
El Gato **painstakingly** tightened his gloves,
He did it very carefully, tight like hugs.
The pitcher got a strike on the first pitch that he threw,
And then El Gato swung and missed: strike number two.
Now all the fans were in pain and **anguish**,



Like someone had sat on their hope sandwich.
 It was **unanimous**, everybody agreed,
 That it was too exciting to sit in our seats.
 Pitch three, **continuous** movement, no stop,
 In slow-mo, until we heard a loud pop.
 The ball was going, going, gone,
 And the crowd **erupted** and exploded in a song.

Hook

1C Words Defined

Below you'll find each vocabulary word that was used in the song. Each word is followed by the part of speech, a simple definition and a meaningful sentence. Some words will also have synonyms, antonyms and other forms of the word listed.

1. **boisterous** (adj) noisy and rowdy

Cheerleaders are a very *boisterous* group.
 Antonyms: quiet, calm

2. **capacity** (noun) 1. the largest possible amount that can be contained 2. the ability to do something

1. The auditorium is filled to *capacity*. 2. Luckily, I have the *capacity* to stay cool in hot places.

3. **maximum** (adj) the highest allowable amount

The *maximum* number of horses that could fit in the stable was three.
 Synonyms: utmost, limit
 Antonyms: minimum

4. **inept** (adj) without skill, clumsy

Nina was completely *inept* at cooking a tasty meal.
 Antonyms: skilled, graceful

5. **restrain** (verb) to hold back from

It was difficult for me to *restrain* from eating too much at the all-you-can-eat buffet.
 Other forms: Danny showed his *restraint* (noun) by eating only a salad and a piece of bread.

6. **commentary** (noun) an explanation or interpretation

The President's speech was followed by a political *commentary* on the local news channel.

7. **marvel** (noun) a wonderful thing or an awesome sight

Yosemite National Park is a natural *marvel* that takes people breath away daily.
 Synonyms: a wonder, miracle
 Other forms: *Marvel* is also a verb meaning "to wonder at" as in: I always *marvel* at those at the beach who can swim for hours in that cold water.

8. factor (noun) a reason or circumstance

One *factor* that convinced Sheila to take the job was the huge salary.

Synonyms: aspect, cause

Other forms: You must *factor* (verb) groceries, gas and the electric bill into your budget if you are thinking of living on your own. You must include them.

9. cumulative (adj) increasing by adding one thing after another

The *cumulative* effect of not studying for any science test all year forced me to attend summer school to remedy the F.

Other forms: *Cumulative* is related to *accumulation* (noun), which is what you get when things gather for a while, like snow.

10. intimidate (verb) to frighten, threaten, scare

Tanya always tries to *intimidate* Nancy before competitions by making fun of her skating ability, tripping her intentionally, and hiding her outfits.

Antonyms: to comfort, encourage

Other forms: Mr. Keller was known for using *intimidation* (noun) in his classroom as a technique to maintain a silent class.

11. painstaking (adj) taking a lot of care or trouble; careful

Dr. Zino performed a *painstaking* exam of the baby looking for what could be causing his pain and constant crying.

Antonyms: careless, sloppy

Other forms: The hunter *painstakingly* (adverb) waited in the bushes for a duck to fly close enough for him to shoot.

12. anguish (noun) extreme suffering or pain

The *anguish* that Thomas felt from the death of his mother was overwhelming and kept him from going to work for a year.

Other forms: *Anguish* is also a verb meaning “to suffer” as in: Amelia will *anguish* over the loss of her pet hamsters because she has raised them since they were born.

13. unanimous (adj) in complete agreement, everyone agreed

It was a *unanimous* decision by the students to make summer vacation six months long.

14. continuous (adj) without interruption or end

The *continuous* pounding of the hammers from the construction site next door made it impossible for the baby to take a nap.

Synonyms: nonstop, constant, unbroken

15. erupt (verb) to burst, explode or release suddenly

Vincent was convinced that the pimple on his face was going to erupt and gross out his friends at the lunch table.

Synonyms: to blow up, burst, gush

Other forms: The volcano's *eruption* (noun) surprised all of us, even the scientists who had studied it for years.

1D Fix the Mistake

Each of the sentences below has a mistake. The wrong vocabulary words have been used, so the sentences don't make sense. Rewrite each sentence using the correct vocabulary word from this unit.

1. Nathan's ability to draw perfect circles was a **commentary** to his classmates.

2. Alexander experienced a lot of pain and **factor** when he first got his braces put on.

3. When Christopher first started going to the skate park he was **continuous** at completing any cool skateboarding tricks.

4. The velvet ropes **intimidated** the crowd from stepping onto the red carpet, where the celebrities walked to enter Radio City Music Hall for the awards show.

5. The fan was so **maximum** during the game that security had to escort him out of the arena.

6. The jury finally reached a **cumulative** guilty decision in the highly publicized court case.

7. When Mount St. Helens **restrained** in the year 1980, the lava and landslides caused devastation throughout the volcano's surrounding region.

8. The banquet room was filled to **marvel** for Brian's bar mitzvah celebration.

9. Her lack of effort toward completing her school work over the last year resulted in a severe drop of her **painstaking** grade point average.

10. The broadcasters on ESPN's *Sportscenter* provide daily **anguish** for all of the sporting news highlights.

11. When the plumbing pipes broke in our apartment, there was a **cumulative** flow of water gushing from underneath the sink for four hours.
- _____
12. Austin was **restrained** to ask his secret crush to dance with him at the prom.
- _____
13. The doctor **ineptly** stitched up the gash on Isaiah's knee.
- _____
14. One-hundred percent is the **unanimous** score a student can earn on each weekly spelling test.
- _____
15. An autograph book signing session by J.K. Rowling was the main **marvel** in causing a long line outside of the bookstore.
- _____

1E Pick the Winner

Circle the word that best fits into the sentence. Then write a sentence below that uses the word you didn't pick in a meaningful way.

1. Marcus had to get off of the computer at the public library when he reached the **(maximum OR continuous)** amount of time that he's allowed to surf the web.
2. _____
3. Jessica felt that the Fourth of July fireworks display was a **(capacity OR marvel)**.
4. _____
5. When Deion was finally grounded for a month by his parents, it was a result of many **(painstaking OR cumulative)** negative acts.
6. _____
7. Hunter **(erupted OR intimidated)** with excitement when he scored the game-winning soccer goal.
8. _____
9. At tribal council, the voting result was one vote short of **(inept OR unanimous)**, but it was still enough to get rid of the weakest player.
10. _____

1F Draw the Relationship

In each grouping of eight words below, draw straight lines between the synonyms (words that mean similar things) and squiggly lines between any antonyms (words that mean nearly opposite things). Every word should have at least one line connected to it. Some may have more.

1	reason	explanation	increasing	commentary
	boisterous	cumulative	factor	calm
.....				
2	everyone agrees	restrain	unanimous	intimidate
	erupt	hold back	explode	bully
.....				
3	comfort	marvel	painstaking	maximum
	careless	small amount	awesome sight	anguish
.....				
4	stopped	amount	clumsy	inept
	boisterous	capacity	noisy	continuous

1G Understanding What You Read

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions.

Early one morning in the spring of 1980, a single event changed the landscape of the northwestern United States. Mount St. (Saint) Helens, an active volcano located in Washington state, erupted. The explosion wasn't a surprise. Scientists had been painstakingly watching the volcano and conducting tests. They knew it was about to blow.

The boisterous eruption that morning came as a result of years of cumulative magma buildup deep within the volcano itself. It was also caused by a small earthquake deep within the ground, which forced the magma and gases up to the top of the volcano.

What happened next? The entire top of Mount St. Helens blew off, sending rocks, lava, and ash everywhere. When the north side of the volcano fell, it resulted in the largest landslide ever recorded in the history of The United States.

Immediately after the volcanic eruption, news crews arrived to provide commentary to the entire world, describing what had just taken place. The newscasters offered safety tips for everyone in the area, because volcanic ash was still falling from the sky like snowflakes. The ash even traveled a maximum distance of 500 miles and rained down on people in Colorado. As the people marveled at the sight of the enormous volcano smoking, rescue teams were busy trying to locate and save the people lost amid the rocks and ash.

In all, the powerful blast killed 57 people and many thousands of animals. Scientists later estimated that the eruption was 27,000 times as powerful as the atomic bombs used in World War II, a reminder to all of us that nature's power is enormous.

Today, Mount St. Helens looks very different than it did before 1980. Where the peak of the volcano once stood, there is now a crater, a hole that stretches over a mile wide. As a result, the volcano is more than a thousand feet shorter than it once was. Mount St. Helens is still active today. In fact, the volcano has erupted 40 times since 1980, but no blast has been even close to the size of that huge explosion that shook the United States.

1. According to the text, Mount St. Helens is

- (A) an inactive volcano in Washington, DC
- (B) a huge mountain in Colorado
- (C) an active volcano in Washington state
- (D) an active volcano in Colorado

2. The explosion in 1980 was

- (A) a surprise to most scientists
- (B) the result of pressure released from an earthquake
- (C) the biggest volcanic explosion the world had ever seen
- (D) more deadly than every natural disaster since

3. In the line that says "ash was still pouring from the sky like snowflakes," why might the author decide to describe the ash using this comparison?

- (A) She wanted to let the reader know it was very cold at the time.
- (B) She wanted to explain that the volcano kicked up lots of snowflakes that fell on the landscape, along with the ash.
- (C) She wanted to let the readers picture the ash falling from the sky, in case they weren't sure what it looked like.
- (D) She always dreamed of being a poet.

4. Which statement is NOT true?

- (A) Volcanic ash traveled as far as Colorado.
- (B) The TV news helped provide safety information to people.
- (C) The eruption was much stronger than the force of atomic bombs.
- (D) Mount St. Helens killed 57 scientists.

5. The passage is most likely

- (A) a true story written by someone just before they were killed by the volcano
- (B) a made-up story by a talented author
- (C) a report by someone who wants to bomb volcanoes before they can erupt
- (D) a true story written by someone around the year 2007

1H Thinking Creatively

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. How could you feel **anguish** and joy at the same time?

2. What do you think is the biggest **factor** for getting good grades in school?

3. Besides the word **commentary**, list two more words that start with "com." Do they relate to *commentary* at all?

4. Briefly describe the idea behind a made-up book called *The **Boisterous** Factor*.

5. Describe a **restraint** on students at school that you wish you could change.

Word Breakdown

The word *painstaking* is pretty interesting. It's really just two words put together: "pains" and "taking." So if you do something *painstakingly*, you are just "taking pains" to do it correctly. You'll do it correctly even if it hurts. The underground rapper C-Rayz Walz uses the word to describe the hip-hop game: "The game is painstaking, I remain ancient."

The word *anguish* comes from an old French word "anguisse," which means "a choking sensation." So when you feel anguish it's almost like feeling you're choking. The rapper Talib Kweli uses the word in his song "Love Language." He notes that his raps are full of love and language, while others rap from "pain and anguish."