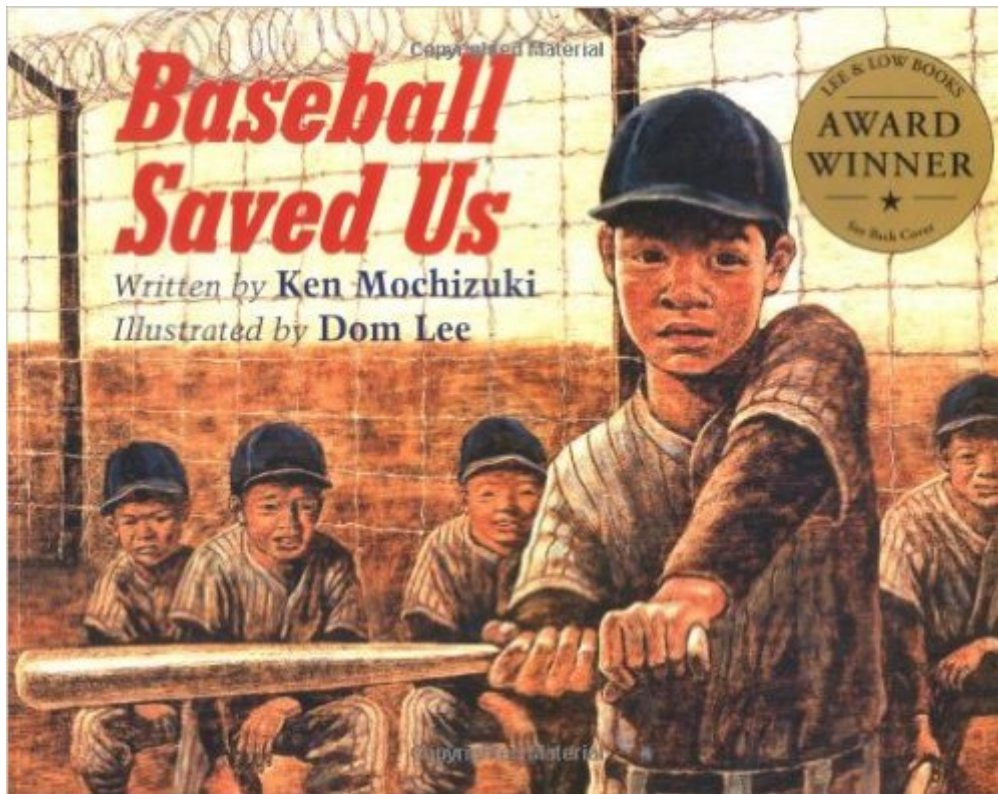


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# Baseball Saved Us



## Synopsis

Shorty and his family, along with thousands of Japanese Americans, are sent to an internment camp after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Fighting the heat and dust of the desert, Shorty and his father decide to build a baseball diamond and form a league in order to boost the spirits of the internees. Shorty quickly learns that he is playing not only to win, but to gain dignity and self-respect as well. *Baseball Saved Us* is the ultimate rite of passage story. It will appeal again and again to readers who enjoy cheering for the underdog.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD550L (What's this?)

Paperback: 30 pages

Publisher: Lee & Low Books; Reprint edition (March 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1880000199

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Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 8.2 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (49 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #25,750 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Multiculturalism](#) #17 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > Asian & Asian American](#) #40 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball](#)

Age Range: 6 - 11 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 6

## Customer Reviews

Mochizuki, K. (1993). *Baseball Saved Us*. New York. LEE & LOW BOOKS. The story of "Shorty" and his family living at an internment camp during WWII can be used when teaching students about war, especially WWII. Younger students can relate to the character of "Shorty" and his struggles with fitting in and the hardships he feels among peers. Older students can debate the equality issues and the effect war has on people concerning race, religion, and nationality. The issues of prejudices are revealed through the eyes of a young Japanese-American boy. This story revolves around baseball, an all American great pastime. Baseball is the answer because the Japanese-American's are American's. The injustices in this book are well written to inform a large audience at many age

levels.

The book starts out well. As a Japanese American teacher (retired) who was interned, however, I was very troubled by the stereotypic name ("Shorty") given to the protagonist; boys in camp had lots of nicknames--why select one that reinforces negative images? Was also disturbed by the boy's motivation, anger at the white camp guard, because it sends a poor message to young readers that they need anger at someone who was doing his job to motivate them. Most of the boys playing ball in camp played for love of the game, out of boredom, or someother reason but if they tried to do well it wasn't out of anger. Last, and most problematic, is the ending where after the war, Shorty is playing baseball and being called different racist names. Then he hits a home run and suddenly everyone loves him. The book never explains why calling people racist names is a bad thing. What if Shorty (like many children) couldn't hit a home run? The underlying message seems to be that if you assimilate enough into white culture (hit a home run) all your problems with racism will be solved. That's unrealistic and for those of us who have lived with racism, highly offensive. It's clear to me that the young man who wrote the book meant well but clearly he did not live through the war and has not thought these things out. Was told the book got some awards, and am most concerned that readers wouldn't see the inherent problems with the book. Baseball didn't save anybody.

Ken's father spent WWII in the Minidoka Japanese-American Internment Camp in Idaho. Ken, the author was raised in Seattle. Shorty is stuck in the barracks without friends, surrounded by noise and boredom. No one has anything to do. His dad sees verves fraying and has an idea, Build a baseball diamond and organize games. The men make the diamond, the women improvise the uniforms. Games are scheduled under the gaze of the guard towers. Shorty scores a big hit under nervous angry pressure. After the war, he continues to be taunted, but learns self respect under the pressure of adversity. The benefit from this book, is that there is no whitewash. It is honest, and yes, he was called Shorty, cuz life is like that.

This book is a great inspiration to young children. It deals with obstacles in life and the ways they are over come. Even if you are different, there are ways for everyone to fit in.

This book is an amazing resource for teaching students about the inequalities that took place during WWII. It is a reality check to all of those who stood by and watched their fellow friends and neighbors as they were forced to leave their homes and be placed in internment camps. This is not

just a gut check. This book served to illustrate how the simple things in life can mean everything. This book receives my highest rating and is first rate with teachers everywhere.

This story has the elements of a perfect teaching tool but it just didn't come together. It feels like the author had a lot to say but wanted to condense it and had a hard time deciding what to include. It starts off telling how the Japanese people lost their homes and lives when they were placed into camps. It tells of a wise father who decides to build a baseball field to help occupy time and have something to focus on. It does not offer an easy kick-off for a conversation about racism except in that it seems to confirm it. When Shorty returns, he is rejected until he hits a home run. Then he's a hero. It is counter to what I want to teach my students about racism. The title is compelling; the book does not deliver.

I read this to my "just-turned 8" year old son who really identified with the kid as "odd man out." The story both communicates what it was like to be in a Japanese internment camp from a kid's perspective, and communicates how it feels to be an outsider (a feeling I'm sure every child has felt some time) by talking about baseball and being the "littlest" and physically different kid. A nice, serious story with a smile at the end.

This book was about a boy and his family when America was at war with Japan. The boy's dad decided to make a baseball field and everyone helped it as if it were the real thing. The boy was not such a good player but he practiced. After the war ended he went back home it was bad nobody talked to him and also made fun of him. Baseball season came and he played for a team there so they made fun of him saying Japan's no good. That same day he batted and he made his team win. This story shows the struggle and getting out of it just by playing baseball.

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