

## Teacher Guide to Worksheet 1: Baseball Salary Comparison

### Worksheet 1: Baseball Salary Comparison

Review the following data. Compute the percentage of a baseball player's salary to that of the average U.S. salary in the last column. (Note: the first year is completed for you)

Year	Average US Salary**	Average Baseball Salary*	Average Baseball Salary/Average US Salary
1878	\$262	\$1730	6.6
1890	\$285	\$3,000	10.5
1929	\$1405	\$7,200	5.1
1933	\$1048	\$6,000	5.7
1949	\$2844	\$15,000	5.3
1967	\$6,230	\$19,000	3.0
1978	\$14,341	\$99,876	7.0
1987	\$20,262	\$431,521	21.3
2002	\$40,136	\$2,400,000	59.8

1. Can you make any generalizations concerning the relationship between player salaries and the average worker salaries?

*In general, the average baseball players salary has been at least three times that of the average US salary. In particular, after 1978 a wide gap opens up between the two.*

2. Why do you think both player salaries and worker salaries went down in 1933?

*All salaries probably saw a decrease in 1933 because of the economic state of our country. This was after the stock market crash of 1929, during the Great Depression years.*

3. Between what two years was the greatest percentage rise in player salaries? Why do you think that rise occurred?

*Between 1987 and 2002 was the greatest percentage rise in player salaries. The rise occurred because the national economy in general was doing well in the eighties, and because the reserve clause was lifted in 1975. This meant that ballplayers were now able to negotiate trades and not be "reserved" to a specific team.*

4. In your opinion, do players "deserve" to earn so much more money than today's average worker?

*This answer could vary.*

\*Fraser, Jonathan Light. *The Cultural Encyclopedia of Baseball*. McFarland & Company Publishers: Jefferson, North Carolina. 1997.

\*\*US Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States*. US Bureau of Printing: Washington, D.C.. 1975.  
And <http://www.census.gov>

