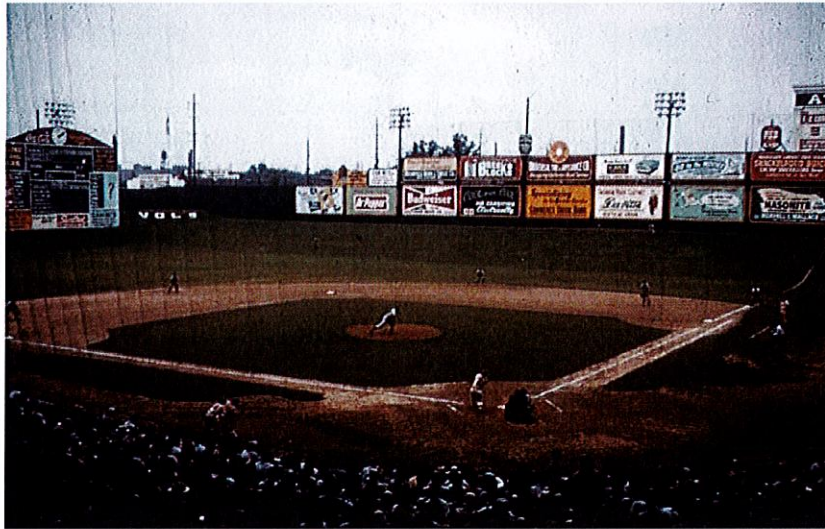


**Fifth Grade  
Blizzard Bag  
Day 5**



## A Funny Old Ballpark

W.M. Akers



Have you ever seen a baseball stadium with a hill in it? In Nashville, Tennessee, there used to be a ballpark called Sulphur Dell. It was one of the strangest ballparks in history.

In most ballparks, the right field fence is about 330 feet from home plate. In Sulphur Dell, it was only 262 feet—which made it very easy to hit home runs, if you hit the ball to just the right spot. That's pretty odd, but not half as weird as the hill in the outfield. It sloped up in front of the right field fence, until it got to about 22 feet high!

Skip Nipper, a historian who wrote about Sulphur Dell in his book *Baseball in Nashville*, calls the stadium "quirky." He likes to tell a story about a player named Phil Weintraub, who had some trouble with the outfield hill in 1934.

"A hard line drive came his way," says Nipper, "and he ran down the hill and reached down to catch the ball and missed it. It went between his legs. He turned around, went up the hill to catch it, and once again it went between his legs. When he finally got it, he threw it over the third baseman's head."

In baseball, when a player makes a mistake, he's charged with an "error." It's pretty bad if a player makes more than one error in a game, but on that play, Phil Weintraub made three!

A lot of great players came through Sulphur Dell, including Bill Dickey, Honus Wagner, and the sultan of swat himself: Babe Ruth. When Ruth came to town, the whole city was excited. The state Senate even made a special resolution, allowing them to leave the Capitol early so they could all go to the game. Back then, you couldn't watch players on TV, and they

didn't want to miss their chance to see Babe Ruth. Ruth was in the outfield when he played there in 1934, Nipper says, and "almost broke one of his legs" running on it.

But even though the ballplayers didn't like hills, the people of Nashville loved their ballpark. They called it "the Dell." Nipper started going to games at the Dell when he was a child. His father would take him, and so would his grandfather.

"My dad would take me and my cousin or my brother," he says, "and we would sit on the first base side, so we could see that right field hill. And my grandfather would not let us go to the concession stand until the seventh-inning stretch. He wanted us to watch the game."

One of the greatest games ever played at the Dell was on July 11, 1916. A pitcher named Tom Rogers was on the mound for the Tennessee Volunteers. They called him Shotgun Rogers, because he threw the ball so fast. That night, he pitched better than he ever had. He did something that's only happened a few dozen times in all of baseball history: he threw a perfect game. That means that, in nine innings of play, nobody on the opposing team got a hit. Nobody got a walk. Nobody even got to first base!

By 1963, the old ballpark wasn't so popular anymore. Teams stopped playing baseball there, and eventually Sulphur Dell was torn down. It had been around for almost 100 years.

In 1978, a new team came to town: the Nashville Sounds. They built themselves a brand new ballpark called Greer Stadium. A lot of famous players have played there: Don Mattingly, Ryan Braun, Rick Ankiel—even Michael Jordan, when he was playing baseball. The Sounds played at Greer Stadium through the 2014 season. A new ballpark called First Tennessee Park was built for The Sounds. It opened its doors in 2015, and it is located right beside the state Capitol, on the spot of land Sulphur Dell once stood.

Where does Skip Nipper think they should have built First Tennessee Park? He doesn't care.

"I'm a baseball fan," he says. "I'm going to go wherever they play."

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was Sulphur Dell?

- A) a baseball
- B) a historian
- C) a ballpark
- D) a meeting place for state senators

2. What does this passage describe?

- A) This passage describes the career of baseball stars like Babe Ruth, Don Mattingly, and Ryan Braun.
- B) This passage describes a strange old ballpark and some of the things that happened there.
- C) This passage describes the reasons that some people want to build a new ballpark next to the state Capitol in Tennessee.
- D) This passage describes the different players on the Nashville Sounds.

3. Sulphur Dell was a strange ballpark.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A) "In most ballparks, the right field fence is about 330 feet from home plate. In Sulphur Dell, it was only 262 feet—which made it very easy to hit home runs, if you hit the ball to just the right spot."
- B) "A new ballpark called First Tennessee Park was built for The Sounds. It opened its door in 2015, and it is located right beside the state Capitol, on the spot of land Sulphur Dell once stood."
- C) "One of the greatest games ever played at the Dell was on July 11, 1916. A pitcher named Tom Rogers was on the mound for the Tennessee Volunteers."
- D) "A lot of great players came through Sulphur Dell, including Bill Dickey, Honus Wagner, and the sultan of swat himself: Babe Ruth. When Ruth came to town, the whole city was excited."

4. Based on the information in the passage, how did baseball fans feel about Sulphur Dell?

- A) Baseball fans hated Sulphur Dell and almost never went to games there.
- B) Baseball fans loved Sulphur Dell and were excited about going to games there.
- C) Baseball fans did not care much about Sulphur Dell one way or the other.
- D) Baseball fans did not like Sulphur Dell at first but started liking it more in the 1960s.



5. What is this passage mainly about?

- A) what watching a baseball game at Sulphur Dell was like for Skip Nipper
- B) what it means for a pitcher to throw a perfect game
- C) what made Sulphur Dell a strange and special ballpark
- D) how the right field fence in Sulphur Dell made it easy to hit home runs

6. Read the following sentence: "By 1963, the old **ballpark** wasn't so popular anymore. They stopped playing baseball there, and eventually Sulphur Dell was torn down."

What does the word **ballpark** mean?

- A) a hill in the outfield of a baseball stadium
- B) a fence that is about 310 feet from home plate
- C) a baseball game in which no player gets a hit
- D) a place where baseball is played

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Sulphur Dell was eventually torn down, \_\_\_\_\_ it had once been popular and loved by baseball fans.

- A) although
- B) because
- C) before
- D) especially

8. According to the passage, what was weird about the outfield at Sulphur Dell?

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9. Describe the trouble Phil Weintraub had with the outfield hill in 1934.

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**10.** Was Sulphur Dell a good place or a bad place for baseball games? Explain your answer using evidence from the story.

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# Comparing and ordering decimals

Compare the decimals. Which decimal is greater?

2.2 and 3.1

0.45 and 0.6

Line them up vertically.

2.2

3.1

$3 > 2$ , so  $3.1 > 2.2$

0.45

0.60

$6 > 4$ , so  $0.6 > 0.45$

Compare the decimals. Which decimal is greater?

7.9 and 8.1

0.5 and 0.62

3.6 and 0.94

0.4 and 0.67

1.6 and 1.9

0.31 and 3.10

8.5 and 6.9

6.75 and 6.71

Find the greatest decimal.

2.9 and 2.75 and 2.6

0.97 and 1.09 and 1.3

4.9 and 3.87 and 4.75

Write the decimals in order from greatest to least.

0.33    3.1    0.3

24.95    23.9    24.5

7.5    6.95    7.58

Find the answer to each problem.

The Weather Bureau reported 5.18 inches of rain in March, 6.74 inches in April, and 5.23 inches in May. Which month had the least rainfall?

A postal worker walked 4.5 miles on Wednesday, 3.75 miles on Thursday, and 4.25 miles on Friday. Which day did she walk the farthest?

# A whale of a story



## Background knowledge

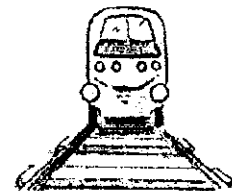
In air, sound travels more than 300 meters every second (about 750 miles per hour). In water, it travels five times faster, at about 1,500 meters every second. Whales use their vocal cords to make sounds. They also have a very good sense of hearing. The sounds that they make travel for thousands of kilometers through the oceans and can be heard by other whales far away.

## Science activity

The figures in the table on the right show how many meters sound travels every second in different materials. Use the information in the table to decide which of the statements below are true and which are false. Place a check mark (✓) beside the statements that you think are true.

Material	Speed of sound (meters per second)
Cold air	330
Warm air	350
Fresh water	1,410
Ocean water	1,540
Steel	5,060
Granite rock	6,000

- Whales in the ocean hear sounds more quickly than goldfish in a lake.
- It is easier to hear sounds in winter than in summer.
- Railway workers hear the horn of an approaching express train before they hear the vibrations it makes in the steel rails.
- You hear sounds more quickly in gases than in liquids.
- It is possible to hear sounds through rocks.



## Science investigation (Optional)

⚠ Take extra care - ask an adult to supervise you.

Using two balloons, one filled with water and the other with air, design and conduct an experiment to see if you can hear better through air or water. Make sure the balloons are the same size.

