

SECTION B (Example)

In the early days of its history, baseball was a much higher scoring game than it is today. The pitcher did not fire the ball overhand from a mound sixty feet from home plate, but threw it softly and underhand from forty feet away. If the batter hit the ball, it was up to the players in the field to get him out. There was no umpire to call balls and strikes. The batter struck out only if he swung and missed three times. But the main difference was that the game did not have a set number of innings. It went on until one team scored 21 runs. Because of the way the ball was pitched, scoring 21 runs was not difficult to achieve, so a game could be played in a relatively short time. But when pitchers got the notion to throw the ball faster, it became harder for a batter to hit it, and more difficult to score a run. Games began to last longer and longer, sometimes extending into the following day. When, in the 1850s, baseball became a professional sport, spectators did not want to pay to see a game that might not be finished by nightfall. So, in 1858, the National Association of Baseball Players decided that an appropriate length for a baseball game would be nine innings, or a game that would be over in about two and a half hours. Today, because of stoppages in play for TV commercials, and the time batters waste adjusting their clothing, their helmet, their batting gloves, and so on, a two and a half hour game is the exception, not the rule.
