

Grab your baseball hat or something else that will keep the sun out of your eyes, your sunglasses, a blanket, and a chair that isn't too hard. It's time to be a spectator. It's the season. You'll see these people, parking in the parking lot of a baseball or soccer field, opening up the back of their cars, and getting all kinds of equipment, blankets, coolers full of food and drinks, hats, gloves, newspapers. They've thought of everything. Spectating is a serious business. When a family member is involved in the sport that you watch, you don't want anything to distract you; you want to keep your eyes on the game, keep score, and not miss a thing. I made the mistake of taking my laptop to my son's game the other day; I had to do my podcast, and, I thought, while he was in the dugout (or not playing) that I could get some work done. Big mistake! I had all kinds of dirty looks coming in my direction. It is not the done thing, not kosher; it's breaking an unwritten rule. So, I won't do that again. It's interesting, you know, watching all the other spectators. Most of them sit quietly and occasionally cheer someone on, but some of them really stand out. You have the ones who are particularly loud, and yell instructions at the players, even though the coach is quite capable of doing that. You have the ones who have practically set up camp, who pass out food, chat through the whole game, and spend a lot of time setting up and packing up. And then there is always a scattering of people who have just got off work in time to see a son or daughter play; they rush to the field, coffee in hand, baseball cap firmly on their heads, nodding and saying "hi" to people here and there. It's generally a positive place, and friendly too. Everyone is enjoying themselves, even when their team is losing. I suppose it is a shared experience: the sport, the parenting; we are all in the same boat. How could I possibly think that a laptop would fit in here? I've had some good conversations with people at the ball park, and a good laugh too. It's one place in the U.S. where people can leave the rush of work, and sit and enjoy a sense of community.

### **Grammar notes.**

Related vocabulary: a cooler, serious business, the dugout, to be capable.

1. A cooler is an insulated container that keeps food cool; you generally half fill it with ice and add the food.
2. Coin collecting is serious business for my nephew.
3. The dugout is the sheltered area where the baseball players rest when they are not playing.
4. My mother is good at fixing things; she is capable of fixing her car or anyone else's.