

bio. CLASSROOM



Jackie Robinson Classroom Guide

This 1-hour BIO chronicles the life and athletic career of Jackie Robinson. While Jackie Robinson's athletic ability made him an American hero, his larger contribution to American history took place off the field in the arena of civil rights and race relations. *Jackie Robinson* explores the achievements of Jackie Robinson, both on and off the field.

Curriculum Links:

Jackie Robinson will be useful for classes on American history, African American history, sports history, civics and popular culture. It is appropriate for middle and high school students.

Vocabulary:

Using a dictionary (www.merriamwebster.com) or an encyclopedia, students may want to define or explain the significance of the following terms from this program:

- ancestry
- discrimination
- elated
- integration
- pervasive
- resilient
- skeptical
- virulent

Discussion Questions:

1. It is said that Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier. Discuss what is meant by this phrase. Does America still have a color barrier?
2. How do you think Jackie Robinson's off the field qualities influenced Branch Rickey's decision to sign him with the Brooklyn Dodgers?
3. What year did Robinson become the first African American player in Major League Baseball? What else was going on in the U.S. at the time?
4. Do you think Robinson knew that he was making history when he helped integrate baseball?
5. What impact did Jackie Robinson have on civil rights and racial intolerance? Compare Jackie Robinson's role in the civil rights movement with that of Dr. Martin Luther King.
6. Andrew Young called Jackie Robinson a gentleman athlete. What does this phrase mean? To which athlete today could this term apply?
7. Jackie Robinson said: a life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives. What impact has Jackie Robinson's life had on other lives?
8. When Jackie and Rachel Robinson sought to buy a home, they encountered racial prejudice. They were not allowed to purchase a home in certain neighborhoods. How did learning about this kind of discrimination make you feel?

Extended Activities:

1. Create a baseball card for Jackie Robinson. Instead of listing his baseball statistics, list his accomplishments in civil rights and his influence on American sports and society.
2. Create a timeline that simultaneously chronicles both Jackie Robinson's life and events in America.
3. Write a letter to the editor of the Brooklyn Eagle (a Brooklyn newspaper in circulation during Jackie Robinson's career) telling your feelings and reactions to the first game that Jackie Robinson played with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Websites:

Read more on Bio.com:

<http://www.biography.com/blackhistory/featured-biography/jackie-robinson.jsp>

Learn more about Jackie Robinson on History.com:

<http://www.history.com/topics/jackie-robinson>

Visit the Jackie Robinson Foundation online to learn about Robinson's legacy:

<http://www.jackierobinson.org/>

Books:

Herman, Gail, et al. *Who Was Jackie Robinson?* (Grosset & Dunlap, 2010).

Robinson, Jackie and Alfred Duckett. *I Never Had it Made: An Autobiography of Jackie Robinson.* (Harper Perennial, 2003).