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March 21, 2005

ATTACHMENT 5

Teaching With Documents Lesson Plan: Beyond the Playing Field - Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate

Jackie Robinson Quotes:

Baseball was just a part of my life. Thank God that I didn't allow a sport or a business or any part of my life to dominate me completely. . . . I felt that I had my time in athletics and that was it.

The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.

I don't think that I or any other Negro, as an American citizen, should have to ask for anything that is rightfully his. We are demanding that we just be given the things that are rightfully ours and that we're not looking for anything else.

I guess you'd call me an independent, since I've never identified myself with one party or another in politics. . . . I always decide my vote by taking as careful a look as I can at the actual candidates and issues themselves, no matter what the party label.

Civil rights is not by any means the only issue that concerns me—nor, I think any other Negro. As Americans, we have as much at stake in this country as anyone else. But since effective participation in a democracy is based upon enjoyment of basic freedoms that everyone else takes for granted, we need make no apologies for being especially interested in catching up on civil rights.

I won't 'have it made' until the most underprivileged Negro in Mississippi can live in equal dignity with anyone else in America.

Life is not a spectator sport. . . . If you're going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, in my opinion you're wasting your life.

It is up to us in the north to provide aid and support to those who are actually bearing the brunt of the fight for equality down south. America has its iron curtain too.

Negroes aren't seeking anything which is not good for the nation as well as ourselves. In order for America to be 100 per cent strong—economically, defensively, and morally—we cannot afford the waste of having second-and-third class citizens.

I believe in the goodness of a free society. And I believe that society can remain good only as long as we are willing to fight for it—and to fight against whatever imperfections may exist.

Activity idea: Determine which of the Jackie Robinson documents best reflects the message conveyed in each of the above quotes.

Jackie Robinson Main Page

- Telegram to the White House
August 13, 1957
- Letter to President Eisenhower
May 13, 1958
- Draft letter from Vice-President Nixon
November 4, 1960
- Letter to President Kennedy
February 9, 1961
- Telegram to President Kennedy
June 15, 1963
- Photograph

- August 28, 1963
 - o Telegram to President Johnson
March 9, 1965
- Letter to President Johnson
April 18, 1967
- Letter to the White House
April 20, 1972
- **Jackie Robinson Quotes**

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Teaching With Documents Lesson Plan: Beyond the Playing Field - Jackie Robinson, Civil Rights Advocate

Lesson Resources: Standards Correlations, Teaching Activities, Worksheets

Background

To the average man in the average American community, Jackie Robinson was just what the sports pages said he was, no more, no less. He was the first Negro to play baseball in the major leagues. Everybody knew that. . . . In remembering him, I tend to de-emphasize him as a ball player and emphasize him as an informal civil rights leader. That's the part that drops out, that people forget.



-Rachel Robinson

Jack Roosevelt Robinson (1919-72), the first black man to "officially" play in the big leagues in the 20th century, possessed enormous physical talent and a fierce determination to succeed. In the course of a distinguished 10-year career beginning in 1947, Robinson led the Brooklyn Dodgers to six National League titles and one victorious World Series. Beyond his many and stellar baseball feats, Jackie Robinson went on to champion the cause of civil rights when he retired from the game.

The National Archives and Records Administration holds numerous records relating to Jackie Robinson, many of which pertain to his period of civil rights advocacy. Several belonging to that time have been reproduced here for educators teaching courses that involve civil rights events and issues, character education, and effective citizenship skills.

Above: Jackie Robinson, undated, Records of the United States Information Agency, Record Group 306 (306-PS-50-4730), is available from the [Still Pictures Branch](#) at the National Archives at College Park, MD.

The Documents

1. [Telegram to the White House](#)
August 13, 1957
2. [Letter to President Eisenhower](#)
May 13, 1958
3. [Draft letter from Vice-President Nixon](#)
November 4, 1960
4. [Letter to President Kennedy](#)
February 9, 1961
5. [Telegram to President Kennedy](#)
June 15, 1963
6. [Photograph](#)
August 28, 1963
7. [Telegram to President Johnson](#)
March 9, 1965
8. [Letter to President Johnson](#)
April 18, 1967
9. [Letter to the White House](#)
April 20, 1972

[Jackie Robinson Quotes](#)

Lesson Resources

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Standards Correlations

Teaching Activities: Civil Rights History

Teaching Activities: Character Education

Teaching Activities: Civic Responsibility

Document Analysis Worksheet

Photograph Analysis Worksheet

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