
Author

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Name of Unit

Sports Shape Society

Students Learn How Sports Have Played a Beneficial Role in the Evolution of Civil Rights and Contributed to “Leveling the Playing Field” for Disenfranchised Groups in the United States

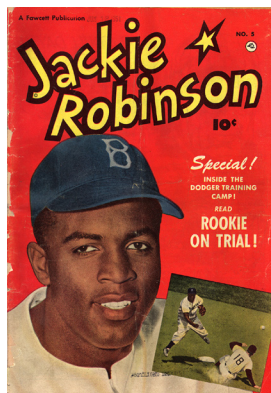
Suggested Grade Level(s)

8/Adaptable 7–12

Suggested Subject Area(s)

English/Social Studies

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Americans with Disabilities**Breaking the Color Barrier****Baseball Behind Barbed Wire****Babe Didrikson Zaharias**

Unit Map

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Number of Class Periods Required

12–14 class periods

Essential Question

- How do sports shape society?

Guiding Questions

Lesson 1: Baseball Therapy

- How did baseball help Japanese Americans cope with life in the World War II concentration camps?
- How did baseball competition affect the perceptions of non-Japanese Americans about Japanese Americans?
- How does physical activity affect psychological well-being?

Lesson 2: Baseball Leads the Way

- How can sports figures use their fame to improve our nation?
- What influences in Jackie Robinson’s life led him to confront discrimination?
- How did Jackie Robinson influence the Civil Rights Movement?

Lesson 3: Disabled? Still Able

- How are sports used for physical and psychological rehabilitation?
- How has our government assisted disabled Americans in securing healthier lives and more freedom?
- What challenges did people with disabilities have to face in order to gain their full rights?

Lesson 4: IX Women

- How has Title IX affected today’s women?
- What are physical benefits of sports participation for women?
- How does our society benefit from sports participation for girls and women?

Teacher Overview

This unit is intended for an English/Language Arts class. Ideally, this unit would be taught with a thematic/cross curricular approach in conjunction with a Social Studies class. Most of the lessons require a computer lab setting with Internet access. In classrooms without computers, some of the information from the Internet sites would need to be printed and used in a hardcopy format.

The unit could be adapted to shorten the number of classroom days needed if some of the activities are assigned as homework. Each of the four lessons could be taught intact as stand alone lessons. Taught together, the four lessons comprise a comprehensive survey of the beneficial role sports has played in the championing of civil rights in the United States. The lessons focus on the plight of specific disenfranchised groups during critical chapters in America’s civil rights history: 1) the Japanese Americans during World War II, 2) the continued post-World War II segregation of African Americans, 3) Americans with Disabilities and the Disability Rights Movement of the 1980’s, and 4) Women and the Equal Rights Movement of the 1970’s. If faced with time constraints,



some of the lesson activities could be scaled back per teacher discretion.

While not a major focus of this unit, the lesson resources could be used for intensive vocabulary development. Health and Technology standards are incorporated throughout all four lessons in this unit. Lesson 4, about women in sports and Title IX, targets a Math standard.

The culminating assessment for the entire unit is a Five Paragraph Expository Essay evaluated within the framework of the Six Traits of Writing. One of the lessons could be omitted and the framework for a five-paragraph essay would still be intact.

A Note on Terminology

The words and phrase used to describe this history vary considerably amongst scholars, government officials, and even those directly affected by Executive Order 9066: “relocation,” “evacuation,” “incarceration,” “internment,” “concentration camp.” There is no general agreement about what is most accurate or fair.

Officially, the camps were called “relocation centers.” Many now acknowledge that “relocation center” and “evacuation” are euphemisms used purposefully by the government to downplay the significance of its actions.

America’s concentration camps are clearly distinguishable from Nazi Germany’s torture and death camps. It is difficult to accept the term “concentration camp” because of the term’s associations with the Holocaust. This educational material uses “concentration camp” not in an effort to bear comparisons to the atrocities of the Holocaust, but to express the veritable magnitude of what was done to Japanese Americans.

It is an unequivocal fact that the government itself, including the President, used the term “concentration camp” during World War II in speeches and written documents. It is also crucial to note that a “concentration camp” is defined broadly as a place where people are imprisoned not because they are guilty of any crimes, but simply because of who they are. Many groups have been singled out for such persecution throughout history, with the term “concentration camp” first used at the turn of the twentieth century in the Spanish-American and Boer wars.

Despite some differences, all concentration camps have one thing in common: People in power remove a minority group from the general population, and the rest of society lets it happen.

