

# Discover America

## Course 15 - Teacher Guide



## Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Baseball

# Table of **Contents**

3	<b>Themes + Values</b>
4	<b>Learning Objectives</b>
5	<b>Introduction</b>
6	<b>Key Terms</b>
7	<b>Lesson Guide</b>
10	<b>Flash Cards</b>
13	<b>Baseball Review Game</b>
21	<b>Assessment</b>
23	<b>Resources</b>
24	<b>Notes</b>

4th Grade

# Teacher Guide



## Key Themes

- Bravery
- Perseverance
- Breaking Barriers

## Core Values

- Liberty
- Community
- Life

# Learning Objectives

## Students will be able to:

- Explain why Jackie Robinson is remembered in American History
- Describe the impact Jackie Robinson had on Major League Baseball and other American sports
- Outline the challenges Jackie Robinson faced and tell how he was able to overcome those challenges



# Jackie Robinson - 4th Grade

# Introduction

## **ASK** Students

Who is your favorite athlete? Why?

What makes them someone you admire?  
(allow students to respond)

In this lesson we will be learning about a very famous athlete who was known for something that is probably different from what you admire about your favorite athlete. This athlete is known for more than just his incredible baseball talent. Jackie Robinson is known for being the first Black baseball player allowed to join a Major League Baseball team. That's right, there was a time when only White Americans could play in the Major Leagues. His courage, talent, and determination helped pave the way for other African American athletes to play on major teams in other sports across the United States.

## **WATCH**

Learn More with Liberty



Scan Me!

# Jackie Robinson - 4th Grade

## Key Terms

- 01 **Major League** - top tier baseball group of teams who play against each other
- 02 **Exclusion** - being left out or kept out on purpose
- 03 **Jackie Robinson** - the first African American to play in Major League Baseball in the modern era
- 04 **Integrate** - combine or unite together
- 05 **Debut** - first public appearance
- 06 **Segregation** - separation of Black and White Americans
- 07 **Prejudice** - thinking another person is "less than" because of a certain quality or characteristic, such as skin color, religious beliefs, or gender
- 08 **Rookie** - an athlete who has never played on a professional sports team before
- 09 **Discrimination** - making a decision for or against someone based on the group or class that person belongs to rather than the individual themselves
- 10 **Inducted** - to be brought in as a member

# Jackie Robinson - 4th Grade

# Lesson Guide

## TELL Students

Life after the Civil War did not solve all the problems that Black Americans were facing. Prejudice was still high and discrimination was very present in our country. There were even laws passed specifically designed to limit opportunities for Blacks and keep them separate from Whites.

Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in Major League Baseball in the modern era, was born during this dangerous time on January 31, 1919 in Cairo, Georgia. Shortly after Jackie was born, his father abandoned the family and his mother moved Jackie and his four older siblings to Pasadena, California, where she raised them on her own as a single mother.

Jackie and his family were poor, and as the only black family living on their block, faced prejudice and exclusion because of the color of their skin. Yet despite resistance, Jackie worked hard and became an exceptional athlete, playing on his high school's varsity baseball, basketball, football, and track teams. If you play sports, whether on a team or on the field at recess, you know that being an athlete requires dedication, courage, discipline, selflessness, and physical and mental toughness. Jackie developed all of these qualities throughout his life.

# Jackie Robinson - 4th Grade

# Lesson Guide

## TELL Students

While Jackie was playing baseball for the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro League in 1945, Brooklyn Dodgers executive Branch Rickey was searching for a Black player with both talent and guts to join Major League Baseball, which at the time, unofficially banned Black players. There had not been a Black player in the major leagues since 1889.

Rickey was looking for a player to integrate the MLB who would “turn the other cheek” when facing taunts, abuse, and threats. While Rickey was interviewing Jackie for the job in August 1945, Robinson reportedly asked, “Are you looking for a Negro who is afraid to fight back?” Rickey is said to have replied that he was looking for someone “with guts enough not to fight back.”

Jackie got the job and played for the Dodgers’ farm team, the Royals, in 1946. He did so well that he was called up to the Dodgers the next season.

On April 15, 1947, Jackie made his National League debut as a first baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers and broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball. Jackie was on the receiving end of taunts, slurs, death threats, and hate mail, and while traveling with the team, had to navigate segregation laws. But Jackie endured and earned the respect of supporters, friends, and teammates, such as Dodgers shortstop, Pee Wee Reese.



# Jackie Robinson - 4th Grade

# Lesson Guide

## TELL Students

Jackie's talent spoke for itself. In his rookie season, Jackie hit 12 home runs, had a .297 batting average, led the league with 29 steals, and was named the National League Rookie of the Year. In 1949, he became the first Black player to win the National League Most Valuable Player Award, was an All-Star every year from 1949-1954, and led the Brooklyn Dodgers to victory in the 1955 World Series against the New York Yankees.

After winning the World Series, Jackie retired and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. As Roger Craig, Jackie's former Dodger teammate said, "I think a lot of people think he got in the Hall of Fame because he was the first." However, Jackie's induction was not a recognition of his skin color, but of his talent. As Craig confirmed, "He was a great, great ballplayer. He could've done anything he wanted to."

To honor the barriers that Jackie broke down, in 1997, his number was retired by all big-league teams. Every April 15, the anniversary of Jackie's first game in the Major Leagues, is now known as Jackie Robinson Day and all players and personnel wear his number 42 on their jerseys. Jackie is remembered in American History for his courage to stand up for equal opportunities for Black Americans.

# Flash Cards



**JACKIE  
ROBINSON**

the first African  
American to play  
in Major League  
Baseball in the  
modern era

**SEGREGATION**

separation of  
Black and  
White  
Americans

**INDUCTED**

to be brought in  
as a member



## **DISCRIMINATION**

making a decision for or against someone based on the group or class that person belongs to rather than the individual themselves

## **MAJOR LEAGUE**

top tier baseball group of teams who play against each other

## **DEBUT**

first public appearance

## **PREJUDICE**

thinking another person is "less than" because of a certain quality or characteristic, such as skin color, religious beliefs, or gender



**ROOKIE**

an athlete who has never played on a professional sports team before

**EXCLUSION**

being left out or kept out on purpose

**INTEGRATE**

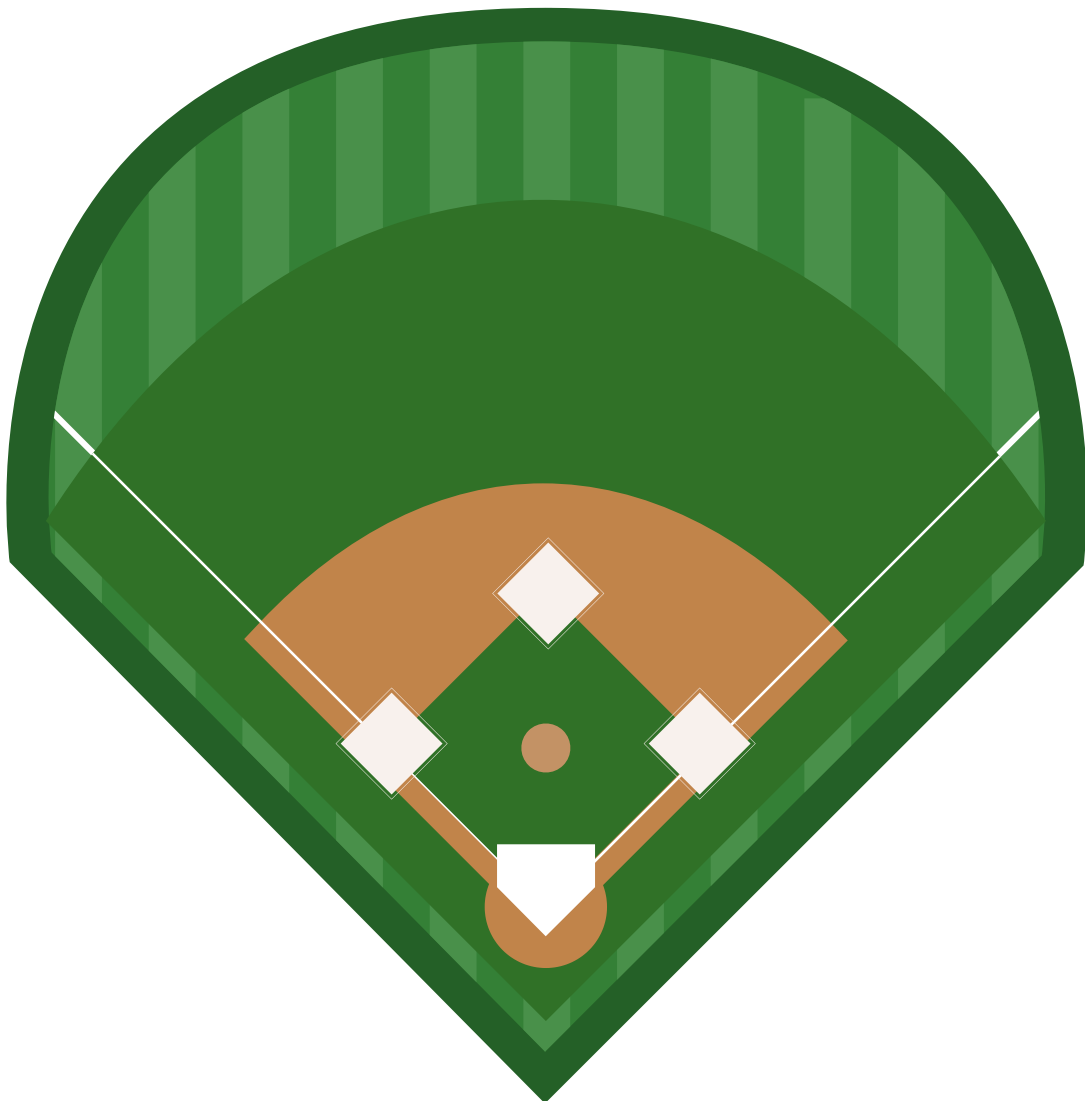
combine or unite together

# Jackie Robinson Baseball Review Game

**Materials:** game board, deck of questions, game piece, timer

**Directions:** Start your game piece on home plate. Have your partner get the deck of questions and start the one minute timer. Every time you answer a question correctly, move one "base" around the baseball diamond and give yourself 1 point. Once you go around the board back to home plate, give yourself 5 points. After one minute is up, switch roles with your partner. Repeat the process with your partner's game piece beginning on home plate. Play three rounds taking turns each time the timer is up.

**Whoever has the most points at the end of three rounds wins!!**



Jackie Robinson

# Baseball Review Game



A light gray baseball with red stitching is centered within a white rounded square, which is itself inside a dark blue square frame.

Who was the first African American  
to play in Major League Baseball  
in the modern era?

**JACKIE ROBINSON**

baseball review game

A small black icon of a pair of scissors is positioned on the left side of a horizontal dashed line that spans the width of the page.

Where was Jackie Robinson born?

**CAIRO, GEORGIA**

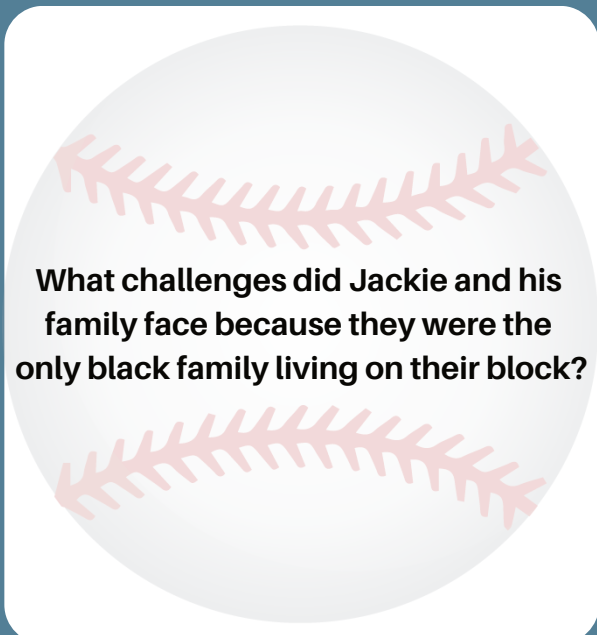
baseball review game

A stylized illustration of a baseball with red stitching on a light gray background, centered within a white rounded square.

When was Jackie Robinson born?

**JANUARY 31, 1919**

baseball review game

A stylized illustration of a baseball with red stitching on a light gray background, centered within a white rounded square.

What challenges did Jackie and his family face because they were the only black family living on their block?

**PREJUDICE + EXCLUSION**

baseball review game







In what year did Jackie  
join the Negro League?

**1945**

baseball review game



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Jackie played baseball for what  
team in the Negro League?

**KANSAS CITY MONARCHS**

baseball review game

A stylized illustration of a baseball with red stitching on a light gray background, centered within a white rounded square.

When did Jackie make his  
National League debut?

**APRIL 15, 1947**

baseball review game

A stylized illustration of a baseball with red stitching on a light gray background, centered within a white rounded square.

Branch Rickey was looking  
for a player to do what to the MLB?

**INTEGRATE**

baseball review game



A white baseball with red stitching is centered in a white rounded square, which is set against a dark blue background.

What MLB team did Jackie play for?

**BROOKLYN DODGERS**

baseball review game

A small black icon of a pair of scissors is positioned on the left side of a horizontal dashed line that spans the width of the page.

What position did Jackie play in MLB?

**FIRST BASEMAN**

baseball review game



Why is Jackie Robinson important in American History?

baseball review game



**BREAKING THE COLOR BARRIER IN MLB**



After winning the World Series, Jackie retired and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in what year?

baseball review game



**1962**

# Jackie Robinson - 4th Grade Assessment

Use the words from the word bank to complete the facts below.

prejudice	integrate	Negro League	inducted	1962
April 22, 1987	intersect	Kansas City Monarchs	April 15, 1947	Major League
1975	Jackie Robinson	Brooklyn Dodgers	January 31, 1919	New York Yankees

- \_\_\_\_\_ was the first African American to play in \_\_\_\_\_ Baseball in the modern era.
- He was born on \_\_\_\_\_ in Cairo, Georgia.
- On \_\_\_\_\_, Jackie made his National League debut as a first baseman for the \_\_\_\_\_ and broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball.
- Jackie and his family were the only black family living on their block so they faced \_\_\_\_\_ and exclusion because of the color of their skin.
- Jackie played baseball for the \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ in 1945.
- Branch Rickey was looking for a player to \_\_\_\_\_ the MLB.
- Jackie led the Brooklyn Dodgers to victory in the 1955 World Series against the \_\_\_\_\_.
- After winning the World Series, Jackie retired and was \_\_\_\_\_ into the Baseball Hall of Fame in \_\_\_\_\_.

# Jackie Robinson - 4th Grade Assessment Key

Use the words from the word bank to complete the facts below.

prejudice	integrate	Negro League	inducted	1962
April 22, 1987	intersect	Kansas City Monarchs	April 15, 1947	Major League
1975	Jackie Robinson	Brooklyn Dodgers	January 31, 1919	New York Yankees

1. Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play in Major League Baseball in the modern era.
2. He was born on January 31, 1919 in Cairo, Georgia.
3. On April 15, 1947, Jackie made his National League debut as a first baseman for the Brooklyn Dodgers and broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball.
4. Jackie and his family were the only black family living on their block so they faced prejudice and exclusion because of the color of their skin.
5. Jackie played baseball for the Kansas City Monarchs in the Negro League in 1945.
6. Branch Rickey was looking for a player to integrate the MLB.
7. Jackie led the Brooklyn Dodgers to victory in the 1955 World Series against the New York Yankees.
8. After winning the World Series, Jackie retired and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

# Jackie Robinson

# Resource List

- 01 <https://jackierobinson.com/biography/>
- 02 <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/jackie-robinson>
- 03 <https://baseballhall.org/hall-of-famers/robinson-jackie>
- 04 <https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/jim-crow-laws>
- 05 <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/freedom-riders-jim-crow-laws/>
- 06 <https://www.mlb.com/mlb-community/jackie-robinson-day>
- 07 <https://www.nydailynews.com/sports/baseball/robinson-jack-trades-article-1.1315884>
- 08 <https://baseballhall.org/civilrights>
- 09 <https://jackierobinson.com/achievements/>
- 10 <https://www.mlb.com/phillies/community/educational-programs/uya-negro-league/african-american-players-banned>

