

# Jackie Robinson

## CONNECTIONS

### Literature Connection—*Jackie's Bat* by Marybeth Lorbiecki

*Jackie's Bat* tells the story of Jackie Robinson through the eyes of a young batboy. The book and the script introduce students to Jackie Robinson and his great success both as a baseball player and as an African American who paved the way for other African Americans in sports. It addresses the important role he played in furthering civil rights for his community.

### Content Connection—Social Studies

*Jackie Robinson* teaches children about his life as a baseball player. The story demonstrates the importance of individual action and character and explains how heroes have made a difference in others' lives.

## OBJECTIVE

Students will summarize information in texts (e.g., includes the main idea and significant supporting details of a reading selection).

## VOCABULARY

1. Introduce the key vocabulary words from the script. Write each word on the board.
2. Describe the meaning of each word and point out its use in the script. Show pictures that represent the meaning of each word if you have them.
3. Ask students to help you write a short story, using all six vocabulary words. Write the story on chart paper.
  - **contract**—a legal agreement between two or more people
  - **historical**—important or famous in history
  - **lieutenant**—an officer in the army
  - **international**—when two or more countries around the world are involved in something
  - **professional**—a person who is an expert at his or her work

## BEFORE THE READER'S THEATER

1. Read the title of the script and discuss with the class a little about Jackie Robinson. Briefly explain who he was and his significance in history.
2. Introduce the Box Summary graphic organizer (page 93 or boxsummary.pdf).
3. Read the script aloud, modeling appropriate reading strategies while you read. To help build fluency and comprehension, it is important for students to hear the script read aloud before practicing on their own.

# Jackie Robinson *(cont.)*

## DURING THE READER'S THEATER

1. Split the class into groups of six to read and practice the script. As students read, encourage them to consider how Jackie Robinson's experiences remind them of their own lives.
2. Students need to decide which character they will play and then highlight their parts in the script (Readers 1–6). They should also mark with a star any places where they need to pause while reading.
3. Give students a few minutes to practice reading with expression in their voices. Additionally, students may decide on a few props or materials to use during their reading. They need to use materials that can be easily acquired or assembled in the classroom.
4. After they have finished practicing, have each group perform the reader's theater for the rest of the class. You may also want them to perform for another class.

## AFTER THE READER'S THEATER

1. As a class, complete the Box Summary graphic organizer. You may want to begin by filling in the key words from the script.
2. Students should brainstorm a list of other possible people who have faced and overcome adversity. Then have students conduct an Internet search for more information about these other people.
3. In groups, have students create a poster about another person who has faced adversity and have them tell the story of the person they chose to investigate.

## RESPONSE QUESTIONS

### Group Discussion Questions

- How did Jackie Robinson contribute to the game of baseball?
- What role did he play in helping African Americans to play professional sports?
- What is the theme or lesson taught by reading this selection? (Suggested answers: Even when things get tough and people are against you, it's important to fight for what you believe is right, or one person can make a difference)

### Written Response Question

- What kind of person do you think Jackie Robinson was? Why do you think so?

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Box Summary


# Jackie Robinson

By Lisa Zamosky

A reader's theater with six parts



**Reader 1:** Jack Roosevelt Robinson was born in 1919 in Cairo, Georgia.

**Reader 5:** People called him Jackie.

**Reader 4:** From a young age, Jackie learned that life wasn't easy.

**Reader 3:** His father left the family when Jackie was a baby.

**Reader 2:** When his father left, the family moved to Pasadena, California.

**Reader 1:** Jackie lived with his mother and his four brothers and sisters.

**Reader 6:** His mother found work as a maid. This is how she fed her family.

**Reader 4:** After finishing high school, Jackie went to college.

**Reader 3:** He went to the University of California at Los Angeles. People call the school UCLA for short.

**Jackie Robinson** (cont.)

**Reader 1:** At UCLA, he played basketball, baseball, football, and competed in track and field.

**Reader 2:** He had to quit school during his third year at UCLA.

**Reader 5:** His family needed his help. He needed to work to make money to support them.

**Reader 3:** He played professional football for the Los Angeles Bulldogs. This gave him the money he needed to help his mother, brothers, and sisters.

**Reader 4:** In 1942, America was at war. Jackie joined the army to fight in World War II.

**Reader 6:** He tried to go to school at the Officers' Candidate School.

**All:** They wouldn't let him in the school because he was African American.

**Reader 1:** Jackie argued against this. He told the army that it wasn't right to keep him out of school for being African American.

**Reader 3:** Jackie won his fight. When he left the army, he was a lieutenant.

**Jackie Robinson** (cont.)

**Reader 4:** After leaving the army, Jackie was given the chance to play on a professional baseball team.

**Reader 2:** In 1945, he signed a contract to play ball for the Montreal Royals.

**Reader 1:** This was an international baseball league.

**Reader 6:** The team trained for the season in the South. Jackie ran into a lot of trouble there.

**Reader 5:** African Americans were not being treated well at that time. The South was a very hard place for them to live.

**All:** But Jackie fought back by being the best.

**Reader 1:** Two years in a row he hit the baseball more than any other player in the league.

**Reader 2:** Jackie became known as a great baseball player.

**Reader 6:** In 1947, he was called up to play in the major leagues. He would play ball for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

**Reader 4:** This was the most historical event in baseball.

## Jackie Robinson (cont.)

**Reader 1:** Jackie Robinson was the very first African American to play baseball in the major leagues.

**Reader 3:** People all over the country were surprised. Many were angry that an African American was playing in the major leagues.

**Reader 6:** Jackie's first year with the Dodgers was very hard.

**Reader 2:** Fans and other baseball players teased him while he played.

**Reader 1:** Jackie kept playing hard and doing the best he could.

**Readers 3:** He didn't fight with the people who were mean to him. He showed everyone that he belonged by playing his best.

**Reader 5:** In 1949, he won the National League's Most Valuable Player award.

**Reader 4:** Jackie was a fighter. But, he never fought with the people who tried to hurt him.

**Reader 1:** Jackie wanted to show people that he belonged in baseball just as much as any white player.

**Jackie Robinson** *(cont.)*

**Reader 5:** Jackie played with the Brooklyn Dodgers for the rest of his baseball career.

**Reader 4:** He set many team and league records. In 1962, he was put into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

**Reader 2:** Jackie decided to quit baseball after 10 years.

**Reader 3:** He became a businessman. He also kept fighting for the rights of African Americans.

**Reader 5:** Jackie died in 1972. He was only 53 years old.

**Reader 1:** After he died, his wife started the Jackie Robinson Foundation.

**Reader 3:** The Foundation gives African American students money to go to college.

**Reader 6:** Jackie Robinson was a great man.

**Reader 6:** He did so much to make the lives of black people better.

**Reader 4:** And he will always be remembered as one of the greatest baseball players of all time.