


TO
CHANGE
THE GAME,
YOU HAVE
TO STEP UP
TO THE
PLATE

JACKIE ROBINSON | A Resource for Families & School Groups

The Jackie Robinson
Foundation



**“A LIFE IS NOT IMPORTANT
EXCEPT IN THE IMPACT IT
HAS ON OTHER LIVES.”**

—JACKIE ROBINSON

Barrier breaker. Freedom rider. Globe changer.

You know the name, and his game. But did you know that Jackie Robinson was a civil rights icon? Did you know that he stood up against racism and injustice of all kinds, that he worked to create social and economic opportunities for African Americans, and that he believed that all citizens should actively participate in our American democracy?

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson broke through a major barrier in American society when he became the first African American to play for a major league baseball team, the Brooklyn Dodgers. Since baseball was one of the most popular forms of entertainment in 1947, all of society watched as Robinson's heroism paved the way for other people of color to achieve new heights.

Throughout his life, even before his baseball career, Jackie Robinson stood up for social justice and fair treatment for all. He was married in 1946 and, though he and his beloved wife Rachel continued to face racism at every turn, his activism and the example they set led to positive change that still impacts and inspires us today.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Jackie Robinson believed that “the right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.” He lived his life—as an athlete, activist, patriot, entrepreneur, and family man—according to that firm belief. 100 years after Robinson's birth, social injustice and inequality remain urgent issues. Highlighting major events in his life and the values by which he lived, along with those of his wife, who shared and continued his work after his death, this guide is meant to encourage open dialogue about historic and current events by using Robinson's life and legacy as a starting point.

It is hoped that students, teachers, and parents will explore this guide together, and use the questions at the end to discuss what social justice, equal opportunity, and responsible citizenship mean, and should mean, to you.

We hope you will visit the Jackie Robinson Museum in New York City and online, where you can experience exhibits, artifacts and interactive activities. No matter your age, you will engage in a thrilling first-hand look into the life and lessons of Jackie Robinson, an American hero.

JAN 31, 1919

Jackie Robinson is born

Jack Roosevelt Robinson is born to Jerry and Mallie Robinson in Cairo, Georgia.



JUN 1, 1920

Move to Pasadena, California

After a journey that began on May 21, 1920, Mallie Robinson and her five children, including one-year-old Jackie, arrive in Pasadena.

JUL 19, 1922

Rachel Isum is born

Jackie's future wife, Rachel, is born to Charles and Zelle Isum in Los Angeles, California.

SPRING 1936

Star high school athlete

At John Muir Technical High School, Jackie Robinson earns a place on the annual Pomona Tournament All-Star baseball team; wins the Southland Class A long-jump title with a 23', 1" leap; and captures the junior boys' singles championship in the annual Pacific Coast Negro Tennis Tournament.



FEB 1, 1937

Pasadena Junior College

Jackie Robinson enrolls in Pasadena Junior College, where he continues to be a star athlete.



FEB 15, 1939

Enrolling at UCLA

While at UCLA, Jackie Robinson excels and letters in football, basketball, track, and baseball, still the only athlete in UCLA's history to have lettered in four sports. He leaves school in his senior year to get a job as Assistant Athletic Director at the National Youth Administration, and helps his mother support the family.

JAN, 1938

Reverend Karl Downs

Reverend Downs, an activist preacher, moves to Pasadena where he meets Robinson and mentors him during adolescence, becoming a key figure in Robinson's life.

SEP 1, 1940

Jackie Robinson & Rachel Isum meet

The two are introduced by Ray Bartlett on the UCLA campus, when Jackie is a senior and Rachel is a freshman.



APR 3, 1942

Jackie is drafted into the Army

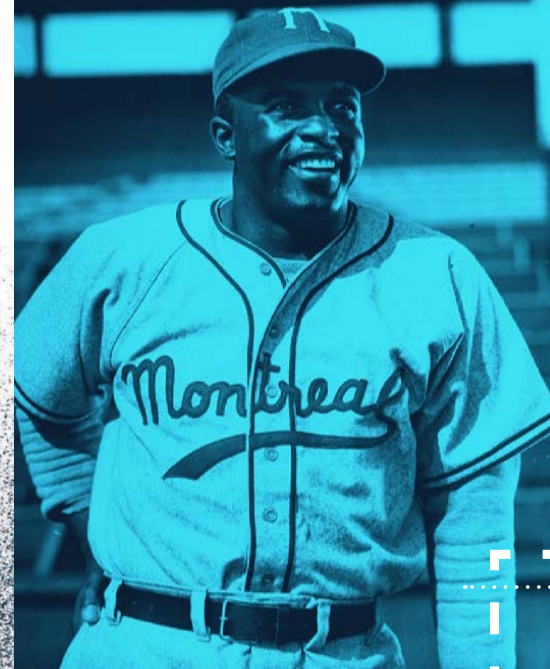
Drafted into the segregated United States Army, Jackie Robinson befriends prizefighter Joe Louis. At Fort Riley, they work together to challenge the Army to include African-American soldiers in Officer Candidate School (OCS), after which Robinson is accepted into OCS and commissioned a second lieutenant.



AUG 2, 1944

Jackie is arrested, and later acquitted

Arrested by military police at Fort Hood, Texas, for sitting in the front of an Army bus next to a fair-skinned black woman who was thought to be white, Jackie Robinson defended himself against the court martial and was found *not* guilty of all charges. He was honorably discharged in 1944 after an ankle injury.



SPRING 1945

Joining the Monarchs

Jackie Robinson joins the Kansas City Monarchs baseball team, a Negro Leagues team.

The Negro Leagues was a professional baseball league made up mostly of African-American athletes who were forbidden from playing on the segregated major league teams.

JUN 1, 1945

Rachel Isum graduates from UCLA

Rachel Isum graduates with honors from UCLA with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing.

OCT 23, 1945

The Montreal Royals

Branch Rickey, the president and general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team, signs Jackie Robinson to play with the Royals, the Brooklyn Dodgers' farm team. Rickey learned about Robinson's ability from baseball scouts and from Wendell Smith, an African-American sports reporter for the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

A farm team is a minor-league team affiliated with a major league baseball club. Many professional players begin their careers with a farm team before getting called up to the affiliated major league team, and major league players often spend time training with a minor league team after suffering an injury.

FEB 10, 1946

Jackie Robinson and Rachel Isum marry

The two are married by Reverend Downs in Los Angeles.





OCT 4, 1946

Little World Series

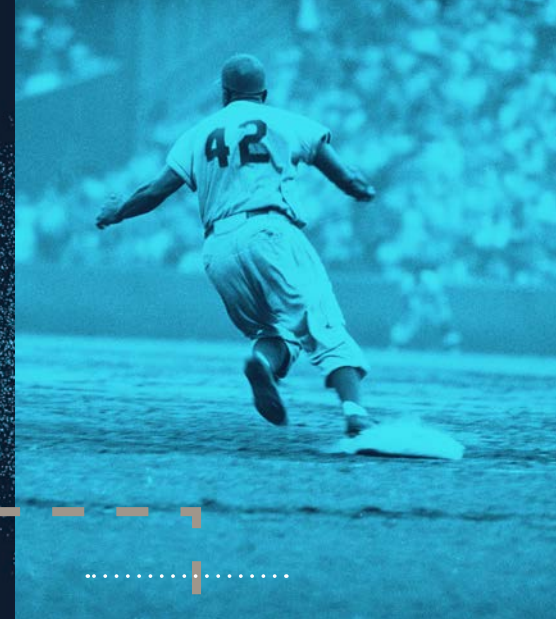
The Montreal Royals win the Little World Series at the end of Jackie Robinson's debut year in professional baseball.

The Little World Series was the championship game played between the two best minor league baseball teams.

APR 15, 1947

Breaking the color barrier

After signing a contract five days earlier, Jackie Robinson takes first base on Ebbets Field to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers, becoming the first African American in modern baseball history to play for a major league baseball team.



NOV 1, 1948

YMCA in Harlem

After concluding their barnstorming tour, Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella report for duty as coaches and counselors in the Boy's Work Department of the Harlem YMCA in New York City.

At this time, many professional American athletes held jobs during baseball's off-season to support their families. Some players earned money doing "barnstorming" tours—teams of ballplayers traveling across the U.S., and sometimes Central America, playing exhibition games.

JUL 12, 1949

All-Star Game

Jackie Robinson is the National League's starting second baseman in the MLB All-Star game, the first to feature African-American players. Other African Americans who played that year were his Dodgers teammates, catcher Roy Campanella and pitcher Don Newcombe, and the American League's first African-American player, Larry Doby, who played for the Cleveland Indians.

OCT 4, 1946

Little World Series

The Montreal Royals win the Little World Series at the end of Jackie Robinson's debut year in professional baseball.

The Little World Series was the championship game played between the two best minor league baseball teams.

NOV 18, 1946

Jackie Jr. is born

Jack Roosevelt Robinson, Jr., the first child of Rachel and Jackie Robinson, is born.

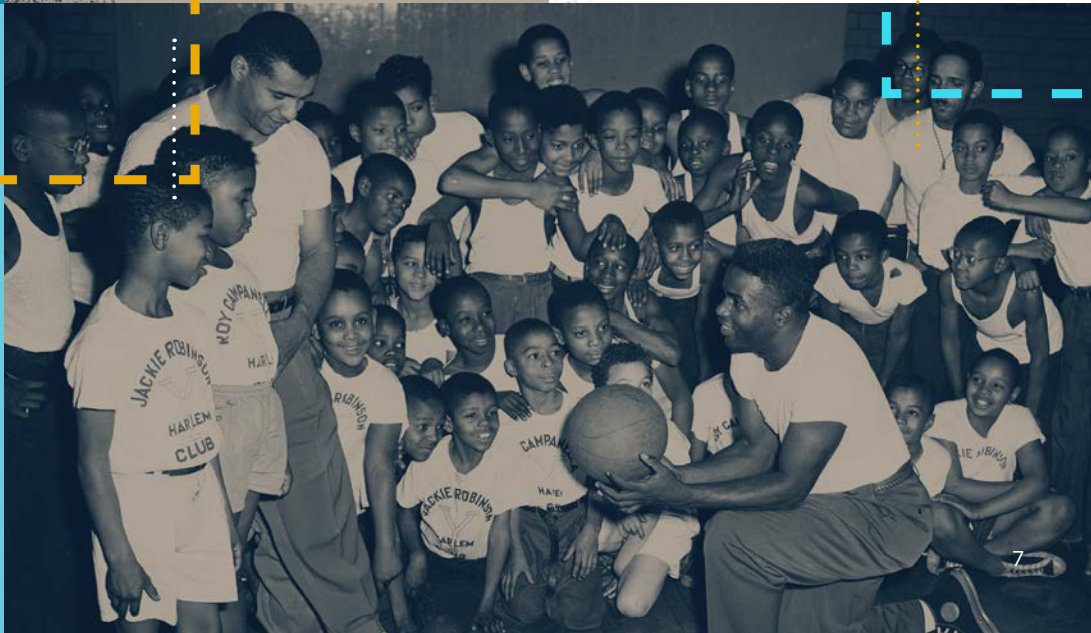


SEP 26, 1947

Rookie of the Year

Sporting News awards Jackie Robinson the first-ever "Rookie of the Year Award," which is renamed the "Jackie Robinson Rookie of the Year Award" in 1987.

By the end of his rookie year as a Brooklyn Dodger, Jackie Robinson had 12 home runs, a .297 batting average, and led the league in steals, with 29. He distinguished himself throughout his decade-long career, with an impressive .311 career batting average.





FALL 1949
Named National League MVP
Jackie Robinson is named the MLB National League's Most Valuable Player.

JUL 18, 1949
House Un-American Activities Committee testimony
Jackie Robinson testifies before the U.S. House of Representatives' Un-American Activities Committee on whether African-American soldiers should fight in the military against communist countries. Robinson publicly disagrees with Paul Robeson, the renowned African-American concert artist, actor and star athlete, who is against fighting the communists to defend the United States government and its policies, which discriminate against people of color.

"DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU. WHAT HE CAME UP AGAINST, AND WHAT WE ALL CAME UP AGAINST, WAS VERY, VERY ROUGH."

- RACHEL ROBINSON

JAN 13, 1950
Sharon Robinson is born
Sharon Annetta Robinson, the second child and only daughter of Rachel and Jackie Robinson, is born.

ROBINSON
WE ARE GOING
TO KILL YOU
IF YOU ATTEMPT
TO ENTER A
BALL GAME AT
CROSLY FIELD
THE TRAVELERS

MAY 21, 1951
Death threat
Arriving at a hotel in Cincinnati, Jackie Robinson finds two FBI agents waiting for him because of a letter containing a death threat against him—just one of a vast number of racist actions he faced on a daily basis. With the support of his teammates, Robinson decides to play that day anyway.



FEB 4, 1952
Broadcast career
WNBC and WNBT announce that they have signed Jackie Robinson as Director of Community Activities, to deliver commentary on air and to supervise the development of youth programs in collaboration with the Police Athletic League (PAL), the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), the Boy Scouts, the YMCA, and the YMHA.

MAY 14, 1952
David Robinson is born
David, the youngest child of Rachel and Jackie Robinson, is born.

"JACK AND I FINALLY FELT CONNECTED TO SOMETHING LARGER THAN [OUR] STRUGGLES IN BASEBALL. [AND WERE] MORE INTENSELY CONNECTED TO THE DESTINY OF OUR RACE."

- RACHEL ROBINSON, ON THE LANDMARK 1954 BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION SUPREME COURT DECISION

The 1954 landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* continues to positively impact all of society. The justices ruled unanimously that "racial segregation of children in public schools is unconstitutional." The *Brown* decision was a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement.

SEP 28, 1955

"He's safe!"

Jackie Robinson steals home plate in game one of the 1955 World Series, creating great team momentum. The Brooklyn Dodgers win the series in seven games, earning the Dodgers their first World Championship.

Jackie Robinson's history-making achievements in baseball were only part of his extraordinary life and legacy. His athleticism and performance as a major league player became a platform that allowed him to invite all of America into a conversation that would impact almost every facet of our society. Throughout his years as a corporate executive, civil servant, and major figure in national politics, he would continue to be an outspoken leader for civil and human rights issues.



DEC 8, 1956

Spingarn Medal

The **National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)** announces that Jackie Robinson will receive its highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, given annually to an African American whose achievements brought credit to the race.

The NAACP is a civil rights organization founded in 1909 to advance equal rights and justice for African Americans. It remains an active, important organization.

OCT 1956

Brooklyn Dodgers' Goodwill Tour

Jackie and Rachel Robinson visit Japan with the Brooklyn Dodgers for a twenty-game tour to support United States diplomatic and cultural relations after World War II.

JAN 14, 1957

Career change

The Brooklyn Dodgers trade Jackie Robinson to the New York Giants, but Robinson had already decided to retire from baseball and publicly announces that he will become Vice President of Personnel Relations for the Chock full o' Nuts corporation. While there, Robinson chairs the NAACP's Fight for Freedom Fund, which raises money to fight for equal rights for people of color, and he convinces the company to support those efforts.

1957

Fundraising for Dr. King

In addition to raising funds for the NAACP, Jackie Robinson travels extensively in 1957 to raise funds for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)** organization, which defends equal rights for people of color.

Formed in 1957 after the Montgomery Bus Boycott, SCLC's mission was to end all forms of segregation. Today, the organization remains focused on economic justice and civil rights for people of color.



OCT 17, 1957

Little Rock 9

With the situation in Little Rock far from resolved, Jackie Robinson joins members of the NAACP in New York for a telephone conversation with Daisy Bates and seven of the nine children who had integrated Central High, to provide encouragement for their efforts.



FALL 1960

President Nixon and Dr. King

To campaign for Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon, Jackie Robinson takes a leave of absence from Chock full o’Nuts until the presidential election in November. When a hostile judge in De Kalb County, Georgia sentences Dr. King to four months in jail, Robinson appeals to the Nixon campaign for a direct show of support for the civil rights leader. Nixon refuses. Robinson responds, saying, “Nixon doesn’t deserve to win.”

Following the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision, a group of nine African-American high school students enrolled in the segregated Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas. After protests, President Eisenhower sent federal troops to protect the students.

“HE WAS A
FREEDOM RIDER
BEFORE THERE
WERE FREEDOM
RIDES.”

- THE REVEREND DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The Freedom Rides in the United States occurred between May 4 and December 10, 1961. African-American and white civil rights activists took bus trips together through southern states such as Alabama and South Carolina to protest segregated bus terminals.

MAY 1961

Rachel Robinson earns a master’s degree

Graduating from New York University (NYU) with a master’s degree in psychiatric nursing, Rachel Robinson later becomes Head of Psychiatric Nursing at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine.



JAN 1, 1962

Jackie as a visionary

In New York’s African-American weekly publication, *Amsterdam News*, Robinson starts a column called “Home Plate,” which focuses on politics and civil rights. In 1962, he is also elected to the NAACP’s Board of Directors.

JAN 23, 1962

Hall of Fame induction

Robinson becomes the first African American inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

1962

Voter registration

In Decatur, Georgia and Harlem (New York City), Jackie Robinson serves as a central figure in voter registration rallies and efforts.

JUN 30, 1963

Jazz for a Cause

Jackie and Rachel Robinson host a jazz concert at their home in Stamford, Connecticut to raise bail money to help civil rights activists who are jailed in the South. The event continues and supports important causes annually until 2001.



AUG 28, 1963

1963 March on Washington

The Robinson family attends the "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," at which Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gives his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. Jackie Robinson and Dr. King are friends, despite disagreeing over some issues, such as the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War.

One of many marches that Jackie and his family joined, the 1963 "March on Washington, D.C." saw 250,000 people gather in front of the Lincoln Memorial to shed light on limited job opportunities and other social inequities faced by African Americans. Conceived of by civil rights activists A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, and organized with the great support of African-American men and women across the country, it was where Dr. King shared his "I Have a Dream" speech.

1963

Malcolm X

Jackie Robinson and Malcolm X publicly denounce each other's tactics on gaining equality for African Americans. Robinson believed in integration, while Malcolm X was more of a segregationist at the time. Nonetheless, the men maintain great respect for each other.

FEB 28, 1964

Nelson Rockefeller

Jackie Robinson resigns from Chock full o'Nuts to join Nelson Rockefeller's presidential campaign as one of six deputy national directors.

JAN 4, 1965

Freedom National Bank

Co-founded by Jackie Robinson, the Freedom National Bank opens. It would become the largest black-owned and operated bank in New York State.



1965

Rachel Robinson as Director of Nursing

Rachel Robinson becomes Director of Nursing for the state mental health center in New Haven, Connecticut, and an Assistant Professor at the Yale University School of Nursing.

FEB 1, 1968

National Conference of Christians and Jews

Jackie serves as national chairman of the **National Conference of Christians and Jews**' Brotherhood Week.



The National Conference of Christians and Jews was founded in 1927 to promote harmony between groups separated by race and religion.

FEB 8, 1966

Special Assistant to Governor Rockefeller

Jackie Robinson is appointed by New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller to the position of Special Assistant for Community Affairs.



JUN 17, 1971

Jackie Robinson, Jr. dies

At 24 years old, Jackie, Jr. dies in a car accident while driving home from his job as Assistant Regional Director of Daytop, Inc, a drug rehabilitation center in Seymour, Connecticut that had helped Jack, Jr. overcome his drug habit.

OCT 24, 1972

Jackie Robinson passes away

With his wife Rachel present, Jack Roosevelt Robinson dies of a heart attack at his home in Stamford, Connecticut. He is 53 years old.

MAR 1, 1971

War on drugs

Jackie Robinson and Jackie, Jr. appear together on a program about drug abuse sponsored by the New York State Narcotics Addiction Control Commission for the Scotia-Glenville school district. Jackie, Jr. had become addicted to drugs as a soldier during the Vietnam War.

DEC 1, 1972

Jackie Robinson Construction Corporation

Rachel Robinson becomes president of the Jackie Robinson Construction Corporation that she and her husband founded and renames it the Jackie Robinson Development Corporation. The company builds 1,600 low-to-moderate income housing units.



MAY 1973

Jackie Robinson Foundation (JRF)

Rachel Robinson, along with founding board members Martin Edelman, Charles Williams and Franklin Williams, honors her husband's memory by establishing the Jackie Robinson Foundation to provide four-year scholarships, hands-on mentoring, and leadership development opportunities to talented college students with limited financial resources. Having disbursed over \$80 million in scholarships and direct program services which include job placement, study abroad opportunities and graduate school fellowships, JRF continues to address the achievement gap in higher education through its celebrated scholarship program.

In 2019, JRF will expand Robinson's legacy further with the opening of the Jackie Robinson Museum in NYC.

1982

Jackie Robinson postal stamp

The U.S. Postal Service first commemorates Jackie Robinson with a stamp in 1982, then issues additional stamps honoring his life in 1999, 2000, and 2013.

MAR 26, 1984

Presidential recognition

President Ronald Reagan posthumously awards Jackie Robinson the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which Rachel Robinson accepts on his behalf.

APR 15, 1997

Number 42 is retired throughout baseball

The nation, led by President Bill Clinton, celebrates the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's historic entry into baseball in an on-field ceremony with Rachel Robinson, President Clinton and MLB Commissioner Allan "Bud" Selig. MLB also honors Robinson by retiring his number, 42, throughout Major League Baseball, the only number in baseball history to have been retired across the league. The number 42 is displayed on the stadium wall of every major league ball park in the United States.

MAY 13, 1997

Jackie Robinson coins

The U.S. Mint commemorates Jackie Robinson's life by issuing silver \$1 and gold \$5 coins bearing his image. He is the first African American featured on a U.S. gold coin.

OCT 10, 2003

Congressional Gold Medal honor

The Congressional Gold Medal, the nation's highest civilian award bestowed by Congress, is awarded posthumously to Jackie Robinson. President George W. Bush and Congress present the Congressional Gold Medal (made of solid, 18 karat gold) to Rachel during a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda on March 2, 2005.

APR 1, 2013

"42" movie premieres

Legendary Pictures and Warner Bros. premiere the motion picture "42" in Los Angeles, California. The film stars Chadwick Boseman (known also for portraying James Brown, Thurgood Marshall, and Marvel Studios' *Black Panther* on screen) and acclaimed veteran actor Harrison Ford (*Stars Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, etc.), and depicts Robinson's time in the minor leagues and first year with the Brooklyn Dodgers. "42" is a box office success, particularly in the United States and Japan.

2019

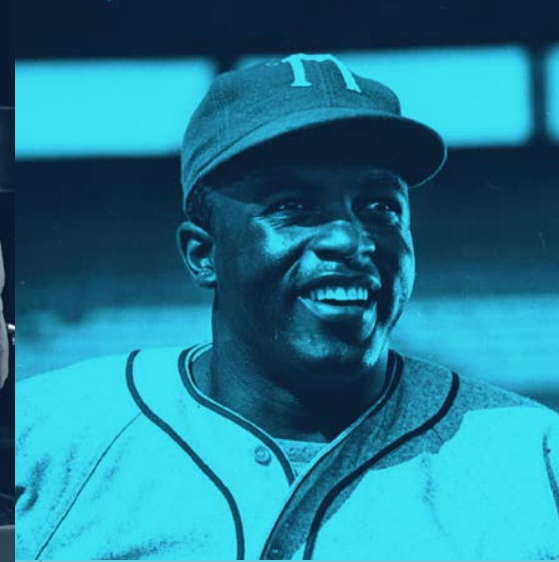
JRF today

The Jackie Robinson Foundation continues to honor the memory of its namesake through its celebrated college and graduate school scholarship programs, and with the building of the Jackie Robinson Museum in New York City. JRF Founder Rachel Robinson, at 97 years old, remains an active member of the board of directors.

2019

The Jackie Robinson Museum opening

The Jackie Robinson Museum commemorates the life and legacy of this American hero by exploring his pioneering baseball career, his commitment to service, and his work on behalf of "first-class citizenship" for all Americans.



JOIN US AND BE INSPIRED.

Visit us at

jackierobinsonmuseum.org

throughout the year for hours, directions, and more information.

THE JACKIE ROBINSON MUSEUM

75 Varick Street | New York, NY 10013



Questions for Discussion

- 1 Jackie Robinson said, “The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.” What time period was he referring to? What did he mean by “first-class citizenship?” What does “first-class citizenship” mean today, and do all Americans share this right equally?
- 2 In what other sports did Jackie Robinson excel? How did his athleticism help him become a visionary public figure in the fight for social equality?
- 3 “We had agreed [that] I had no right to lose my temper and jeopardize the chances of all the blacks who would follow me if I had a chance to break down the barriers.” With whom did Jackie Robinson make this agreement? What did it mean? How did Rachel Robinson support him? How did his resiliency and commitment to certain values benefit all people?
- 4 Jackie Robinson’s mother taught him the importance of perseverance and using one’s resources and talents to have a positive impact on others. What major events of his life demonstrate that he took his mother’s advice seriously?
- 5 In what areas of our society did Jackie Robinson have an impact that we benefit from today?
- 6 Jackie Robinson believed that the two keys to creating equal opportunities for African Americans in the United States were “the ballot and the buck.” What do you think he meant? Identify milestones and other events in his life that support this idea he expressed.
- 7 Jackie Robinson’s patriotism led him to make choices that many people disagreed with, from his opinion of the United States’ involvement in the Vietnam War; to his decision to testify before the Un-American Activities Committee of the United States Congress, challenging Paul Robeson’s opposition to African Americans serving in the United States Armed Services; to his belief in the use of non-violent tactics against racism and inequality. Who were his allies and opponents in these views?
- 8 What are examples of the variety of tactics used by Jackie and Rachel Robinson and their children to fight injustice before, during, and after the Civil Rights Movement? Which tactics do you believe were most effective and why?
- 9 What values did Jackie Robinson embrace and live by that made him the leader he was? What leadership skills do you have?
- 10 Is there something you would like to improve in your school, neighborhood, city, or country? What is it and how would you get started? Who are your allies?

Resources

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ONLINE

The Jackie Robinson Foundation jackierobinson.org

The Jackie Robinson Museum jackierobinsonmuseum.org

The Official Jackie Robinson Website jackierobinson.com

National Baseball Hall of Fame baseballhall.org

Los Angeles Dodgers mlb.com/dodgers/history

Major League Baseball mlb.com

The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum nlbm.com

The Library of Congress loc.gov

The *J*ackie Robinson
Foundation

jackierobinson.org
jackierobinsonmuseum.org