



**The Kansas City Monarchs Impact on Baseball and
America while at the Helm of Global Social Change**

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This unit is recommended for 7th Grade**

Keywords: Negro league, change, bias, culture, baseball,
Pastime, representation, African American, divide, social change

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix I](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit

Synopsis: This unit is a focus on the importance of “the power of influence” one has for social change and impact in their respective sports and communities. The power to use influence for social change is big. This is seen across many sports arenas where athletes use their platform to bring social change that is needed in some or all parts of the world. There are several athletes such as Colin Kapernick, Lebron James, Naomi Osaika can be seen using their level of influence to bring change to their respective causes. In the past we have athletes like Jacki Robinson, Roberto Clemente, and Rube Foster as lead change agents of their time.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to (specify number) students in 7th grade.

Introduction

Sports today play a major role all over the world. Sports can be found in every living room on a random Monday or NFL Sunday. Culture and history would determine what is being watched in these homes. Football, soccer, baseball, volleyball, track and field and the likes are the many sports that one can guarantee is being streamed on television in living rooms around the world. Some would say that sports entertainment is the very glue to a country's pride, its economy, pop culture, diversity, and equality. However, many can argue that maybe there is diversity in America, but equality is questionable? In America, we know the struggles and inequities of those who are not American born or made. We recognize the social divide and racism that is weaved into the fiber of the great USA. Many beg to differ on the idea that sports have always been equal for all and in many cases can be proven to be true. However, inequities can be clearly seen in the history of baseball where diversity and equality were questionable and non-existent. As clearly as we can see, sports are able to bring a nation together as a pastime and entertainment. In the same breath, the game of baseball served as great disdain for the marginalized African Americans athletes as well as African American fans. Because of this divide, Ruth Foster created what we know today as the Negro Leagues. This league was created because black ball players could not play with white ball players.

According to Lanclot "Professional baseball in the United States arose in the late nineteenth century largely through the intertwined processes of urbanism and industrialization. Evolving from other bat and ball games such as rounders and cricket, baseball became professionalized by 1870 as factories increasingly began to dot the urban landscape of the North and Midwest. Because of this, thousands of workers streamed into the cities to man the new machines. Moreover, during breaks these men would come out and play bat ball.

History of the Negro League

The history of the Negro League baseball is fascinating! It was a professional baseball league that operated in the United States from 1920 to 1960. The league was formed because African American players were excluded from playing in the segregated Major League Baseball. The Negro League provided a platform for immensely talented African American players to showcase their skills and entertain fans across the country. Some of the greatest players in baseball history, such as Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, and Cool Papa Bell, competed in the Negro Leagues.

The league faced numerous challenges, including limited resources and constant discrimination, but it thrived, nonetheless. It showcased exceptional talent, exciting games, and a rich baseball culture. Major League Baseball finally started integrating in the late 1940s and early 1950s, leading to the decline of the Negro Leagues.

Despite its eventual dissolution, the legacy of the Negro Leagues remains strong. It paved the way for racial integration in professional sports and left an indelible mark on the history of baseball. The Negro Leagues also produced legendary players who are celebrated to this day.

Reasoning and Rationale-

The rationale behind this unit is to bring awareness of the power of “REPRESENTATION” to students and young people of color with athletic abilities that are capable of transcending and changing the sports arena. Their talents and culture can inspire growth and motivation to all young people so that they can effect change among their peers in their respective careers, the sports arena of their choice, and the world. This understanding will allow young people as well as young athletes to believe in their power and ability to lead. The more history taught about athletes of the past that looks like them and effected change in the world would motivate one to stand firm on their own beliefs and the change they would like to see today. As much as sports entertainment is a highly consumed pastime, the power of representation helps keep barriers of discrimination low. Students need to understand the history of sports and how it was used to factor out many athletes because of “under representation.” The more one understands the power of their participation in a sport that is revered by an entire nation can be the difference it takes to effect change. As student athletes they are on the front lines of social change in some form or another. Students need to understand that this social change doesn’t have to be earth shattering but understanding that any change for the betterment of a sport is a move in the right direction. Understanding history and its patterns will allow students to better understand the necessity of their involvement.

Student Demographics-

I am a 7th grade ELA teacher at Martin Luther King Middle School. My school is a title-I School located in the Northeast Side of Charlotte, North Carolina. The school demographics are made up of Asians, Hispanics, Pan-Americans and African Americans. This school is composed of 54% males and 46% females totaling a population of 957. Of this number, Hispanic males and females make up a larger chunk of the school population. African Americans make up 34.7% of the school population at the school.

Unit Goals-

There are many goals set for this unit. First and foremost, I want to grow as an educator in the area of social change and activism through this unit project. I want to inspire others to stand for social change where it is needed in their respected place of influence or career. In addition, I want to empower young minds in the classroom to believe in themselves and the power of their

impact on the world whether it be sports, journalism, reporting, medical field and etcetera. This impact is rewarding in many facets that can positively change their life. Next, is to get students excited about the topic and so intrigued that the learning and studying extends beyond the classroom. Understanding the history of social change in sports in the past and the constant change in today's sports can have a positive impact on students and how they lead in their respective sport. This unit on the paradigm shift of baseball and the rise and fall of the Negro League is life changing history. I would like every student to develop critical thinking skills through their writing and reading that can be shared with others for the betterment of the community and world today. There are many goals set for this unit such as student developing empathy about the struggles of athletes in the past, social constructs that continue to plague our sports arena, and awareness of the powers that be who continues to try to erect barriers to keep certain groups of individuals from equitable access to achieving goals in the sports arena.

Content research-

Who are the Kansas City Monarchs and their impact

Kansas City Monarchs were a Negro baseball league formed in 1920 in Kansas City, Missouri. This league became one of the leading and most successful programs in the Negro Leagues. The Negro League was a program established during America's darkest era of segregation where African American athletes were not able to play in Major League Baseball. Because of segregation, African Americans were forced to create their own programs and from these programs African Americans rose to the top in their talents and ability to compete with their white counterparts. It all started with Ruth Foster, he had a vision that he ultimately brought to pass forming the Negro League and hence why the Kansas City Monarchs is such a big deal today. Their history alone speaks for itself. According to Robinson, "Between 1888 and 1947, black ball players were restricted to the Negro Leagues. Despite the glory associated with the Negro League baseball, it was still part of the discriminatory system. MLB had an unwritten policy that kept non-white players out of organized baseball (Robinson, 2004). The Negro Leaguers played a unique style of baseball "The Kansas City (Missouri) Monarchs were the most prominent baseball team to play in the Negro Leagues. Formed in 1920, they were also the longest-running team in the Leagues, disbanding in 1965. Many famous players were on the Monarchs roster, including the hall of fame pitcher Satchel Paige, and the man responsible for breaking the color barrier in major league baseball, Jackie Robinson. The Kansas City Monarchs won several championships, including the first Negro League World Series in 1924" (McBride, 2014).

Economic Impact

The economic factors that influenced the Negro League were significant and played a crucial role in its development and challenges. Here are a few key economic factors:

1. Segregation and discrimination: Racial segregation in the United States limited opportunities for African Americans in various industries, including professional sports. The exclusion of black players from Major League Baseball created a niche market for African American baseball talent, leading to the formation of the Negro League.
2. Limited resources and funding: The Negro League teams often faced financial struggles due to limited financial resources and infrastructure compared to Major League Baseball. This affected player salaries, team travel, and overall operational costs.
3. Lack of major corporate sponsorship: Major sponsorship deals were rare for the Negro League teams, as many corporations were hesitant to invest in African American baseball initiatives. This further limited the financial stability and growth potential of the league.
4. The Great Depression: The economic downturn in the 1930s impacted the Negro League, as it did many industries. Attendance and revenue declined during this challenging period, causing financial strain for many teams.
5. Competition with Major League Baseball: The Negro League had to compete for fans, media attention, and player talent with the more established and well-funded Major League Baseball. This created economic challenges as the Negro League teams struggled to match the resources of their white counterparts.

Despite these economic challenges, the Negro League managed to thrive, showcasing exceptional talent, and captivating a devoted fan base. It was a testament to the resilience, determination, and passion of the players, owners, and fans who supported the league.

Culture Impact

The game of baseball has evolved over time, and its origins can be traced back to various early bat-and-ball games played in different parts of the world. However, the modern version of baseball that we know today is often credited to Abner Doubleday, a respected American Civil War officer. According to popular legend, Doubleday is said to have invented the game in Cooperstown, New York, in 1839.

It's important to note that the claim of Doubleday being the sole founder of baseball has been disputed by historians over the years. The development of baseball was a collective effort, with various elements and rules evolving over time. Regardless of its exact origins, baseball has become an iconic and beloved sport worldwide, captivating fans with its rich history, exciting gameplay, and deep-rooted cultural significance.

Social Impact-

The Negro League had a profound social impact on American society. Here are some key aspects of its social influence:

1. **Breaking racial barriers:** The Negro League played a pivotal role in challenging racial segregation in professional sports. It provided African American players with an avenue to showcase their talents, proving that they were just as skilled and capable as their white counterparts. Their success in the Negro League played a significant role in shaping public opinions and helping pave the way for the integration of professional baseball.
2. **Fostering pride and community:** The Negro League instilled a sense of pride and unity within African American communities. It became a symbol of resilience, perseverance, and cultural achievement. Fans supported their favorite teams and players, creating a vibrant community of baseball enthusiasts who celebrated African American excellence on the diamond.
3. **Inspiring future generations:** The players of the Negro League served as inspirational figures for generations to come. Their talent, determination, and grace in the face of adversity inspired countless young African Americans to pursue their dreams and break down barriers in various fields beyond sports.
4. **Cultural impact:** The Negro League contributed to the rich cultural fabric of African American history. It became a source of pride, folklore, and storytelling within communities. The league's unique style of play, charismatic players, and the vibrant atmosphere of its games became part of the cultural legacy that still resonates today.
5. **Influence on baseball history:** The Negro League produced some of the greatest baseball players of all time. Icons like Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, and Jackie Robinson emerged from the Negro League and went on to make significant contributions to Major League Baseball. Their accomplishments not only changed the game but also challenged societal norms and paved the way for racial integration in sports.

Overall, the Negro League had a lasting social impact by challenging racial barriers, fostering community pride, inspiring future generations, contributing to African American culture, and reshaping the course of baseball history.

Educational Impact

The educational impact of the Negro League baseball was multifaceted and extended beyond the realm of sports. Here are some aspects of its educational influence:

1. **Providing opportunities for education:** Many players in the Negro League came from disadvantaged backgrounds and had limited access to formal education. However,

participation in the league provided them with a platform to showcase their skills and generate income to support their education or the education of their families.

2. Promoting perseverance and resilience: The challenges faced by the players in the Negro League, such as racial discrimination and limited resources, highlighted the importance of perseverance and resilience. Their determination to excel in the face of adversity served as valuable life lessons, inspiring others to overcome obstacles and pursue their dreams in education and other fields.
3. Encouraging teamwork and collaboration: Baseball, as a team sport, necessitates collaboration, communication, and teamwork. The Negro League fostered an environment where players had to work together, despite the difficulties they faced, to achieve success. These collaborative experiences translated beyond the field, teaching valuable lessons about cooperation and teamwork in various aspects of life, including education.
4. Inspiring academic achievement: The success stories of players in the Negro League, who often had to overcome significant challenges, served as inspirations for academic achievement. Their accomplishments demonstrated the importance of dedication, hard work, and lifelong learning. They proved that with determination and education, individuals can overcome barriers and achieve their goals.
5. Preserving history and cultural heritage: The history of the Negro League and its impact on American society provide important educational opportunities. By learning about the league, students can gain a deeper understanding of the struggle for racial equality, the power of resilience, and the significance of historical moments in shaping the present.

Overall, the educational impact of the Negro League extends beyond the sport of baseball. It serves as a source of inspiration, teaching valuable lessons about perseverance, teamwork, and the importance of education in overcoming challenges and achieving success through social activism.

Instructional Implementation

Building Background-

I will begin this unit with giving a short pre-assessment on the topic to see how much students understand and know about the topic. I will then conduct a KWL activity through oral discussion and use this KWL chart to drive the next steps in what students have expressed to what they desire to learn. Literature and reading will be another form of building background knowledge. I will allow students to engage in a gallery walk of photos of past and present athletes with a caption of their contribution to social change in America. During this gallery walk, students will choose an athlete of choice that they find interesting or feel like there is a connection with their

movement. This choice will later be part of a culminating activity for this unit that will bring all the learning together in one final product.

Student research and presentation-

Students will research an athlete and their contribution to social change. This research will entail the who, what, when, where, and how this athlete movement effected change in America.

Students will create a picture gallery walk of their research. This walk would allow students to get the history and visualization of this time period. The gallery walk will entail photo opps of the athletes in different facets affecting change. Students will later present their project to their peers and charge their peers to stand up for social change in their respected social circle of influence. This circle of influence can be in their respected sport, organization and or club of choice.

Podcasting-

Students will take their research and create a podcast with their peers interviewing them about the social change they would like to see. During this interview guests will share their vision for social change and why there is a need for the change. Guests will share their respected area of influence. This influence can be in school, sports, and neighborhood.

Peer Group Discussions-

Students will engage in a socratic seminar about the history of the Kansas City Monarch's and their contributions to the social change that changed America's greatest pastime.

Appendix I: Content and teaching standards

RI.7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. Students use multiple pieces of evidence from the text to support their analyses of what the text directly and indirectly states.

RI 7.2 Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.7.3 Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text.

RI.7.5 Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

RI.7.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.

RI.7.8 Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

RI.7.9 Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

R.L 7.1 Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.7.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.7.3

Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Craft and Structure:

RL.7.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

.RL.7.5

Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning

.RL.7.6



Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

.RL.7.7

Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

RL.7.9

Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity:

RL.7.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6-8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Lesson 1

RL 7.1 and RI 7.1- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Student learning target- I can infer the topic of this module from the resources provided.

Students will be given a pre-test on the topic of baseball and the negro league.

TW- introduce topic of the negro league and baseball and ask students to create a KWL chart. As teachers lecture on the topic students will be given an opportunity to stop and jot what they already know about the subject.



SW- Turn and talk with their neighbor to share what they already know about the topic. Students will share out and then update their K section of their KWL activity.

TW- will introduce the text being read to students and students will observe pages and images found in “Promises to Keep” by Sharon Robinson.

Lesson 2

RL 7.1 and RI 7.1- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Student learning target- I can infer the topic of this module from the resources provided.

Students will be given a pre-test on the topic of baseball and the negro league.

TW- introduce topic of the negro league and baseball and ask students to create a KWL chart. As teachers lecture on the topic students will be given an opportunity to stop and jot what they already know about the subject.

SW- Turn and talk with their neighbor to share what they already know about the topic. Students will share out and then update their K section of their KWL activity.

Teacher will introduce the text being read to students and students will observe pages and images found in “Promises to Keep” by Sharon Robinson.

Lesson 3

RL 7.1 and RI 7.1- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Student learning target- I can infer the topic of this module from the resources provided.

Students will be given a pre-test on the topic of baseball and the negro league.

TW- introduce topic of the negro league and baseball and ask students to create a KWL chart. As teachers lecture on the topic students will be given an opportunity to stop and jot what they already know about the subject.

SW- Turn and talk with their neighbor to share what they already know about the topic. Students will share out and then update their K section of their KWL activity.

Teacher will introduce the text being read to students and students will observe pages and images found in “Promises to Keep” by Sharon Robinson.

Lesson 4

RL 7.1 and RI 7.1- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Student learning target- I can infer the topic of this module from the resources provided.

Students will be given a pre-test on the topic of baseball and the negro league.

TW- introduce topic of the negro league and baseball and ask students to create a KWL chart. As teachers lecture on the topic students will be given an opportunity to stop and jot what they already know about the subject.

SW- Turn and talk with their neighbor to share what they already know about the topic. Students will share out and then update their K section of their KWL activity.

Teacher will introduce the text being read to students and students will observe pages and images found in “Promises to Keep” by Sharon Robinson.

Lesson 5

RL 7.1 and RI 7.1- Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Student learning target- I can infer the topic of this module from the resources provided.

Students will be given a pre-test on the topic of baseball and the negro league.

TW- introduce topic of the negro league and baseball and ask students to create a KWL chart. As teachers lecture on the topic students will be given an opportunity to stop and jot what they already know about the subject.



SW- Turn and talk with their neighbor to share what they already know about the topic. Students will share out and then update their K section of their KWL activity.

Teacher will introduce the text being read to students and students will observe pages and images found in “Promises to Keep” by Sharon Robinson.

Appendix II

Negro League-Pre/Post Assessment

1. Which decade did the Negro Leagues begin?
2. Who was the founder of the first successful Negro League team?
3. Name one of the most famous players in the Negro Leagues.
4. What were some challenges faced by Negro League players and teams during segregation?
5. Which team was considered the most dominant in the Negro Leagues?
6. In what year did Jackie Robinson break the color barrier in Major League Baseball?
7. How did the integration of Major League Baseball impact the Negro Leagues?
8. Name one notable Negro League team that was based in Kansas City.
9. Which Negro League player is often referred to as the "Black Babe Ruth"?
10. How did the decline of the Negro Leagues coincide with the Civil Rights Movement?

Appendix III

Gallery Walk

Past Athletes

1. *Jackie Robinson: The first African American to play in Major League Baseball, breaking the color barrier and inspiring a wave of change in the sports world.*
2. *Muhammad Ali: Not only a legendary boxer but also a prominent social activist who fought against racial injustice, religious freedom, and the Vietnam War.*
3. *Serena Williams: A tennis icon who has championed equality, women's rights, and has used her platform to raise awareness on social issues.*
4. *Jesse Owens: An Olympic gold medalist who defied Hitler's Aryan supremacy theory by winning four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.*
5. *Wilma Rudolph: Overcoming childhood polio, she became the first American woman to win three gold medals in track and field at the 1960 Olympics, inspiring many and breaking barriers.*
6. *Bill Russell: A basketball legend who not only dominated the court but also fought for civil rights, advocating for equality and using his influence for positive change.*
7. *Arthur Ashe: The first African American male to win a Grand Slam title in tennis, he used his platform to raise awareness about racial inequality and promote education.*
8. *Tommie Smith and John Carlos: Olympic track and field athletes who famously raised their fists in a Black Power salute during the 1968 Olympics, becoming symbols of protest against racial injustice.*

Current Athletes

1. *LeBron James: A basketball superstar who has been a vocal advocate for social justice, addressing issues such as police brutality, education, and voter suppression.*
2. *Colin Kaepernick: Though not currently playing in the NFL, Kaepernick made a significant impact by kneeling during the national anthem to protest racial injustice and police brutality, sparking a nationwide conversation.*
3. *Megan Rapinoe: A prominent member of the U.S. women's national soccer team, Rapinoe is an outspoken advocate for LGBTQ+ rights, gender equality, and racial justice.*

4. *Naomi Osaka: A tennis star who has used her visibility to raise awareness about racial injustice and police violence, notably withdrawing from tournaments to protest the shooting of Jacob Blake.*
5. *Simone Biles: A gymnastics icon who has been vocal about mental health and the importance of self-care, inspiring others to prioritize their well-being.*
6. *Russell Westbrook: A basketball player known not only for his athletic prowess but also for his philanthropy and efforts to empower underprivileged communities through education and resources.*
7. *Maya Moore: A former WNBA player who took a hiatus from basketball to focus on criminal justice reform and to help overturn the wrongful conviction of Jonathan Irons.*



Appendix IV

Writing Rubric sponsored by Read Write and Inspire

Appendix V

Socratic Seminar

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