

BASEBALL

THE TENTH INNING

A FILM BY KEN BURNS & LYNN NOVICK

Bases Divided

Grade Level: 7–12

Related Academic Subjects: U.S. history, social studies

Lesson Overview:

For more than 60 years, African Americans were banned from playing in major league baseball. The reasons today might seem unbelievable, but it was a time when discrimination was rampant and accepted. Not willing to be denied, African American baseball players started their own league and developed a style of play that gave the game two of its strongest attributes—entertainment and athleticism. In this lesson, students will explore the collusion of the white baseball club owners and their “gentleman’s agreement” to exclude African Americans from playing in the major leagues.

(NOTE: The lesson has students examine some of the central questions surrounding racism in the video clips from the “Baseball” series and in discussion. On occasion, the materials present certain words, expressions and attitudes that some students might find objectionable. It is recommended that you make students, parents and administrators aware of this and explain how these are used in the context of history.)

Lesson Objectives: (The student will...)

- Analyze the views and attitudes of many white Americans who opposed African American participation in baseball
- Evaluate the reasoning of many whites for rejecting African American participation in baseball and in other aspects of American society
- Analyze the extent of greater inclusion of African Americans in baseball and society today
- Evaluate the benefits of a post-racial America and how it might come about

Estimated Time for the Lesson: Four class periods

Video Segments:

Baseball: The First Inning, Our Game
Chapter 12: “My Skin is Against Me”

Baseball: The Fourth Inning, A National Heirloom
Chapter 5: “I Fear Nobody”

Baseball: The Fifth Inning, Shadow Ball
Chapter 9: “Carrying the News”
Chapter 11: “Plain Prejudice”

Baseball: The Sixth Inning, The National Pastime
Chapter 7: “The Answer is No”

Baseball: The Ninth Inning, Home
“Al Campanis on ABC Nightline”

Materials Needed:

- Internet access
- Computer with overhead projector or TV/DVD set-up
- Student handouts
 - “The Story of Negro League Baseball” (video clip viewing guide)
 - “Is America Experiencing a Post-Racial Era?”

Lesson Procedure:

Part 1. Negro League Baseball

Tell students that in this lesson they will look back at the history of race in professional baseball and how it affected not only the African American athlete and society, but also the sport of baseball. This activity will provide information for addressing the question in Activity 3 of whether America has developed into a post-racial society.

1. Allow time for the class as a whole to watch the clips “My Skin is Against Me,” “I Fear Nobody,” “Carrying the News,” “Plain Prejudice,” and “The Answer is No.” Doing this will better facilitate the jigsaw activity that follows.
2. Divide the class into five groups. Distribute the handout “The Story of Negro League Baseball” to all students. Review the directions with the class. Then assign each group one of the video clips to view and instruct them to take notes from the questions.
3. After the student groups have reviewed their assigned clips and answered the questions, have them “jigsaw” into new groups. Make sure that a member from each of the viewing groups is in the new group. Instead of students just reviewing their answers to the questions, have each student facilitate a discussion by asking the other group members to comment on their impressions from the clips they viewed earlier.
4. Rejoin to discuss some of their comments. You can use the following guide to help you facilitate the discussion:
 - African Americans were brought to this country as slaves. After the Civil War, most Americans saw slavery for what it was—brutal and a violation of the principles on which the country was founded. Given this, why do you think African Americans were so maligned in the decades after their emancipation?
 - Does the fact that Andrew Foster’s Negro League teams competed only against other African American teams diminish his accomplishment? Do you think he

would have had as much success if he and African American ballplayers were allowed into the all-white National League?

- How can the expression “working twice as hard for half the pay” be applied to Negro League baseball?
- In one of the video clips, former ballplayer Slick Surratt seems to accept the practice of serving African Americans in the back of a café. How do you react to the decision of some African Americans to accept the racism and prejudice they experienced on the road?
- How did the fact that other ethnic groups *were* allowed to play in the American and National Leagues and African Americans were not deal a double blow to African Americans?
- Do you think the practice of segregation in the U.S. military, baseball, and society in general was hypocritical as the United States entered World War II? Explain.

Part 2. How far have we come?

1. Ask students for their thoughts on how far they feel African Americans (and other racial groups) have come to be accepted as equals since the integration of baseball by Jackie Robinson. Ask them to place their answer on a five-point scale, with “come as far as they can” (#5) to “not very far (#1). Ask several students with different positions to explain their reasoning.
2. Show the clip “Campanis on Nightline.”
3. In seeking students’ reaction to the video clip, ask that they focus not so much on the individual as on the substance of what he said.
 - What was the essence of Campanis’ answer to the question of why there were so few African Americans in baseball management?
 - What do you think Campanis’ beliefs were based on?
 - Why do you think there were so few African Americans in baseball management?
 - Do you think his views were similar to those of many whites at the time? Or today?

Part 3. Do we live in a post-racial society?

To start this activity, explore with students the meaning of the term “post-racial.” Provide a little background, explaining that the term gained notoriety after the election of President Barack Obama, when some people asked whether race mattered any more.

To explore this issue as it relates to race relations in baseball and society, have students read articles in newspapers and magazines that discuss a post-racial America. (This can be assigned as homework the day before you conduct this activity.) Here are some suggestions:

- “A New, ‘Post Racial’ Political Era in America” *NPR*
(<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18489466>)
- “‘Post-racial’ America isn’t here yet” *CNN*
(<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/03/28/pitts.black.america/index.html>)
- “Efforts to develop black talent in USA insufficient” *USA Today*
(http://www.usatoday.com/sports/baseball/2010-03-09-part-3-baseball-roundtable_N.htm)

After students have read the articles, have them work in small groups to brainstorm definitions for the term post-racial. As they report back their ideas in full class session, try to organize their answers into a small number of definitions and see if it is possible to come to a consensus on a single definition. Tell students that defining the term is difficult, as its meaning depends on one's perspective, but the basic form of a post-racial society is one in which race is no longer significant or important.

Distribute the handout "Is America Experiencing a Post-Racial Period?" to all students. Go over the directions with them, then divide the class into small discussion groups and monitor their discussions.

Finally, have students write an essay on the statement below, explaining whether they agree or disagree and the reasons why:

America is reflecting the pattern of racial acceptance in baseball and moving toward a "post-racial" society. In the long run, as with baseball, this will be good for America.

Assessment: Once students have completed the essay, the following rubric may be used to evaluate student work. If desired, teachers may develop their own assessment tools.

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Position statement	The position statement provides a clear, strong statement of the author's position on the topic.	The position statement provides a clear statement of the author's position on the topic.	A position statement is present, but does not make the author's position clear.	There is no position statement.
Support for position	Includes three or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. The writer anticipates the reader's concerns, biases or arguments and has provided at least one counter-argument.	Includes three or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	Includes two pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	Includes one or fewer pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences).
Sequencing	Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the author's train of thought.	Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the author's train of thought.	A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing.	Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order; distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing.
Closing paragraph	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The author's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion—the paper just ends.
Grammar and spelling	Author makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes one or two errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes three or four errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more than four errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.

Resources:

(NOTE: While the following resources provide a good overview of the history of African American baseball in the United States, the teacher should also encourage students to conduct research using traditional resources such as books, magazines and encyclopedias.)

- Baseball Web site (<http://www.pbs.org/baseball>)
- Baseball: The Tenth Inning (<http://www.pbs.org/tenthinning>)
- Negro Leagues Legacy (from the major league baseball Web site) (http://mlb.mlb.com/mlb/history/mlb_negro_leagues.jsp)
- Negro League Baseball (<http://www.negroleaguebaseball.com>)
- Negro League Baseball Museum (<http://www.nlbm.com>)
- Black Baseball.com (<http://www.blackbaseball.com>)
- Barnstorming and the Negro Leagues: 1900s–1930s (<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/jrhtml/jr1900s.html>)
- Is America Really Post-racial? (http://racism-politics.suite101.com/article.cfm/postracialism_in_america)
- Race Relations: Seeking Harmony (<http://www.racebridgesforschools.com>)
- What Does Post-Racial Mean, Anyway? (<http://www.tolerance.org/activity/what-does-post-racial-mean-anyway>)

Standards: This lesson fits the following academic standards set by the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks>).

U.S. History

Standard 22. Understands how the United States changed between the post-World War I years and the eve of the Great Depression

Level III (Grades 7–8)

- Understands the various social conflicts that took place in the early 1920s
- Understands changes in the social and cultural life of American society in the 1920s

Level IV (Grades 9–12)

- Understands the major social issues of 1920s America
- Understands the impact of new cultural movements on American society in the 1920s

Standard 31. Understands economic, social and cultural developments in the contemporary United States

Level III (Grades 7–8)

- Understands various influences on American culture

Level IV (Grades 9–12)

- Understands the influence of social change and the entertainment industry in shaping views on art, gender and culture
- Understands major contemporary social issues and the groups involved

Historical Understanding

Standard 2. Understands the historical perspective

Level III (Grades 7–8)

- Understands that specific individuals and the values those individuals held had an impact on history
- Analyzes the influence specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history
- Analyzes the effects specific decisions had on history

Level IV (Grades 9–12)

- Analyzes the values held by specific people who influenced history and the role their values played in influencing history
- Analyzes the influences specific ideas and beliefs had on a period of history and specifies how events might have been different in the absence of those ideas and beliefs
- Analyzes the effects specific decisions had on history and studies how things might have been different in the absence of those decisions
- Understands that the consequences of human intentions are influenced by the means of carrying them out

About the Authors:

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The Story of Negro League Baseball

(Student Handout)

Directions:

In this video clip viewing activity, you will look back on the history of race in professional baseball. You will first view the five clips as a class. Then you will view them again in your small groups and discuss and answer the questions related to the video clip assigned to your group. Then each member from your group will move to a new group and facilitate a discussion on each of the clips' questions.

First Inning: "My Skin Is Against Me." This section traces the history from post-Civil War race relations to the formation of Negro teams. The clip presents several examples of African Americans playing on predominantly white teams as the "national pastime" became part of American culture. But soon, prevailing racial attitudes intervened, and through a "gentleman's agreement," African Americans were banned from playing major league baseball.

Questions:

- What are some of the examples cited in the video clip of African American players facing prejudice?
- Why do you think white ballplayers were so strongly opposed to having African Americans play alongside them?
- What was the reason for the "gentleman's agreement" made by the National League owners? Why do you think they didn't just institute a policy of openly banning blacks from playing in the league?
- One distinction for African Americans between slavery and post-Civil War America was the fact that they were no longer in bondage. However, the racial policies of white prejudice in the North and Jim Crow laws in the South kept them out of professional baseball. Explain how this policy made the notion of "separate but equal" unequal.

Fourth Inning: "I Fear Nobody." By the early part of the 20th century, baseball was becoming the sport for all Americans, as players from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds were playing professional baseball; only African Americans were excluded. Tensions rose nationally, as more southern blacks began migrating into northern cities and a series of race riots exploded across the country in 1919. Out of this arose black pride and an assertiveness that took hold of African American society. One outcome was the birth of the Negro Baseball League.

Questions:

- Review the quote from the *Sporting News*. How does this describe the idea that equality is for some, but not for all?

It matters not what branch of mankind the player sprang from, with the fan, if he can deliver the goods. The Mick, the Sheeney, the Wop, the Dutch, and the Chink, the Cuban, the Indian, the Jap, or the so-called Anglo-Saxon—his "nationality" is never a matter of moment if he can pitch, or hit, or field. In organized baseball there has been no distinction raised—except tacit understanding that a player of Ethiopian descent is ineligible—the wisdom of

which we will not discuss except to say by such a rule some of the greatest players the game has ever known have been denied their opportunity.

- The race riots of 1919 occurred mostly in northern cities. They were a devastating blow for blacks who had gone north in hope of finding relief from southern prejudice and exclusion. How did these riots promote a new assertiveness among African Americans? Compare and contrast how this new assertiveness might have helped as well as hurt African Americans.
- Early 20th century America has many stories of the “titans of industry”—men like John Rockefeller, J. P. Morgan, and Henry Ford—all white—who through hard work, intelligence and innovation created major industries, employing thousands of workers. Describe how the story of Andrew “Rube” Foster was a similar American success story.
- How did the success of Foster’s league give African Americans a chance to enjoy baseball as a recreational sport and a profession, but never quite earn them respectability?

Fifth Inning: “Carrying the News.” This segment opens with Ted “Double Duty” Radcliff and Buck O’Neil reminiscing about road trips in the Negro League. Though the league was thriving, black professional ballplayers had to play under much harsher conditions than their white counterparts. The black game was faster, more strategic and just as competitive. Travel was hard, and most players faced discrimination and segregation in the towns and cities where they played.

Questions:

- Describe the conditions African American ballplayers had to withstand that their white counterparts did not.
- Though black baseball provided entertainment for African American audiences and employment for African American athletes, how did the conditions both on the field and on the road reinforce the notion that “separate but equal” was not equal?
- Describe the style of play of Negro League baseball. What was its entertainment value? Why might this style of playing baseball be appealing to all audiences regardless of race?
- To keep their businesses alive and profitable, Negro League baseball teams had to be innovative. Identify some of the ways they did this.

Fifth Inning: “Plain Prejudice.” This segment opens with an editorial from the *Chicago Defender*, lamenting the fact that members of other races play in the National League but African Americans do not. The Negro League enjoyed great players and heroes of its own, but they never got the chance to prove themselves against white ballplayers. The exclusionary rules of baseball resounded with an eerie echo of events in 1930s Germany.

Questions:

- If you were a sportswriter or newspaper columnist during the 1930s, how would you comment on the fact that all races and nationalities except African Americans were playing in the National and American Baseball Leagues?
- Describe some of the accomplishments of Negro League ballplayers. Why was their success in the Negro League not enough for them?
- How did the Negro League prove to be a benefit but also a stigma for African American society as a whole?
- Compare and contrast Nazi Germany's exclusionary laws against Jews with the Jim Crow statutes in the United States.

Sixth Inning: "The Answer Is No." Baseball Commissioner Kenesaw Landis made sure blacks stayed out of major league baseball. As the United States entered World War II and every able-bodied man was asked to enlist, a hard-to-ignore hypocrisy arose. Though the press and black leaders applied pressure to integrate major league baseball, the answer from Commissioner Landis was still "no." Meanwhile, at Fort Hood, a young Army lieutenant was found "not guilty" after being court-martialed for refusing to comply with a Jim Crow law.

Questions:

- There was no written law banning African American players from major league baseball. How did the "gentleman's agreement" help ensure that baseball would stay white?
- Summarize the efforts of major league baseball commissioner Kenesaw Landis to keep African Americans out of baseball.
- For African Americans, the injustice of fighting racism abroad during World War II while being banned from baseball due to their race was exemplified in the slogan, "If we are able to stop bullets, why not balls?" Why did blacks believe they had earned the right to be treated as equals by whites?
- How does the story of Jackie Robinson's court-martial for refusing to move to the back of a segregated bus and his exoneration by Army judges demonstrate the struggle in America between traditions of segregation and the promise of equal opportunity for all?

Is America Experiencing a Post-Racial Period? (Student Handout)

Directions:

In this activity, you will share your views on race in the United States and whether America is in a post-racial period. It will be important to honor other students' opinions and be respectful of their views. You should feel free to express your views but maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect. If necessary, establish some ground rules before you begin. To better conduct your discussions, have some group members take on the following roles:

- Facilitator (guides the discussion through the questions and makes sure everyone in the group gets a chance to speak)
- Recorder (takes notes on pertinent comments)
- Presenter (shares summary of conversation with class)

Discussion Questions:

1. Did the articles you read reflect a shift in attitudes about race? If so, what do these shifts look like? If not, express your views on why not.
2. Discuss the concept of "post-racial" as you defined it in your earlier discussion. How does your definition compare with what you saw in the video clips from the "Baseball" series? Do you feel American society today is more "post-racial" than was described in the video clips you viewed earlier? Try to explain how much, if at all.
3. Identify several examples of how conditions faced by players in the Negro League would have been different if 20th century America had been a post-racial society.
4. Do you believe the United States is experiencing a post-racial period today? What evidence can you present to support or refute your position?
5. Are people your age more "post-racial" than other generations? Support your position.

After your discussion, share your thoughts with the class. Then write an essay on the statement below, explaining whether you agree or disagree and the reasons why:

America is reflecting the pattern of racial acceptance in baseball and moving toward a post-racial society. In the long run, as with baseball, this will be good for America.