

BASEBALL

THE TENTH INNING

A FILM BY KEN BURNS & LYNN NOVICK

Women in Baseball

Grade Level: 6–12 (although lesson may be suitable for upper elementary grades with some teacher adaptations)

Related Academic Subjects: U.S. history, sociology, business education, language arts

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, student groups role-play sports marketing firms looking to “package” female baseball players with product endorsement deals. To “sell” their client, groups present multimedia projects highlighting the accomplishments of their client, as well as examples of how they would market the player (such as baseball cards, cereal boxes, etc.).

Lesson Objectives: (The student will...)

- Recognize the achievements of women in baseball during the first half of the 20th century
- Develop collaborative strategies and skills
- Develop marketing campaigns to make the public aware of female baseball players of the 1940s

Synthesize information and create an effective persuasive multimedia campaign presentation

Estimated Time for the Lesson: Three to four class periods, as well as possible outside research time.

Video Segments:

Baseball: The First Inning, Our Game

Chapter 8: “A Division of Feeling”

Baseball: The Second Inning, Something Like a War

Chapter 7: “Free and Equal”

Baseball: The Sixth Inning, The National Pastime

Chapter 6: “War”

Materials Needed:

Computers with Internet access; multimedia software (Power Point or Keynote); possibly drawing software to create baseball cards or other merchandise, such as endorsement cereal

boxes; related student handouts. (Marketing plan handout and graphic organizer should be distributed together.)

Lesson Procedure:

Background

Open the lesson with an introduction that describes the home front during World War II. The teacher may elect to use a U.S. or world history textbook, or may wish to use the “At Home” section of the Ken Burns film “The War” (http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_home.htm). In particular, the teacher should point out how women transcended typical gender roles, as depicted in the famous “Rosie the Riveter” character of the era. A more complete discussion of the effect of World War II on family life during the era can be found at http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_home_family.htm.

Discuss with the students the role of baseball during World War II. The teacher should mention that President Franklin D. Roosevelt personally approved baseball for the duration, noting in a letter to Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis that “everyone will work longer hours and harder than ever before, and that means they ought to have a chance for recreation, and for taking their minds off their work even more than before.... I honestly feel it would be best for the country to keep baseball going.” However, note that no special draft exemptions were given to baseball players, and many of the premier stars of the era enlisted or were drafted. This led to the creation of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League.

Opening Activity

Tell the students they will be exploring how women were at first barred from playing professional baseball and then, briefly, given the opportunity.

Divide the class into small groups of students.

Distribute the handout Video Clip Analysis form to all students.

Have students view the related lesson video segments, completing the Video Clip Analysis form as they watch.

After students have viewed the video clips and completed the graphic organizer, discuss with them the following questions:

How were women in baseball a good example of change in American culture during the war years? *(Students will probably note that the war opened an opportunity to women because of the number of male ballplayers who were unavailable because of military service. Others may suggest that the war gave women an opportunity to prove that they actually could play professional baseball on par with their male counterparts.)*

Speculate about whether female players enjoyed the same publicity and notoriety that male major leaguers did, especially in the area of product endorsements or being featured on baseball cards or other merchandise that might have made them better known. *(Answers will vary.)*

Brainstorm athletes and other celebrities who are well-known product endorsers. (*Students will probably note current athletes including Peyton Manning, Michael Jordan, and various Olympic athletes*). Ask students to discuss the effect of these sports endorsements on product sales. Ask them whether they believe women can serve as spokespersons as effectively as men; have them explain their positions.

Main Activity

Introduce the activity by telling the class that they will be working collaboratively as “sports agents” developing a digital presentation for a female baseball player from the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) of the World War II era. This presentation will align the athlete with various products, including baseball cards, sportswear, food and drink products (breakfast cereals, sports drinks, etc.) and other merchandise.

1. Divide the class into equal groups of approximately four to six students.
2. Distribute the handout “Women in Baseball Marketing Plan” with the AAGPBL Graphic Organizer attached. Review the directions with students.
3. Explain to the student groups that their digital presentation should include the following:
 - A multimedia presentation featuring a member of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), selected by the group. (The AAGPBL Web site is at <http://aagpbl.org>.)
 - Biographical information on the player, statistical information about her baseball career (batting average, fielding, championships, awards, etc.) and photographs. The presentation should be persuasive in nature; in other words, an attempt to “sell” the “client.” In this regard, the group should analyze the specific strengths and athletic abilities that make their client an effective product spokesperson in their marketing strategy. The teacher should direct students to find products for endorsement that would be typical of the period.
 - Examples of how the subject will be marketed. This can be done, preferably, by actually creating examples (baseball cards, cereal boxes, other products) or by writing descriptive paragraphs including slogans, tag lines, graphics and other key elements. The teacher may suggest that students look at current ad campaigns and endorsements featuring athletes in various sports to get a feel for how modern ad campaigns and endorsements are featured in popular media.
4. Allow students sufficient time to complete the organizer as they research various players to select one AAGPBL player to feature in their presentation.

Once the group has decided on the player they want to “represent,” they should develop the multimedia presentation, including details about the player’s sports record and their marketing plan. Student groups may wish to organize their marketing strategies the way current sports stars are publicized. What strengths or abilities does the ballplayer have that might be admired or emulated by the public, especially the target audience for the marketing campaign?

Regarding the presentation, the teacher may specify the time period in which the marketing plan should take place. For example, if the marketing presentation is developed during the 1940s and 1950s, students would present their client in the media of the period—baseball cards, radio scripts, magazines, newspaper ads, and product endorsements such as cereal boxes. Or the teacher might choose to have students make the presentation using 21st century media, such as

television commercials or basic Web sites.

Allow students sufficient time to complete their marketing plans. The teacher may elect to have students present their marketing plans to the entire class.

Assessment:

Once students have completed their projects, evaluate the work using a suitable rubric. The teacher may wish to view project rubrics for multimedia presentations at <http://www.vcsc.k12.in.us/staff/mhutchison/thewar/evaluation.htm> and <http://www.vcsc.k12.in.us/staff/mhutchison/civilwar/evaluation.htm>.

Resources:

(NOTE: While the following resources provide a good overview of the history of women’s 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>

The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (<http://aagpbl.org/>)

The Science of Baseball: The Girls of Summer
(<http://www.exploratorium.edu/baseball/girlsofsummer.html>)

The Baseball Archive—AAGPBL page (<http://www.baseball1.com/bb-data/bbd-wb1.html>)

The AAGPBL “Charm School Guide” (<http://www.aagpbl.org/league/charm.cfm>)

The Diamond Angle Profiles and Interviews of the Women of the All American Girls Professional Baseball League
(<http://www.thediamondangle.com/archive/aagpbl.html>)

John Skilton’s baseball-links.com—Women’s Baseball link page
(http://www.baseball-links.com/links/Womens_Baseball/)

Women in Baseball (<http://www.nocryinginbaseball.com/women/women.html>)

What Did You Do in the War, Grandma?: A Farm Girl Plays Professional Baseball
(http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/FarmGirlBaseball.html)

About.com Women and Baseball links page
(http://womenshistory.about.com/od/baseball/Women_and_Baseball.htm)

“Belles of the Ball Game”: Women’s Professional Baseball League Thrives in the 1940s (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6251/>)

Wisconsin Historical Society page on the AAGPBL
(http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/highlights/archives/2005/05/a_league_of_the.asp)

Florida Memory Project “Batter Up! A Visual History of Baseball in Florida” AAGPBL page (photos)
(http://fpc.dos.state.fl.us/memory/PhotographicCollection/photo_exhibits/baseball/baseball3.cfm)

National Visionary Leadership Project—Oral History page on Mamie “Peanut” Johnson, first woman pitcher in men’s professional baseball (Negro Leagues)
(<http://www.visionaryproject.org/johnsonmamie/>)

USA Today “Female Baseball Legend Recalls Her Playing Days”
(http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/states/nevada/2009-04-02-1033864834_x.htm?DB_OEM_ID=17300)

Vincennes Lincoln High School project resource page for “The War” (includes various “how-to” links for Microsoft Power Point)
(<http://www.vcsc.k12.in.us/staff/mhutchison/thewar/>)

Academic Standards:

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

U.S. History

Standard 25. Understands the causes and course of World War II, the character of the war at home and abroad, and its reshaping of the U.S. role in world affairs.

Level II (Grades 5–6)

Understands events on the U.S. home front during World War II (e.g., economic and military mobilization; the internment of Japanese Americans and the implications for civil liberties).

Level III (Grades 7–8)

Understands how World War II influenced American society (e.g., how the war fostered cultural exchange and promoted nationalism and American identity; the effects on gender roles and the American family).

Standard 29. Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties.

Level III (Grades 7–8)

Understands factors that shaped the women's rights movement after World War II (e.g., the factors that contributed to the development of modern feminism; the ideas, agendas and strategies of feminist and counterfeminist organizations; conflicts originating from within and outside the women's movement)

Level IV (Grades 9–12)

Understands conflicting perspectives on different issues addressed by the women's rights movement (e.g., the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII and Roe v. Wade).

Behavioral Studies (Sociology/Psychology)

Standard 1. Understands that group and cultural influences contribute to human development, identity and behavior

Level IV (Grade 9–12)

Understands that family, gender, ethnicity, nationality, institutional affiliations, socio-economic status, and other group and cultural influences contribute to the shaping of a person's identity

Business Education

Standard 43. Understands the roles of marketing and the impact of marketing on the individual, business and society

Level IV (Grade 9–12)

Knows marketing functions (e.g., distribution, financing, marketing-information management, pricing, product planning, promotion, purchasing, risk management, selling) and how they contribute to the marketing concept

Standard 47. Understands components and strategies of effective marketing plans (e.g., product development, pricing, distribution processes and methods, forms of production)

Level IV (Grades 9–12)

Knows components of the marketing mix (i.e., product, price, promotion, place) and how they contribute to successful marketing

Develops a marketing plan (e.g., describes the target market, states the marketing objectives, identifies the competition, describes the marketing environment, details each element of the marketing mix, develops a budget)

Knows various channels of distribution (e.g., agents, brokers, retailers, wholesalers) and factors to be considered when selecting them (e.g., nature of the product, size/location of the market, availability of channel members, ability to manage marketing activities)

Knows components of the promotional mix (e.g., advertising, personal selling, public relations, sales promotion) and characteristics and costs associated with these components

Standard 48. Understands the selling process and forecasting principles and methods used to determine sales potential for specific products

Level IV (Grades 9–12)

Understands the selling process (e.g., locating prospects, forming relationships with customers, identifying customer needs and suggesting solutions, handling objections, closing the sale, following up)

Knows a variety of selling strategies (e.g., feature-benefit selling, suggestion selling, counselor selling)

Understands a variety of sales approaches (e.g., industrial approach, retailing approach)

About the Author:

Michael Hutchison is Social Studies Department chairperson at Lincoln High School, Vincennes, Indiana, and has over 30 years of teaching experience. He has written several lessons for PBS films, including “The Civil War,” “The War,” “Horatio’s Drive,” and “Empire of the Air.” He is president of the board of directors of the Indiana Computer Educators and is a moderator for the NCSS Network and list editor for H-HIGH-S, a secondary social studies teachers’ listserv.

Women in Baseball Marketing Plan Assignment Information Sheet

Congratulations! You and the members of your group have been awarded a contract to serve as sports marketing agents for one player from the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) from the World War II era. Your job will be to develop a marketing plan to get your client lucrative endorsements from various sports-related corporations.

To do this, you'll need to research players from the AAGPBL, use the attached graphic organizer to collect information, and then select one player you want to market.

Once your group has selected a player, develop a marketing plan including the following items:

1. A multimedia presentation featuring a member of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL), selected by the group. (The AAGPBL Web site is listed under Resources below.)
2. The presentation should include biographical information on the player, statistical information about her baseball career (batting average, fielding, championships, awards, etc.), and photographs.
3. The presentation should be persuasive in nature; in other words, an attempt to sell your client.
4. Examples of how the subject will be marketed. This can be done, preferably, by actually drawing or creating examples (baseball cards, cereal boxes, other products) or by writing descriptive paragraphs including slogans, tag lines, graphics and other key elements. The group should translate the athletic determination, ability, winning attitude and appeal noted in #3 into a persuasive statement as to why your client makes a good spokesperson for targeted products.
5. Be sure to check the following Web sites as you do your research:

All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL)

[\(<http://aagpbl.org>\)](http://aagpbl.org)

The Baseball Archive AAGPBL page (<http://www.baseball1.com/bb-data/bbd-wb1.html>)

John Skilton's baseball-links.com Women's Baseball link page

[\(\[http://www.baseball-links.com/links/Womens_Baseball\]\(http://www.baseball-links.com/links/Womens_Baseball\)\)](http://www.baseball-links.com/links/Womens_Baseball)

Your teacher may make additional suggestions for research links.

AAGPBL Player Graphic Organizer

Player Name	Team(s)	Year(s) Played	Relevant Statistics (batting average, fielding, etc.)	Individual and Team Honors (MVP awards, etc.)	Other Important Information

Video Clip Analysis Form

Clip	Group Analysis
<p>(Inning 1)</p> <p>The Young Women of Vassar College:</p> <p>Why were girls banned from playing baseball? Is this fair? Could this be done today? Why or why not?</p>	
<p>(Inning 2)</p> <p>The Story of Alta Weiss:</p> <p>Listen to Dan Okrent's statement about women in baseball. Do you agree or disagree? Explain. What are your feelings about Alta Weiss's father buying a minor league team so she could play ball?</p>	
<p>(Inning 6)</p> <p>The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League</p> <p>Compare and contrast men's attitudes regarding women playing baseball during the early days of the 20th century (such as the Vassar Girls or Alta Weiss) and during the World War II years. Why do you think there was a change in opinion?</p>	

<p>(Inning 6)</p> <p>Describe the reaction of the public to women in baseball during WWII. How do you think the players felt about how the league made them act and look? Do you think it was fair for women ballplayers to have to be “feminine” and have chaperones? Why?</p>	
<p>(Inning 6)</p> <p>How was women’s baseball the same as the game the men played? How was it different?</p>	
<p>(Inning 6)</p> <p>Why do you think the major leagues formally banned women from playing professional baseball in the years after World War II?</p>	