

Meadowlawn Middle School
Winter Brain Builder ELA Boot Camp
7th Grade

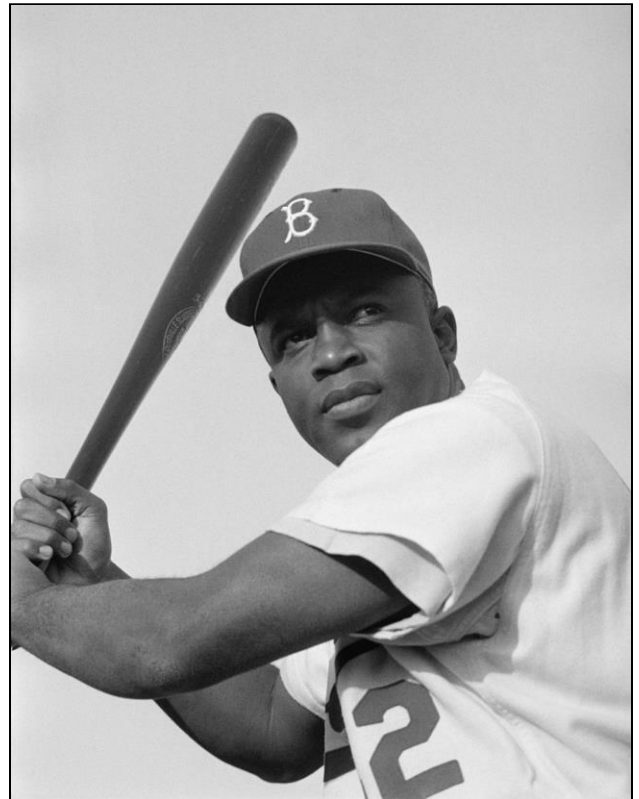


How Jackie Robinson Changed Baseball

By Jessica McBirney 2017

Jackie Robinson (1919-1972) was a professional baseball player and the first African American to play in the Major Leagues. This informational text discusses Robinson's life and accomplishments, and the impact his role in baseball had on the Civil Rights Movement. As you read, take note of the different ways that Jackie Robinson fought back against racial discrimination and segregation throughout his life.

- [1] Today you may not be surprised to see an African-American or Latino player when you turn the TV to Major League Baseball. Maybe your favorite player is a person of color. But baseball has not always been as welcoming to diversity¹ as it is now. In 1947 the famous Jackie Roosevelt Robinson became the first African American to play on a Major League Baseball team. The road he paved was an important, but difficult one.



Early Athletic Success

Robinson was born in Georgia on January 31, 1919, the youngest of five children. His father left the family just a year later, and his mother moved herself and her children to Pasadena, California. She worked odd jobs to support her family, but Robinson still grew up in relative poverty.

When Jackie enrolled in high school, his siblings encouraged him to get involved in school sports teams. He excelled in football, basketball, track, "[Jackie Robinson, Brooklyn Dodgers, 1954](#)" by Bob Sandberg is in and baseball, and he broke many school records. *the public domain.*

Robinson continued to play all of these sports in junior college. Ironically, he viewed baseball as his weakest sport. He transferred to UCLA to complete his degree, where he became the first athlete to letter² in all four of those sports. UCLA had some of the most racially integrated college sports teams at the time, but Robinson was still among a very small minority of non-white athletes on all his teams.

¹ . the inclusion of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization 2. to earn an award for excellence in school activities

Fighting Racism

- [5] Even early in his life, Robinson confronted racism head on. In 1938, while still at junior college, he was arrested after disputing the police’s detention of one of his black friends. He managed to escape a long jail sentence, but this and other run-ins with the police earned him a reputation of being very combative against racial oppression.

When the U.S. entered World War II, Robinson enlisted in the army. He never saw direct combat, but his military career was marred² by racial problems. While stationed in Texas, Robinson boarded a nonsegregated bus, but he was instructed to sit in the back anyway. He refused, and military police took him into custody for his insubordination.³ Fortunately, one month later, an all-white jury acquitted⁴him, but the situation foreshadowed only more of the same prejudice he’d face later in life.

A Negro Player with Guts

Robinson joined the professional Negro Leagues to play baseball in early 1945. He signed with the Kansas City Monarchs and had great success, but he was frustrated by all the disorganization that plagued⁵ the Negro Leagues. At the time, a few Major League teams were recruiting from the Negro Leagues, and Robinson struck up a relationship with the General Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Branch Rickey.

Rickey liked the potential he saw in Robinson, but he had one question. He knew Robinson would face racial discrimination and injustice if he joined the Major Leagues. Could he be “a Negro player with enough guts *not* to fight back?” Robinson promised that he could, and signed a contract with the Montreal Royals, the Dodgers’ top minor league team. After just one season, he transferred to the Brooklyn Dodgers.

As he stepped onto the field as first baseman in 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first Major League baseball player to break the color barrier⁶ since 1880. He was 28 years old.

- [10] African-American fans flooded to Dodgers games, and even the general public and the press had a mostly positive view of the team’s newest addition. However, Robinson faced discrimination from a few of his own team members, who threatened to sit out of games if he was allowed to play. Management took Robinson’s side — “I say he plays,” said the manager. “I say he can make us all rich. And if any of you cannot use the money, I will see that you are all traded.”

² 3. **Mar** (*verb*): to damage or spoil to a certain extent

³ 4. **Insubordination** (*noun*): defiance of authority

⁴ 5. to free someone from a criminal charge by verdict of not guilty

⁵ 6. **Plague** (*verb*): to cause continual trouble or distress

⁶ 7. an unspoken social code of racial segregation or discrimination

Other teams also disliked Robinson's admittance into the League. Many threatened not to play against him. Most managers rejected these threats and forced the players to participate anyway. Instead, they took it out on Robinson directly during the games. Some players were physically violent — he once received a 7-inch gash in his leg from an opponent who spiked him with his cleats — while others hurled verbal racial insults at him and his teammates. The racism from other teams only united the Dodgers, however, and the team grew more accepting of him.

Major Success

Robinson won Rookie of the Year in 1947. In later seasons, more African-Americans joined other teams in the Major Leagues, as Robinson continued to excel. His success gained him fans from all over the country. He started at second base for the National League in the 1949 All-Star game, and he helped the Dodgers win the 1949 National League pennant.

Over the next several years his success grew, and by 1955 the Dodgers pulled out a win in the World Series. Robinson was 36 and starting to feel the effects of his age. In 1956 he did not dominate the league as much as he used to, partially because of side effects he suffered from diabetes. When the Dodgers traded him to the New York Giants, Robinson decided to quit baseball altogether and become an executive for a coffee company instead.

A Legendary Impact

After his retirement Robinson remained a baseball legend. In 1962, he received baseball's highest honor when he was elected into the Hall of Fame. His playing style changed many team strategies. For example, he inspired players to be more aggressive in their base-running, rather than relying only on the distance they could hit the ball.

- [15] Robinson also made important racial breakthroughs in the sports world. The first baseball player to break the color barrier in 60 years, he paved the way for many future African-American and minority athletes. His career helped the upcoming Civil Rights Movement by giving Americans a heroic AfricanAmerican sports figure to rally around.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer and fill in on your bubble sheet:

1. PART A: Which of the following identifies a central idea of the text? [RI.2]
 - A. Jackie Robinson's undeniable talent made it easy for coaches and team members to accept him, despite the racial tension of the era.
 - B. While Jackie Robinson faced racial discrimination early on in his life, this stopped once he became the first African-American Major League Baseball player.
 - C. As the first African-American Major League Baseball player, Jackie Robinson was significant in the increased racial diversity that followed in baseball and in other aspects of American culture.
 - D. Once Jackie Robinson left baseball, the impact he had on the sport dwindled, and the racial diversity present on teams decreased.

2. PART B: Which section from the text best supports the answer to Part A? [RI.1]
 - A. "African-American fans flooded to Dodgers games, and even the general public and the press had a mostly positive view of the team's newest addition." (Paragraph 10)
 - B. "The racism from other teams only united the Dodgers, however, and the team grew more accepting of him." (Paragraph 11)
 - C. "Robinson was 36 and starting to feel the effects of his age. In 1956 he did not dominate the league as much as he used to, partially because of side effects he suffered from diabetes." (Paragraph 13)
 - D. "Robinson also made important racial breakthroughs in the sports world. The first baseball player to break the color barrier in 60 years, he paved the way for many future African-American and minority athletes." (Paragraph 15)

3. PART A: What is the meaning of “combative” in paragraph 5? [RI.4]
- A. compliant
 - B. ready to fight
 - C. ineffective
 - D. reckless
4. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?[RI.1]
- A. “Even early in his life, Robinson confronted racism head on.” (Paragraph 5)
 - B. “When the U.S. entered World War II, Robinson enlisted in the army.” (Paragraph 6)
 - C. “He never saw direct combat, but his military career was marred by racial problems.” (Paragraph 6)
 - D. “Robinson boarded a non-segregated bus, but he was instructed to sit in the back anyway.” (Paragraph 6)

PRO/CON: Did Hurricane Harvey show the reality of climate change?

By Wayne Madsen and Whitt Flora, Tribune News Service, adapted by Newsela staff on 09.12.17

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Level **1020L**



In this aerial photo, a neighborhood near Addicks Reservoir is flooded by rain from Tropical Storm Harvey on August 29, 2017, in Houston, Texas. Harvey set a record for rainfall from a tropical system in the continental U.S., dropping 51.88 inches just outside Houston, an eighth of an inch behind the U.S. record set in Hawaii in 1950. Parts of Houston may be flooded for another month. Photo by: AP Photo/David J. Phillip

PRO: Yes, Harvey shows climate change is real

The real scientists, not the ones paid by the fossil fuel industry, have been proven correct.

The sea and air temperatures are rising. That's been brought about by the constant production of environmentally destructive greenhouse gases, which trap heat and warm the earth. This has ensured that what were called "500-year storms" are now happening every couple of years.

Hurricane Harvey heavily flooded parts of Texas that were considered safe from it. Interstate highways were turned into raging rivers. The second floors of many homes and buildings were reached by floodwaters.

But the historic flooding of Texas isn't a one-off event. As Texas accounted for the damage caused by Harvey, South Asia saw 1,200 deaths and millions of people made homeless. Unusually powerful monsoon rains left cities in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan under water.

In July, devastating rains flooded subway stations and turned streets into lakes in Istanbul, Turkey.

There's no doubt: With drastic climate change, the world is experiencing historic storms more often.

Hurricane Katrina did to New Orleans and southern Louisiana in 2005 what Harvey did to Houston this year. The impact will be long-lasting.

Hurricane Rita followed Katrina in 2005 and its strong winds hit Houston. The Texas city was well-prepared for the event, but could have never foreseen the floods brought by Harvey.

Superstorm Sandy in 2012 reminded New York City that it was not protected from the effects of climate change. Flooded subways in Manhattan weren't images from a disaster movie — they were real.

Demands for assistance from such federal government groups as the National Flood Insurance Program reached new levels.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration studies the weather. It's counted an average of 15 major Atlantic storms each year from 1995 to 2012, an increase from years past. The increase was blamed on warming oceans, resulting from our warming atmosphere.

Ice formations in Antarctica and the Arctic have collapsed at the same time. It will cause coastal flooding and change sea currents.

The collapse of underwater ecosystems is already having awful results for all animals in the undersea food chain. Eventually, the top of that food chain, humankind, will suffer without these sea creatures to eat.

Miami streets now flood regardless if there is a storm or not. A Harvey-like storm striking Miami would permanently change the shorelines.

President Donald Trump says climate change is an idea made up by the Chinese.

Someday, the president's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, could be flooded by the rising waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Maybe then, he might understand that his belief in fake science is putting the world at risk.

Wayne Madsen is a writer whose columns have appeared in newspapers around the world.

CON: No, Hurricanes have plagued Texas for a long time

The journalists at East Coast news organizations — The New York Times, Washington Post, NBC, CNN — quickly made a judgment.

These news organizations proclaimed Hurricane Harvey a prime example of devastating climate change. At the time, heavy rains were still flooding a huge area of southeast Texas.

The news reporters received applause from former Vice President Al Gore and climate doomsayers across the country. But they were very wrong.

Hurricane Harvey is a horrible, extreme case of the weather that typically attacks Texas' Gulf Coast. But it has nothing to do with global climate change.

Some in the growing climate disaster industry claim that Harvey was directly caused by manmade climate change.

Senator Bernie Sanders, for example, said, "Is some of the intensity and the magnitude of this related to climate change? I think most scientists believe it is."

And he's been joined by countless others. They're making frenzied calls for more government action and saying climate change will make extreme storms more severe.

But for some historical background, consider what happened in 1900. The worst hurricane in American history roared into Galveston, Texas, destroying thousands of buildings and killing an estimated 6,000-12,000 people. Harvey, thus far, has accounted for less than 100 deaths.

University of Washington atmospheric scientist Cliff Mass said climate change did not cause Hurricane Harvey.

"You can't really pin global warming for something this extreme," Mass said.

William Happer is a former director of energy research of the U.S. Department of Energy. He is also skeptical of global warming as generally explained by mainstream media.

"Climate has been changing since the Earth was formed — some 4.5 billion years ago. Climate changes on every time scale — whether decades, centuries or millennia," he wrote earlier this year.

"The climate of Greenland was warm enough for farming around the year A.D. 1100 but by 1500 the Little Ice Age drove Norse settlers out. There is no opportunity for a hoax," he says, as climate change has been so well-documented over time.

Debate between skeptical thinkers like Happer and his agreeable fellow scientists doing research with money from the government will likely continue.

In the meantime, tens of thousands of Texans are homeless, hungry, and distressed.

A native of El Paso, Texas, Whitt Flora is an independent journalist. He has written about government affairs for The Columbus Dispatch and Aviation Week & Space Technology magazine.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer and fill in on your bubble sheet:

5. Read the paragraph from the CON article.

"The climate of Greenland was warm enough for farming around the year A.D. 1100 but by 1500 the Little Ice Age drove Norse settlers out. There is no opportunity for a hoax," he says, as climate change has been so well-documented over time.

WHY does the author use the word "hoax"?

- A. to indicate that some climate science might be intentionally inaccurate
 - B. to show that consensus exists about the impact of global warming
 - C. to demonstrate that there have been many proven fake reports about climate change
 - D. to suggest that the government should consider only climate change that can be proven in the historical record
6. Read the sentence from the CON article.

Debate between skeptical thinkers like Happer and his agreeable fellow scientists doing research with money from the government will likely continue.

Which two words would BEST replace "skeptical" and "agreeable" in the sentence above?

- A. unconvinced; unwilling
- B. certain; unsure
- C. doubtful; accepting
- D. devoted; convinced

7. Which of the following pieces of evidence is MOST relevant to the PRO article's argument?
- A. Hurricane Harvey heavily flooded parts of Texas that were considered safe from it.
 - B. Superstorm Sandy in 2012 reminded New York City that it was not protected from the effects of climate change.
 - C. It's counted an average of 15 major Atlantic storms each year from 1995 to 2012, an increase from years past.
 - D. Someday, the president's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, could be flooded by the rising waters of the Atlantic Ocean.
8. In the CON article, HOW does William Happer justify extreme weather such as Hurricane Harvey?
- A. He argues that we do not have adequate evidence to prove that climate change exists.
 - B. He suggests that dramatic climate changes have occurred throughout history.
 - C. He indicates that modern storms do not fit the definition of climate change presented by the media.
 - D. He shows evidence to prove that climate change is directly impacted by human activity.