



Black Diamond

Recommended for
Ages 7-11
Grades 2-6

A Reproducible Learning Guide for Educators

This guide is designed to help educators prepare for, enjoy, and discuss *Black Diamond*. It contains background, discussion questions and activities appropriate for ages 7-11.

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MEET SATCHEL PAIGE!

Leroy "Satchel" Paige was born in Mobile, Alabama in 1906, the sixth of twelve children. His father was a gardener, and his mother was a domestic worker. Some say Paige got his nickname while working as a baggage porter. He could carry so many suitcases (or satchels) at one time he looked like a "satchel tree."

SMITHSONIAN CONNECTION https://www.si.edu/object/33c-satchel-paige-single:npm_2000.2020.505

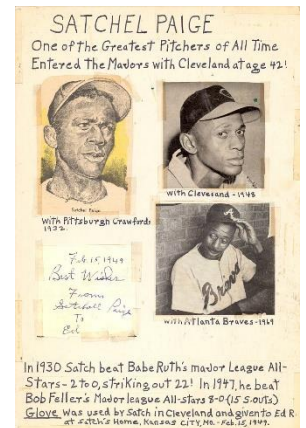
At age 12, a truant officer caught Paige skipping school and stealing. As punishment, he was sent to industrial school. "It got me away from the bums."

He said later. "It gave me a chance to polish up my game. It gave me some schooling I'd of never taken if I wasn't made to go to class."

PITCHING AND BARNSTORMING!

Satchel Paige pitched his first Negro League game in 1924 with the semi-pro Mobile Tigers ball club. After a stretch with the Pittsburgh Crawfords, he went to the Kansas City Monarchs, helping them to win half a dozen pennants between the years 1939-1948. In 1934, **Paige won 101 out of 105 games.**

SMITHSONIAN CONNECTION https://www.si.edu/object/satchel-paige-autograph:nmah_1347797



In the off-season, Satchel Paige would barnstorm as a solo player, appearing independently as a sports personality and sitting in with other teams. For a fee of \$500-\$2000, his appearance would guarantee a full house for small town teams. Paige was a sensation in his time – the most popular and celebrated player of the Negro Leagues. Over his career, he "performed" for crowds estimated to total 10 million in the U.S., Caribbean, and Central America.

NAME THAT BALL!

Satchel Paige amazed fans with his wide variety of pitches. Each had its own name: the "Trouble ball," the "Bee ball," the "Jump ball," the "Long Tom" and the "Two-hump blooper!" **Most famous of all his pitches was the "Hesitation Pitch,"** where he fooled the batter by touching his left foot to the ground just before the throw.



After several record-breaking years in the Negro Leagues, Paige was finally signed to play in the Major Leagues in 1948. (Jackie Robinson, the first African-American player in the Majors had joined the year before.) At age 42, Paige was the oldest "rookie" to enter the Major Leagues, playing for the Cleveland Indians. In September 1965, at the age of 59, he became the **oldest ever to pitch in the professional sport.**

In 1971, Satchel Paige was the first player of the Negro Leagues elected into **the National Baseball Hall of Fame.** A groundbreaker and a sports legend, he died in 1982 at age 75.

WHAT WERE THE NEGRO LEAGUES?

“The Negro Leagues” refers to African- American baseball teams that competed between 1880 and 1955. During this period, **African-Americans were barred from playing on white teams, so they formed their own leagues.** African American fans took pride in the player’s skills and looked forward to exhibition games between the Negro Leagues and the all-white Major League players.

NEGRO LEAGUE GREATS

There were notable athletes in the history of the Negro Leagues. In Black Diamond, you will meet:



Moses “Fleet” Walker

The first African-American player in the 19th-century Major Leagues, Walker played for the Toledo Blue Stockings in 1884 before the creation of the Negro Leagues. He and several other African-American players were gradually forced off teams as white players and owners restricted and then eliminated African American involvement. More than just an athlete, Walker attended Oberlin College and the University of Michigan. He studied Greek, Latin, German, French, and civil engineering, zoology, astronomy and chemistry, wrote a book and published a newspaper, the Equator.



Andrew “Rube” Foster

Foster as a pitcher, a team manager, and founder of the Negro National League, which started in 1920. He was known for his powerful, accurate screwball pitch, and his ability as a manager was equally impressive. **Foster was voted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1981.**



Josh Gibson

Perhaps the **Negro Leagues’ most prominent power hitter,** Gibson was called “the Black Babe Ruth.” Known for his kindness and easy-going personality, he was also a courageous batter, never flinching when a pitch came too close. He hit numerous home runs with incredible strength and control. Sadly, Gibson died shortly after his 35th birthday. **With the incorporation of the Negro League into Major League Baseball’s record book in 2024, Josh Gibson is now recognized as MLB’s all-time batting champion.**



Jackie Robinson

The first African American recruited to play in the modern Major Leagues, Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. An excellent all-round athlete, Robinson’s experience in college at UCLA and serving in the military set him apart from most other Negro Leaguers, who had little or no experience outside of segregated society. He played an important role in the Civil Rights movement, declaring that “The right of every American to first class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.”

PRIMARY SOURCE!

Some of the spoken lines in the show were actually said by the players themselves!

“Do not worry. Try to appear jolly and unconcerned...I have smiled often with the bases full with two strikes and three balls on the batter. This seems to unnerve.” – Rube Foster

Quotes from Satchel Paige:

“How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?”

“Work like you don't need the money. Love like you've never been hurt. Dance like nobody's watching.”

“Age is a question of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.”

“If your stomach disputes you, lie down and pacify it with cool thoughts.”

“Just take the ball and throw it where you want to. Throw strikes. Home plate don't move.”

“Josh Gibson was the greatest hitter who ever lived.”

Quotes from Jackie Robinson:

“A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.”

“I'm not concerned with your liking or disliking me... All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.”

“Baseball is like a poker game. Nobody wants to quit when he's losing; nobody wants you to quit when you're ahead.”

VOCABULARY OF KEY WORDS

Barnstorming – traveling across the country to showcase one's talents

Industrial School – a school specializing in teaching industrial skills (or a public institution of this kind for juvenile delinquents)

Pennant – 1. A flag that serves as the emblem of the championship in a professional baseball league. 2. The yearly championship in such a league.

Satchel – a small bag for books or clothing, often having a shoulder strap.

Truant Officer – a school attendance officer

“Black Diamond” – a term used to describe the Negro Leagues and its players

Hall of Fame – a museum celebrating the accomplishments of people who participate in a specific activity.

Negro League – the US professional baseball leagues comprising teams predominantly made up of African Americans.

Hero – a person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal.

ACTIVITIES

Design Your Own Baseball Uniform!

AGES 5-11

When Satchel Paige went out barnstorming, he wore a special homemade uniform with his name, "Satchel" sewn on the chest.

Create your own personal barnstorming "look"!

- Choose your favorite sport.
- Draw the outline of the uniform on a piece of paper. (Don't forget the socks, hat and shoes!)
- Decorate your uniform with markers, glitter, even feathers or sequins.
- Don't forget your name – in **BIG LETTERS** -so all your fans can see!

Get The Team Spirit!

AGES 7-11

- Pick a sport, a team name and team colors.
- Choose a mascot (an animal or creature that represents your team)
- Draw them in your team uniforms. Anything goes. If you want, draw stripes on the shirts, checks on the socks, and flowers on the shoes!
- Create a baseball card to go along with **your team**. Add your accomplishments, on and off the field! Use a real baseball card as a model. Draw or paste your picture on the front. On the back, write a short account of your rise to fame and list statistics or other information that fans should know.
- "Recruit" all your favorite people to be on the team! And PLAY BALL!



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https://www.si.edu/object/pennant-negro-league-east-vs-west-all-star-game:nmaahc_2015.80.1

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POST-SHOW DISCUSSION: PREJUDICE AND SPORTS

AGES 11+

As a class, focus on the many aspects of **professional athletics, privilege and prejudice**.

Remember there are many opinions: students shouldn't have to reach a consensus. It is important to stimulate critical thinking, and individuals can be encouraged to participate without reaching a set outcome or conclusion.

Review the types of prejudice suffered by the Negro League players.

- Was it better or worse after Robinson broke the color barrier by joining the Major Leagues in 1947?
- Do you think that athletes experience prejudice in sports today? How has the situation progressed? How is this attitude still in place?
- Can you think of other athletes who broke the color barrier in other sports?
- Research the May 31st, 2017 graffiti incident targeting LeBron James. What can you do about situations like this in today's sports?

How can you use the example of Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Rube Foster, Jackie Robinson and Branch Richey (the man who hired Jackie Robinson to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers) as models of different responses to racial inequities?

Make a video of the discussion and share it with us here at Discovery Theater. With your permission we will post it as a YouTube video on our Facebook page. Email it to info@DiscoveryTheater.org.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- www.blackbaseball.com: offers bios of notable African-American baseball players.
- <http://baseballhall.org/hof/paige-satchel>: Satchel Paige's page on the Baseball Hall of Fame's website. The site also includes info on baseball history and other hall of famers.
- <http://baseballhall.org/hof/paige-satchel>: Satchel Paige's page on the Baseball Hall of Fame's website. The site also includes info on baseball history and other hall of famers.
- <http://www.satchelpaige.com>: The Official Satchel Paige website.
- Humphrey, Kathryn Long. *Satchel Paige*. Franklin Watts, 1988. In-depth look for **ages 10+**.
- McKissack & McKissack. *Satchel Paige: The Best Arm in Baseball*. Enslow Publishers, Inc. 1992. Paige, Leroy. **Ages 6 & up**.
- Satchel & David Lipman. *Maybe I'll Pitch Forever: A Great Baseball Player Tells the Hilarious Story behind the Legend*. U of NE Press, 1993. Paige's autobiography (**for older readers**).
- Cline-Ransome, Lesa, and James E. Ransome. *Satchel Paige*. Simon & Schuster, 2000. Beautiful illustrations, saturated with color, in a biography for **ages 6 & up**.
- Riley, James A. *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Baseball Leagues*.
- Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc. 2002. A landmark reference book for **all ages**.
- Ritter, Lawrence S. *Leagues Apart: The Men and Times of the Negro Baseball Leagues*. Morrow Junior Books. 1995. Vibrantly illustrated introduction for readers **6 & up**.



Since 1979, Discovery Theater, the unique, DC-based museum theater has served as a gateway to Smithsonian exhibitions, collections, and themes. Through the joy of live stage performances, students from pre-K through 6th grade are immersed in global cultures, eco-science, living history, and traditional arts. Discovery Theater performances are created to complement students' classroom-based learning; to enrich audiences' knowledge of the arts, history, sciences, and cultures of the world; to foster a love of live theater; and to provide entertaining, educational museum-based interactive experiences.

Don't miss...

Mother Earth and Me

Wed – Fri, April 2nd- 4th and

Tues – Wed, April 29th -30th

10:15 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Recommended for Ages: 5 to 10/ Grades K – 5



**Check out our website to get your tickets now or
arrange to bring these shows to your school.**

www.DiscoveryTheater.org