

Lesson: Citizenship Grades 4-6

Topic: Using Sources



Play Ball, Eleanor?

Introduction: Students will use a primary source document to prompt a debate on whether or not women should be allowed to play Major League Baseball in 1952.

Learning Outcomes:

National Outcomes:

1. Teachers can encourage learners to consider the direct and indirect connections between the assumptions, beliefs, and values of a culture and its actions, policies, and products in multiple situations. They can help them analyze the ways that a people's cultural ideas and actions influence its members.

Ohio Learning Outcomes:

1. Obtain information from a variety of primary and secondary sources using the component parts of the source.
2. Use a variety of sources to organize information and draw inferences.

Getting Started:

Materials:

- Internet access to the National Baseball Hall of Fame's Website:
<http://www.baseballhalloffame.org/default.htm>
- A copy of the article "Gal Shortstop's Bid Given Short 'No' by O.B. Officials," published in *The Sporting News*, July 2, 1952:
http://www.baseballhalloffame.org/education/primary_sources/women/article_01_Transcript.htm

Vocabulary:

- stereotype

Lesson:

Orientation Activity:

- Compare the societal differences between the year 1952, when the article was written, and today, 2003. Lead a discussion on how students think that our society would react now if a woman was signed to play on a Major League Baseball team. Who would object? Who would be happy? Why? What are the stereotypes of women?

Learning Activity:

- Divide students into groups.
- Assign each group a different point of view to hold while reading and reacting to the article. They will debate the issue.

Group 1 - Eleanor Engle

Group 2 - George Engle, Eleanor's husband

Group 3 - Whitey Kurowski, Manager of the Allentown Baseball Team (opponents)

Group 4 - Major League Baseball Umpires

Group 5 - Ford Frick, Major League Baseball Commissioner

Group 6 - Manager Clarence (Buck) Etnison of the Harrisburg Baseball Club

Students will read the article out loud to their group and complete the group worksheet, "Back in 1952." They should be able to argue their opinion to the group. After the students have had time to discuss their ideas, debate the issue as a class. After the discussion, students can explore their individual opinion on the "What Do *You* Think?" worksheet.

Evaluation and Follow-Up:

Assessment Tools and Methods:

- "Back in 1952" group worksheet
- Class participation in discussion and group activity
- "What Do *You* Think?" hand out

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Reading: Students can research and read other articles about women in baseball.
- Writing: Students can write a letter to the editor extrapolating on their opinions.

“What Do You Think?” Hand Out



Name _____

Do you think women should be allowed to play baseball in 1952? Circle YES or NO.

Why or why not? _____

Do you think women should be allowed to play baseball in 2003? Circle YES or NO.

Why or why not? _____

Think of yourself as the Major League Baseball Commissioner. Suggest two ways to solve the disagreement concerning women in baseball.

“Back in 1952” Group Worksheet



Group Members:

Point of View:

How do you think Casey of the Mudville Nine would feel about women in baseball?

Do you think women should be allowed to play baseball? Why or why not?

Why do you think so many people are against women playing baseball?

What do you feel should happen next?

What was the attitude about women in 1952?
