

The Satchel Paige Story

Synopsis

When baseball began, white managers and players refused to play against teams that had black players among them. In 1887, the International League officially barred contracts with anyone of color-- which meant that African-Americans, Hispanics, as well as Native Americans were excluded from America's national pastime. But the black teams continued to play and at the turn of the century the "golden age of blackball," as The Negro Leagues were known, began.

Satchel Paige was the biggest star of his day. In his incredible career, which lasted over 40 years, he was able to throw harder, straighter and farther than anyone else has ever been able to do. He played his best ball in the Negro Leagues during the 1920's, 30's and 40's, and made more money than any other black or white baseball player at the time. It was said that when "Satch" threw his fastball it would somehow vanish mid-flight.

Leroy "Satchel" Paige grew up in Mobile Alabama, and got his nickname transporting guests' bags from the train to the hotels. In July of 1918, his mother sent him to The Industrial School for Negro Children just outside of Montgomery, where he learned to play baseball in his free time. At the age of 13, Satchel, at 6 foot 3 and 140 pounds, began to gain attention for his talents on the field. Under the coaching of manager Edward Byrd, Satchel learned how to pitch, and in 1926 began playing in the semi-pro Negro leagues at a salary of \$50 a month.

Satchel Paige played for over 30 teams during his career in the Negro Leagues, including Chattanooga, Birmingham, Cuba, Baltimore, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, California, North Dakota, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Kansas City Travelers, Puerto Rico and the Kansas City Monarchs. In addition, he played in the Major Leagues for The Cleveland Indians and the St. Louis Browns. Though Satchel had amazing talent, he was met over the years with much resistance to integration within the sport. Finally in 1948, he joined the Major Leagues and remains the oldest Rookie in baseball history.

Satchel continued to play baseball in triple-A and exhibition games until he was in his 60's, when he began losing feeling in his pitching arm, probably due to a slight shoulder separation. Many years later, this would be among the simplest injuries to repair, but at the time, nothing and no one could help him. After much stalling and controversy, Leroy Robert Paige was finally welcomed into the Baseball Hall of Fame on August 9, 1971. Satchel Paige had become a legend in the game of baseball and helped pave the way of opportunity for men of color in Major League Baseball.

Satchel Paige

In The ArtReach production of *Satchel Paige* we are introduced to a baseball player named Satchel. Satchel helped pave the way for another famous African American baseball player. Thanks to Satchel, African American men are able to play in the Major League Baseball Association.

In this activity, students learn about other historical figures who made a difference and understand that to make a difference, you can be any race or gender, and there are no boundaries.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Historical Figure Descriptions
- Activist Worksheet
- Pencil

ACTIVITY

1. Introduce the historical figures (attached page) to the students. The teacher can read the short biographies to their students or split the students into groups to familiarize themselves with the stories.
2. Have each student choose the person most like them and study their figure more closely.
3. Have the groups discuss how the people they have chosen are important. Help them to understand the impact made by the person.
4. Come back together as a class and discuss each person. Write down student input and ideas.
5. Once all ideas are spoken, have the class find the common themes from all of their suggestions.
6. Discuss as a class how even though the people lived at different times, each was a leader in their own way. See how many different ways the historical figures have helped people.
7. Writing exercise: Have the students think of themselves as activists. (Use attached worksheet). Once students have finished, discuss as a class what kind of activists your students are and can become.

Satchel Paige Historical Figure Descriptions

- (624-705): **Wu Zetian** (Asian female)
 - Wu was the only female in China's history to assume the title of Empress Regent. As she held the title, she ruled China – although she had a husband and sons. She ruled in this manner for 25 years, and then founded her own dynasty and ruled for another 15 years. Wu also encouraged volunteering and the country was very successful and healthy during her reign.
- (1806-1872): **Benito Juarez** (Hispanic male)
 - Benito Juarez was President of Mexico for five terms (14 years). He was the first president with no military background, as well as the first full blood indigenous national to rule. Throughout his terms, (known as The Reform), he helped Mexico make many changes including: resisting French occupation, modernizing the country, and bringing the army under civilian control. He is well known for a quote: "Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace."
- (1820-1906): **Susan B. Anthony** (Caucasian female)
 - Susan B. Anthony played a significant role in the women's rights movement for suffrage (voting rights for women). With Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she co-founded the first Women's Temperance Movement. She also co-founded *The Revolution*, a journal on women's rights. She is immortalized as the first American woman on a U.S. circulating coin – she can be found on the Susan B. Anthony silver dollar.
- (1856-1921): **Hara Takashi** (Asian male)
 - Hara Takashi was the 19th Prime Minister of Japan. He was also the first commoner appointed to be Prime Minister. He was a very cautious ruler, which upset some of the prominent politicians in the government. While Hara was in office, Japan became one of the founding members of the League of Nations. Unfortunately, his time in office was short, only three years. He was assassinated by an opposing party railway worker.
- (1867-1948): **The Wright Brothers** (Caucasian males)
 - Brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright were the inventors and builders of the first successful airplane. They also were able to create the first successful heavier than air human flight. In the years following their flight, they were able to develop their design into the first practical fixed-wing aircraft. They are considered to be the pioneers of aviation.
- (1913-2005): **Rosa Parks** (African American female)
 - Rosa Parks was called by Congress "The First Lady of Civil Rights" and "The Mother of the Freedom Movement." Rosa became famous when she refused to give up her seat in the white section of a bus to a white individual, even after being ordered to do so by the bus driver. By doing this, Rosa Parks became an icon of desegregation and civil rights.
- (1919-1952): **Eva Peron** (Hispanic female)
 - As the First lady of Argentina, Eva Peron was expected to fulfill the political duties her job entailed. However, she went above and beyond the call of duty as she fought for labor rights within trade unions. She also ran the Ministries of Labor and Health, along with her own foundation. She was similar to Susan B. Anthony in that she campaigned for women's suffrage and founded Argentina's first female political party.
- (1919-1972): **Jackie Robinson** (African American male)
 - As you heard in the ArtReach production of Satchel Paige, Jackie Robinson was the first African American Major League Baseball player. He made his debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. This move ended segregation in professional baseball, as it had been separated into the Negro League for the past 60 years. He was also awarded Rookie of the Year in 1947.

Activist Worksheet

Many of the individuals you just learned about were known as activists. This means they intentionally made an effort to bring about social, political, economic or environmental change.

Imagine you are an activist.

1. What is a problem that you think should have a solution? Explain. _____

2. Awareness is a key to solving problems. How can you make people aware of the problem you described above? Explain. _____

3. By using what you've learned about the historical activists, what can you do to begin to solve the problem you discussed? Explain. _____

4. Share your problem, awareness ideas and solution with the rest of your class.

Sources:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wu_Zetian
- http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_aboutchina/2003-09/24/content_22879.htm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benito_Juarez
- <http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/19thcenturylatinamerica/p/benitojuarez.htm>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susan_b_anthony
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- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eva_Peron
- <http://www.notablebiographies.com/Pe-Pu/Per-n-Eva.html>
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- <http://www.jackierobinson.com/about/bio.html>

Satchel Paige

Use your knowledge to answer the baseball trivia below.

1. This item is used to protect the player's hand when catching a flying baseball.

2. This item is used to hit the baseball. In the Major League Baseball, only wooden ones are allowed.

3. This item is hit, caught, and thrown by players of the sport.

4. In order to get a home run, a player must round all of the bases including this last one to score.

5. Baseball rules allow this many strikes before a batter is "out."

6. Baseball rules allow this many balls to be thrown before a walk is required.

7. A traditional baseball team has this many players on the field at all times.

8. If all three bases have a player on them and the fourth player at bat hits a home run, four runs are scored and it is called this:

9. In order to protect their heads, baseball players wear this when they are up at bat.

10. There is usually this number of innings in a baseball game. Each has a top and bottom.

Satchel Paige
(ANSWER KEY)

1. This item is used to protect the player's hand when catching a flying baseball.

B A S E B A L L G L O V E

2. This item is used to hit the baseball. In the Major League Baseball, only wooden ones are allowed.

B A S E B A L L B A T

3. This item is hit, caught, and thrown by players of the sport.

B A S E B A L L

4. In order to get a home run, a player must round all of the bases including this last one to score.

H O M E P L A T E

5. Baseball rules allow this many strikes before a batter is "out."

T H R E E

6. Baseball rules allow this many balls to be thrown before a walk is required.

F O U R

7. A traditional baseball team has this many players on the field at all times.

N I N E

8. If all three bases have a player on them and the fourth player at bat hits a home run, four runs are scored and it is called this:

G R A N D S L A M

9. In order to protect their heads, baseball players wear this when they are up at bat.

H E L M E T

10. There is usually this number of innings in a baseball game. Each has a top and bottom.

N I N E