



PART I: Discussion Questions Lisa Wingate, Southernbellevueviewdaily.com

Why do you think Branch Rickey does not admit his real reasons for bringing Jackie Robinson onto the team until later in the season? Why does Branch initially tell everyone it is all about bringing in more money from black fans and winning more ball games? Do you think he believes this is his reason for breaking the color barrier in the major leagues?

Branch tells Jackie he is looking for a player with the courage not to fight back if he is persecuted, insulted, abused, and hated by players, officials, and fans. How can having a “thick skin” be an advantage in life? How might things have turned out differently if Jackie had given in and lost his temper on the field?

Victory is often about adapting to change. How do the various players of the Brooklyn Dodgers and other members of the league adapt differently to addition of Jackie to the team? What happens to those who do not adapt?

42 is a story of personal courage, of people with the guts to stand up against a situation that is both wrong and accepted by the masses. Do situations like this exist today? Do we all face these situations, even if on a smaller stage, in our own lives? Have you ever experienced one? What did you do? Was there something you would do differently, if, like Branch Rickey, you had the chance to go back and right an old wrong?

“A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives.”
—*J a c k i e R o b i n s o n*



Both Jackie and Branch are gifted people — Jackie with talent, and Branch with money and influence. They choose to employ those gifts to change the world, even when they could have followed an easier path. What gifts do you have that could be used to change your school, your community, or the world? Actions speak slowly, but loudly. What do your actions say? Have you ever been disappointed with your own actions in a difficult situation?

Jackie's first season begins to inspire change in young people who watch him play. How can we inspire the people around us?

Are Jackie's teammates, who at first do nothing when Jackie is ridiculed on the field, as guilty as the people who yell racial slurs? When we pretend not to see bad behavior or injustice are we, in effect, saying it's okay? Do people assume that doing nothing means "I agree?"

Was it hard for you to watch the scene in which the Phillies manager, Ben Chapman, yells racial slurs at Jackie Robinson on the field? How did you feel when Jackie's teammate came out of the dugout to stand up against the Phillies manager's racism? How can being "Under fire" sometimes propel us to heroism we did not know we were capable of?

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Do you think Jackie would have made it through the season if he had not had the support of his wife, Branch Rickey, and eventually teammates like Pee Wee Reese? How can finding the right people to support us increase our ability to stand up for what we believe in?

After showing support for Jackie on the field, Pee Wee Reese receives a threatening letter, but when he takes the letter to Branch Rickey's office, he soon learns that Jackie has received hundreds of mail threats. Can we ever really understand what another person may be enduring without walking in those shoes? How did you feel when Reese stood beside Jackie on the field as a demonstration of support? Why did he choose to do this?

What's the biggest lesson you took away from the movie? Which individual did you find the most heroic? Which individual did you most closely identify with?

PART II Breaking Barriers Student Lesson by Scholastic

Define a personal barrier as a problem or obstacle that stops you from moving forward. Barriers can be *physical* or *conceptual*. A physical barrier is something you can see, such as a fence. A conceptual barrier is something you cannot see, such as being afraid of something. Explain your reasoning.

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Describe different barriers that people face and explain why each barrier prevents people from moving forward or accomplishing something. Why is it important to face barriers?

In paragraph form, explain how you would face and overcome the barriers as outlined in question two.

Referring back to the story of Jackie Robinson, what does the quote below signify?

Discuss the concept of *character* which can be defined as features and traits of an individual that reflect the sort of person he or she is.

How do values reflect a person's *character*? How do a person's actions display values and character?

What does it mean when a person is described as having "strength of character"?

Discuss contemporary examples of individuals who have broken barriers, and values that they relied upon in facing barriers.

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