

▶ **Standard:** Determine Key Concepts ▶ **Skill:** Identify Topics

A Player to Remember

- ① In baseball, April 15 is Jackie Robinson Day. Players across the country wear number 42. They honor a great player who changed their sport. Robinson played his first Major League Baseball¹ game on April 15, 1947. He wore the number 42 on his uniform. But who was Jackie Robinson? And why is he honored?
- ② Jackie Robinson was born in 1919. He was a talented athlete. In college, he played football, basketball, and baseball. Then, in 1942, he joined the U.S. Army. He served for two years.
- ③ At that time, life in the United States was not easy. African Americans, like Robinson, were often treated unfairly. Laws in some places forced black people to be separate from white people. Once, Robinson was asked to sit in the back of a military bus. This request was made just because he was black. He refused.



Jackie Robinson at bat. Look Magazine Photo Collection (Library of Congress), LC-DIG-ppmsc-00048/Bob Sandberg, photographer

Robinson continued to play even though some players said they didn't want to play with an African-American player.

¹ **Major League Baseball (n):** leagues, or groups, of professional baseball teams; it is the highest level of baseball in the United States

- ④ That event affected Robinson. He felt inspired. He wanted to fight for equal rights for all people. Little did he know what a difference he would make.
- ⑤ In 1947, Robinson became the first African American to play for a Major League Baseball team in the 20th century. Robinson faced harsh treatment from other players and fans. But he stayed strong. And he played well. He was the National League's Rookie of the Year in 1947. Two years later, he was the league's Most Valuable Player (MVP). Another year, he led the Brooklyn Dodgers to a World Series² win.
- ⑥ Robinson opened the door for all African-American baseball players. He stopped playing in 1957. But he continued to fight for equal rights. He appeared at civil rights events. And he gave speeches. He inspired many people.
- ⑦ Robinson died in 1972. Years later, his number, 42, was retired. No other players could wear that number. Except for on Jackie Robinson Day, of course.



Back cover of Jackie Robinson comic book, Fawcett Publications (Library of Congress), LC-USZC4-6147

Jackie Robinson has been featured in many artistic works. This picture is from a comic book about him.

²**World Series (n):** the highest championship series of baseball games played in the Major Leagues

“A Player to Remember”

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Name _____

1. Complete the *Main Topic Chart* on page 167. Tell about the main topic of “A Player to Remember” and the focus of paragraphs 1, 3, and 5.

Answer questions 2–5.

2. What is this passage mostly about?
 - A. a national holiday in April
 - B. a professional baseball team
 - C. an important baseball player
 - D. a set of laws in American history

3. Which paragraph tells what Jackie Robinson did after his baseball career?
 - A. paragraph 2
 - B. paragraph 3
 - C. paragraph 5
 - D. paragraph 6

4. What is the focus of paragraph 4? Explain.

5. Which paragraph focuses on Jackie Robinson's career as a baseball player? Use information from that paragraph to tell about his career.

“A Player to Remember”

Answer Key

1. Possible responses: Main Topic: Jackie Robinson, a famous African-American baseball player

Focus of Paragraph 1: Every year on April 15, baseball players across the country wear the number 42. They celebrate Jackie Robinson Day in honor of a great player who changed the sport of baseball.

Focus of Paragraph 3: In the 1940s, African Americans were often treated unfairly. Some laws made them stay apart from white people.

Focus of Paragraph 5: Robinson was the first African American to play on a Major League Baseball team in the 20th century. He faced challenges, but he still played very well. He earned several awards.
2. C
3. D
4. Paragraph 4 tells about how an event in Robinson's life affected him. He was told to move to the back of a bus just because he was black. This event made him want to fight for equal rights for all people.
5. Paragraph 5 focuses on Robinson's career as a baseball player. He was the first African American to play for a Major League team in the 20th century. He was named Rookie of the Year in 1947. Then he was named MVP in 1949. He also helped the Dodgers win the World Series one year.