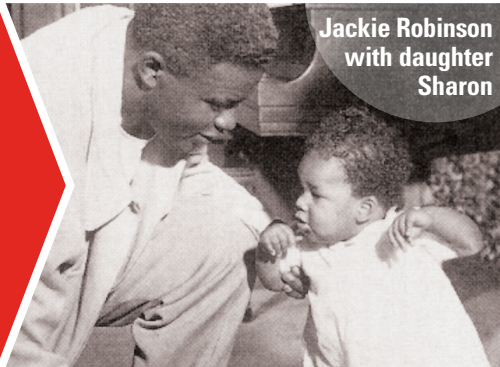


# About My Father

By Sharon Robinson

Author of *The Hero Two Doors Down* and *Promises to Keep*



Jackie Robinson  
with daughter  
Sharon

rough conditions my dad would face in the Majors. Racist fans would shout angry insults. A spiteful opponent might spike him with metal cleats. Rickey hoped my father would have the strength of character to fight back with his bat and not his fist. My dad agreed to this plan. Two months later, he signed with the Montreal Royals, the Dodgers™ minor league team.

Rickey was right: My dad faced amazing odds. He fought back with perfectly timed bunts, hard line drives, and stolen bases. On April 15, 1947, he stepped

**A**pril 15 marks the anniversary of Jackie Robinson's breaking of the color barrier in Major League Baseball. A student once asked me: "What is the color barrier?" Baseball's "color barrier" refers to the time in U.S. history when black- and brown-skinned ballplayers were kept out of the Majors. In 1947, my father, Jackie Robinson, broke through that barrier. He opened the door for others to follow.

Fifty years later, *Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life* was created to help diverse students understand Jackie Robinson's legacy of change. By participating in this program, you'll come to understand the values that made my father successful on the field, and that also guided him as a parent. You'll likewise discover strengths in your own character to help you overcome barriers in your life. Let's get started!

American baseball became popular during the Civil War. Briefly in the late 1800s, two black players, Bud Fowler and Moses Fleetwood Walker, played alongside whites. But by 1890, Major League Baseball, like most of the U.S., was "segregated." Black- and brown-skinned players were in the Negro Leagues. Whites played in the Majors.

In 1945, Branch Rickey stepped forward to break baseball's color barrier.

Rickey was the president and general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers™. He sent scouts to explore the pool of players. Many Negro League

**“Rickey hoped my father would have the strength of character to fight back with his bat and not his fist.”**

players were well-known and highly skilled. Players such as Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson topped the list provided by Mr. Rickey's scouts. But they agreed on Jack Roosevelt Robinson.

The scouts told Mr. Rickey about Jackie Robinson. During his season with the Negro League team the Kansas City Monarchs, Robinson played shortstop. He hit .387, honed his skill at stealing bases, and was chosen for the league's All-Star Game.

They presented my dad's college statistics next. While at UCLA, he was the leading basketball scorer in his conference. He was also the national champion in the long jump, an All-American halfback in football, and a varsity baseball shortstop. In fact, he was the first athlete at UCLA to letter in four sports in a single year.

In a now-famous meeting, Branch Rickey painted the

onto the grass of Ebbets Field™ as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers™. He went on to play 10 seasons and earned such awards as Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player.

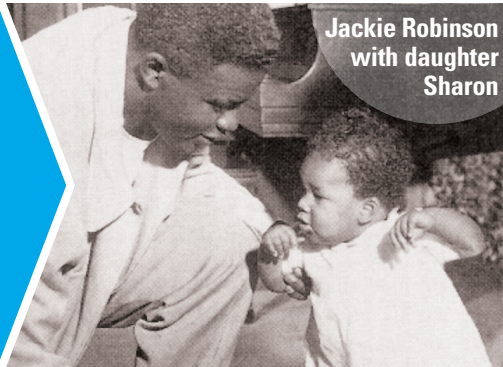
It took 13 seasons before every Major League Baseball team had at least one black player. Today, things have changed. Major League Baseball players come from around the world. They break barriers of culture, language, race, and religion. Like you, they meet challenges with the same set of values that helped my father succeed on and off the field. ♦

Jackie  
Robinson  
sliding into  
home, 1949



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As predicted, my dad played baseball against amazing odds. He fought back with perfectly timed bunts, hard line drives, and

stolen bases. On April 15, 1947, Jack Roosevelt Robinson stepped onto the grass of Ebbets Field™ as a member of the Brooklyn Dodgers™. He went on to play 10 seasons, earning such awards as Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player.

It took 13 long seasons before every Major League Baseball team had at least one African-American player on its roster. Today, Major League Baseball players come from around the world and continue to break barriers of culture, language, race, and religion. Like you, they face barriers and meet challenges with the same set of values that helped my father succeed on and off the field. ♦

Jackie  
Robinson  
sliding into  
home, 1949



# Values And Barriers



George Springer,  
Houston Astros™

We all face barriers in our lives, even Major League Baseball players. Read below to see how some of these ballplayers face barriers by using **Jackie Robinson's Nine Values**.



**YU DARVISH**  
Texas Rangers™

**"Wherever and whenever I'm told to pitch, I'll just do my best. I always strive for excellence."**

**"I learned from my dad, if you make a mistake, don't let it happen again. Just keep your head up and keep playing. Persistence and determination are very important in life."**



**ROBINSON CANO**  
Seattle Mariners™



**CLAYTON KERSHAW**  
Los Angeles Dodgers™

**On citizenship: "Being able to contribute to others to improve their lives is an honor and a privilege."**

**"We won't let history define our future. Our actions will do the talking. Our determination will turn doubters into believers."**



**ANDREW MCCUTCHEN**  
Pittsburgh Pirates™

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**> VALUE:** A belief that is important to you and helps to guide your life

**> BARRIER:** A challenge or obstacle that stops you from moving forward

## JACKIE ROBINSON'S NINE VALUES:



### CITIZENSHIP

Making a contribution that improves the lives of others

### COMMITMENT

Making a promise and following through on it

### COURAGE

Doing what you know is the right thing even when it is hard to do

### DETERMINATION

Staying focused on a plan even though the path to its end may be difficult

### EXCELLENCE

Doing the best that you possibly can

### INTEGRITY

Sticking to your values, regardless of what others think you should do

### JUSTICE

Treating all people fairly, no matter who they are

### PERSISTENCE

Working toward a goal and continuing to move forward even though you face obstacles or barriers

### TEAMWORK

Working with other people toward a common goal

To learn more about Major League players and breaking barriers, visit [MLB.com/BREAKINGBARRIERS](http://MLB.com/BREAKINGBARRIERS).

Cut here for your own Jackie Robinson's Nine Values bookmark.



# Essay Organizer



**F**ollow the steps in the diagram below to help you write your essay. In baseball, you have to follow bases as you run. Likewise, in an essay each step is important and should be followed to complete the essay.



## BEGIN WRITING YOUR ESSAY!

- ◆ Try writing a few “practice” sentences to get your mind ready to go.
- ◆ Use the outline you created on third base to keep you on the right track.
- ◆ Your essay should begin with a good topic sentence. Creating a strong topic sentence can help guide your essay writing.



## ESSAY CONTEST!

Write an essay about a **barrier** you have faced. In the essay, explain how you used one or more of Jackie Robinson's nine values to face your barrier. Use the organizer above to help you develop your ideas. Students in grades 4–9 can enter the **Breaking Barriers Essay Contest**.

For more information, ask your teacher or visit [scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/kids](http://scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/kids).

(continued from previous page)

5. After students finish their discussions, ask various groups to share their answers.
6. Referring back to “About My Father,” instruct students to write a paragraph about what made Jackie Robinson a good candidate to break the color barrier.
7. Then, from the list created in Step 3, ask students to choose one of the barriers (or assign one barrier to each student). Instruct students to write a couple of sentences about how Jackie Robinson’s character traits might be helpful to face this barrier.
8. Ask students to share their paragraphs and sentences in small groups.
9. Move on to Lesson 2: “Values and Barriers” to learn about how Jackie Robinson used values to face challenges and barriers.

#### EXTENSIONS

- In 1949, two years after Jackie Robinson broke baseball’s color barrier, he and three others (Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe, and Larry Doby) became the first-ever African-American players selected for an MLB All-Star Game. How is this achievement a result of Jackie Robinson’s earlier achievement? (Answers might include: *Breaking barriers can open doors for others to follow.*)
- Have students research a figure from the civil rights movement of the 1950s–1960s (e.g., Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, or Melba Pattillo Beals) and report on barriers he or she broke.

### LESSON 2: Values and Barriers

**Reproducible 2:** “Values and Barriers”

**Additional Materials:** Classroom Poster

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Lesson Objective:** Through reading and class discussion, students will understand what values are and how they are important in facing barriers.

#### LESSON STEPS

1. Start the class by asking students what the word *values* means. Guide them to define *values* as: *beliefs that are important to you and that help to guide your life.*
2. Display the classroom poster. Ask students to discuss with a partner the meaning of the quote, “Life is not a spectator sport.” Then ask various groups to share their answers.
3. Divide the class into nine small groups and distribute Reproducible 2: “Values and Barriers” to each group. Assign each group one of the values from the “Values and Barriers” handout. Have students discuss their assigned value, drawing on the text and making inferences from it to respond to these questions:
  - *Explain the meaning of your assigned value in your own words.*
  - *Why is this an important value for people to have?*
  - *How could this value help people face and overcome a barrier? Provide an example.*
4. After students finish their discussions, ask groups to share their answers with the class.
5. Have students prepare to write essays about their own barriers, and how they have used Jackie Robinson’s values to face those barriers. Move on to Lesson 3: “Essay Organizer” to help students understand important steps in the essay-writing process. Encourage students to enter their essays in the **Breaking Barriers Essay Contest**.

#### EXTENSIONS

- Discuss the concept of *character*, which can be defined as the 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 his or her values and character? What does it mean when a person is described as having “strength of character”?
- Have students research and discuss contemporary examples of individuals who have broken barriers, and values that they relied upon in facing barriers. (Examples might include Sonia Sotomayor, Malala Yousafzai, or someone in their local community.)
- Encourage students to conduct interviews with family and friends to discuss any barriers they have faced, as well as the values they have called upon to overcome these barriers.

### LESSON 3: Essay Organizer

**Reproducible 3:** “Essay Organizer”

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Lesson Objective:** Students will follow steps to prepare to write an essay about using values to overcome barriers.

#### LESSON STEPS

1. Distribute copies of Reproducible 3: “Essay Organizer.”
2. As a class, review the steps of the essay-writing process. To reinforce concepts of barriers and values, as well as the history of Jackie Robinson, refer to previous lessons and reproducibles.

**Step 1: Choose a topic.** Ask students to identify a barrier they’ve faced and a value they’ve used to face and overcome the barrier. Remind students to be as specific as possible. Example: Saying you’re afraid or too young is too general. Narrow the topic to “fear of failing” or “too young to be in Little League.” Likewise, saying you used “courage” or “integrity” is too general. Discuss specifics of the value(s) used.

**Step 2: Write your main ideas.** Assign students to do a quick three-minute “freewrite” of a sentence or two for each of the **writing prompts** below:

  - *What was the barrier you faced?*
  - *What are some basic details about the barrier? (For example, When did you face the barrier? Who was involved in the situation? Where did it occur?)*
  - *Which of Jackie Robinson’s nine values did you use to overcome the barrier?*
  - *How did you use the value to face or overcome the barrier? (Write a separate sentence for each value, if you used more than one.)*
  - *How was your barrier similar to the barriers that Jackie Robinson faced? How was it different?*
  - *What was the outcome of using your value(s)?*

**Step 3: Create an outline.** Explain to students that outlines help them organize their essays. Tell them that they can move items around or take them out as they create their outlines. Their goal should be to arrange their ideas in a logical way. Remind students that each main idea needs details to support it.

**Step 4: Write topic sentences.** Explain to students that in this step they will write topic sentences based on their outlines. Generally, each topic sentence begins a new paragraph. Supporting sentences follow and provide information that helps explain the topic sentence.
3. Tell students that when they have completed their essays, they can submit their work to the **Breaking Barriers Essay Contest**. Distribute copies of the contest reproducible or direct students to [scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/kids](http://scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/kids).

20th  
Year!

# 2016 Breaking Barriers Essay Contest



2015 Grand Prize Winner Malcolm Venable of New Orleans, LA, with Rob Manfred, Commissioner of Major League Baseball, and Sharon Robinson, daughter of Jackie Robinson and author.

**Deadline:** March 14, 2016 | Grades 4–9

## Write About a Barrier You Have Faced

Each year April 15 marks the anniversary of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in baseball in 1947. Honoring this important event, the **Breaking Barriers Essay Contest** is a chance for diverse students across the country to share their personal stories and how they use Jackie Robinson's nine values to face their own barriers.

### How to Enter:

- 1** Write an essay about a barrier that you have faced. Explain how you used one or more of Jackie Robinson's nine values (listed below) to face this barrier.

- |               |                 |               |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| • Citizenship | • Determination | • Justice     |
| • Commitment  | • Excellence    | • Persistence |
| • Courage     | • Integrity     | • Teamwork    |

- 2** On each entry, include the following information:

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| • student's name  | • school name           |
| • student's grade | • school city and state |
| • teacher's name  |                         |

- 3** Submit your essay in one of two ways:

**Mail:**

Breaking Barriers Contest  
Scholastic Inc.  
P.O. Box 713  
New York, NY 10013-0713

**Online:**

**Grades 4–8:** Give your entry to your teacher to enter online

**Grade 9:** Enter at [scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/kids/grade9](http://scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/kids/grade9)

- All entries must be submitted by March 14, 2016.
- All essays must be factual and based on the student's real-life experience. Fictional stories will be disqualified.

### Word Count Requirements:

**Grades 4–6:** 200 to 750 words    **Grades 7–9:** 500 to 1,400 words

### Essays will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • How well does the essay express the student's barrier?  | • How well is the essay organized to express what the writer wants to say? |
| • How well does the essay express how one or more of the values— <i>citizenship, commitment, courage, determination, excellence, integrity, justice, persistence, and teamwork</i> —are used to face and/or overcome the barrier? | • How effective is the essay in expressing the writer's point of view?     |
|   | • How well does the essay incorporate an example of Jackie Robinson?       |
|   | • Correct grammar and spelling will also be considered.                    |

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Void where prohibited. All students who are legal residents of, and currently reside in, the U.S., D.C., and Canada (excluding Quebec) and who are currently enrolled in grades 4–9 are eligible to enter, except for those who have family members employed by Major League Baseball Properties, Inc., Scholastic Inc., and other related companies (see the Official Rules for a complete listing). All entries must be written in English. Visit [scholastic.com/breakingbarriers](http://scholastic.com/breakingbarriers) for complete Official Rules and restrictions. All prospective winners and their respective parents/legal guardians will be required to sign, notarize, and return an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability within ten (10) days of date of notification or an alternate winner may be selected. In the event of prize unavailability, a prize of equal or greater value will be awarded as determined by the sole discretion of MLB. No cash substitutions for prizes. Prizes are nontransferable. ERV of Prizes: Grand Prize (\$7,659.70); MVP (\$4,859.70); All-Star (\$2,159.70).

Entry information in Spanish: [scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/spanish](http://scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/spanish)

### 20 National Winners for 2016!

#### Grand Prize Winners (2)

- **Grades 4–6:** Trip to the 2016 MLB® All-Star Game®
- **Grades 7–9:** Trip to a game of the 2016 MLB® World Series®
- Student and teacher laptops
- Class visit from Sharon Robinson

#### MVP Winners (2)

- Student and teacher laptops
- Class visit from Sharon Robinson

#### All-Star Winners (16)

- Student laptops

All 20 winners also receive a class set of books by Sharon Robinson and a class set of T-shirts.



20th  
Year!



## POSTER AND TEACHING GUIDE

CELEBRATING **20 YEARS** WITH  
**20 NATIONAL WINNERS IN 2016!**

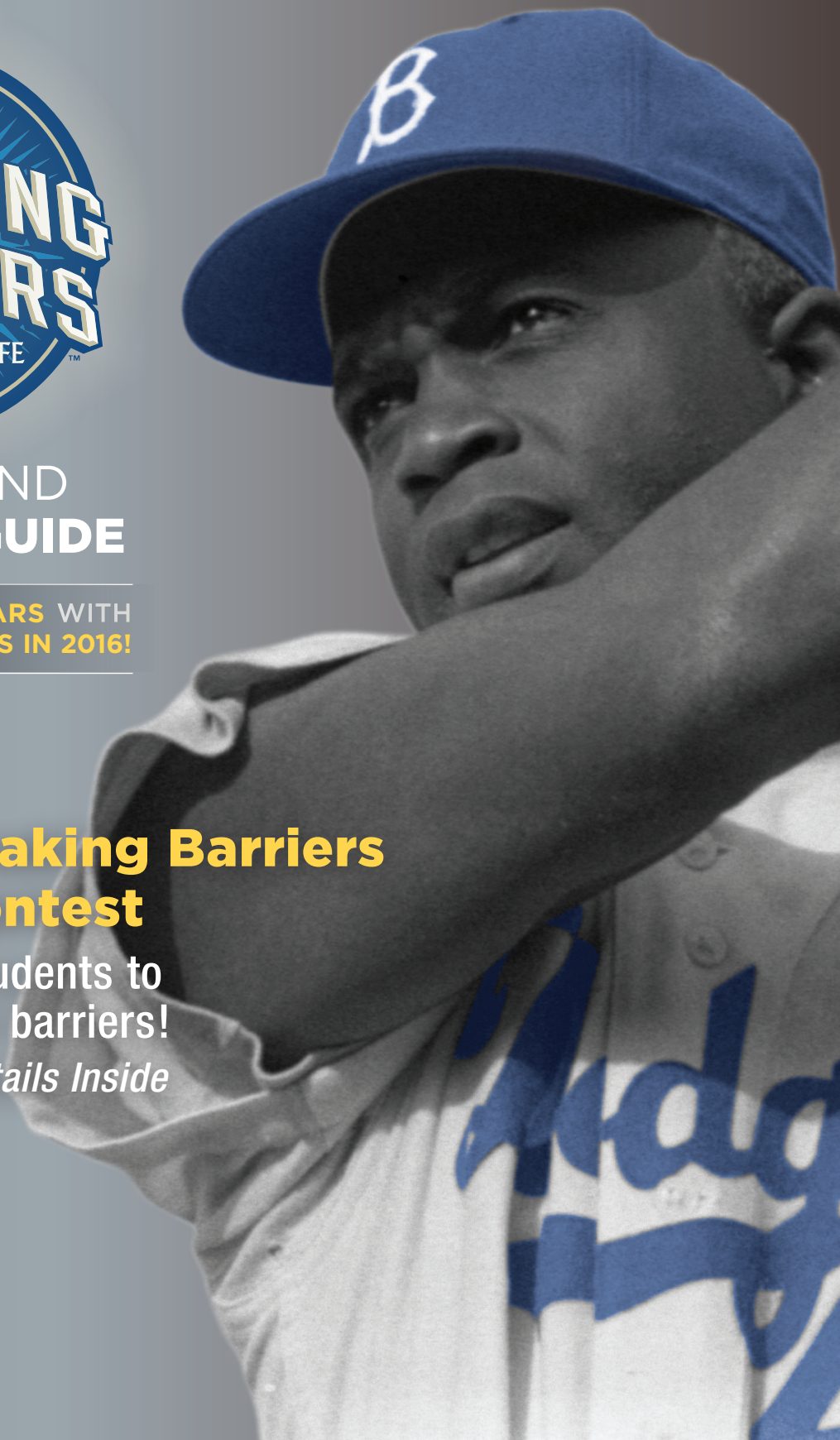
## > **2016 Breaking Barriers Essay Contest**

Motivate your students to  
write about their barriers!  
**Great Prizes • Details Inside**

Generously sponsored by



For more information on Breaking Barriers, visit  
**MLB.com/BREAKINGBARRIERS**



# Welcome, Teachers!



2015 Grand Prize Winner Malcolm Venable of New Orleans, LA, with teacher Katrina Armour (right) and Sharon Robinson, daughter of Jackie Robinson.

I'm happy to announce that 2016 marks the 20th anniversary of **Breaking Barriers: In Sports, In Life!** This educational program not only brings classrooms the story of my father, Jackie Robinson, and his breaking of the color barrier in baseball in 1947, but also extends his legacy of change to students today.

Created by Major League Baseball and developed with Scholastic, **Breaking Barriers** teaches students the values and characteristics that my father exhibited in his life and how to use them to face and overcome barriers in their own lives. At the heart of the program is the **Breaking Barriers Essay Contest**, which gives diverse students from across the country the opportunity to write about their own barriers, along with a chance to win valuable prizes.

I hope you and your students take part in **Breaking Barriers!**

Sincerely,

**Sharon Robinson**

Consultant, Community Affairs & Educational Programming, Major League Baseball  
[sharonrobinsonink.com](http://sharonrobinsonink.com)



## 2016 BREAKING BARRIERS ESSAY CONTEST Grades 4–9

[scholastic.com/breakingbarriers](http://scholastic.com/breakingbarriers)  
**20 NATIONAL WINNERS in 2016!**

- **Grades 4–6 Grand Prize:**  
Trip to the **2016 MLB® All-Star Game®**
- **Grades 7–9 Grand Prize:**  
Trip to a game of the **2016 MLB® World Series®**
- **Laptop computer for each winner!**

See the back cover for entry info and abbreviated rules.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Void where prohibited.

# Lessons

**Teacher Note**—For additional tools to support and enrich the lessons below, download pages at [scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/tools](http://scholastic.com/breakingbarriers/tools) for:

- ◆ Suggested answers to lesson discussion questions
- ◆ Academic and domain-specific vocabulary lists
- ◆ Writing prompts
- ◆ Paired-text reading suggestions
- ◆ Grades 4–8 higher standards chart

## LESSON 1: What Are Barriers?

**Reproducible 1:** “About My Father”—Reproducible 1A (grades 4–5) or 1B (grades 6–8)

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Lesson Objective:** Students will understand what the concept of a barrier means, and how Jackie Robinson faced and overcame barriers in his life.

### LESSON STEPS

1. Start by asking students what a *barrier* is. Guide them to define it as: *a challenge or obstacle that stops you from moving forward.*
2. Discuss with them that some barriers can be seen, such as a fence, a disability, or an event, while others cannot, such as fear, inexperience, or lack of skills.
3. Ask the class to think of different barriers that people face and how they prevent people from moving forward. Create a list on the board.
4. Divide the class into small groups and distribute Reproducible 1A (grades 4–5) or 1B (grades 6–8): “About My Father.” Have volunteers read passages from the story. Then have groups discuss the story, using **text evidence** to respond to the following questions:

#### Grades 4–5:

- Based on the first paragraph, why do you think Sharon Robinson wrote this article?
- What is the main idea of the article? Provide details from the article to support your answer.
- How did the color barrier prevent black baseball players from playing in the Majors before 1947?
- What did the scouts tell Branch Rickey to convince him Jackie Robinson could be successful in the Major Leagues?
- Why did Mr. Rickey describe to Jackie Robinson the rough conditions he would have to face?
- The article says that “Rickey hoped my father would have the strength of character to fight back with his bat and not his fist.” What does this mean?
- How did Jackie Robinson respond to the racism he faced in baseball?

#### Grades 6–8:

- Based on the first paragraph, why do you think Sharon Robinson wrote this article?
- What is the main idea of the article? Provide details from the article to support your answer.
- How did the color barrier prevent black baseball players from playing in the Majors before 1947?
- Why were Jackie Robinson’s college statistics at UCLA and his accomplishments with the Kansas City Monarchs important information for Branch Rickey?
- Why was it important to Mr. Rickey that Jackie Robinson had strength of character?
- What evidence in the article suggests that Jackie Robinson succeeded in breaking barriers in Major League Baseball?

(continued)