

Notable Trade Book Lesson Plan:

A Strong Right Arm: The Story of Mamie “Peanut” Johnson

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Abstract

*This lesson uses, **A Strong Right Arm**, a book about Mamie Johnson and her experiences as an African-American girl who played baseball in the days when the major leagues were segregated. This book is an historical account told firsthand by Mamie Johnson to the author. This lesson can be used with upper elementary students to examine conflicting interests and to explore the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.*

NCSS Notable Trade Book Lesson Plan Template

A Strong Right Arm: The Story of Mamie “Peanut” Johnson

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NCSS Notable Trade Book Title:	<i>A Strong Right Arm: The Story of Mamie “Peanut” Johnson</i> (2004) by Michelle Y. Green Scholastic, Inc.
Book Summary:	The book is about Mamie Johnson and her experiences as an African-American girl who played baseball in the days when the major leagues were segregated. This book is an historical account told firsthand by Mamie Johnson to the author.
NCSS Standards: NCTE and IRA Standards: Thematic Strands:	I, II, III, IV, V, VI 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 I. Social studies programs should include experiences that Provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity. II. Social studies programs should include experiences that Provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time. III. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments. IV. Social studies programs should include experiences that Provide for the study of individual development and identity. V. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions. VI. Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual copies of <i>A Strong Right Arm</i> • student journals • outline maps • colored pencils • <i>Grading Rubric</i> Handout (see Appendix A) • research resources, including the Internet
Objectives:	Students will be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine conflicting interests • identify the social context that shapes historical events

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare and contrast Civil Rights during the time period of the book and present day • identify absolute and relative locations of major cities in America • identify various events occurring from 1935-1965 on a time line • evaluate how an individual can have an impact on society and future generations
<p>Procedures:</p> <p><u>Exploration/Introduction:</u></p> <p><u>Development:</u></p>	<p>Anticipatory Set:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students examine the cover of their books in order to make predictions. ➤ Students write the title of the book on the first page of their journals and then list four or five predictions. ➤ With journals closed, the teacher reads the introduction by Mamie “Peanut” Johnson to the class. ➤ Discuss their predictions and how they changed or stayed the same. ➤ Rereading the last paragraph, discuss Mamie’s dream. ➤ Have them write about their own dream or dreams in their journals. <p>Procedure:</p> <p>Explain in the beginning that their journals are used so that the teacher can evaluate how well they participate and understand this book. Hand out the scoring rubric and have students keep it in their journals.</p> <p>Model journal writing. Show, while explaining, an example of a journal done by the teacher with a different section for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chapter discussion questions • people • places • obstacles people faced • idioms and interesting words or phrases • time line of events <p>Break the reading into sections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students read those sections independently, while generating data for the above sections. During the last 30 minutes of the class, have them discuss their findings with the other members of their group. They should record information shared within the group. ✓ At the beginning of each class, discuss one discussion

<p>Expansion:</p>	<p>question from the previous day chosen by one small group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ When finished the readings, debrief the entire novel with students. ✓ List various historical events (bombing of Pearl Harbor, Brown v. <i>Board of Education</i>, MLK’s <i>I Have a Dream Speech</i>) on the board and have the students chart them on their time lines. <p>Teacher Input:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher scaffolds and models. ▪ She will discuss one of the generated discussion questions each day with class and will monitor and guide small group activity. <p>Student Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students read independently prior to sharing with their small groups. ▪ They record questions, vocabulary, and other data in their journals. ▪ Students work cooperatively in small groups with other students. <p>Debriefing Questions and Potential Answers:</p> <p>Q. How did Mamie get the nickname “Peanut”? <i>A. Hank Baylis said he wasn’t afraid of Mamie’s pitching because she “was no bigger than a peanut” and then Mamie struck him out.</i></p> <p>Q. What were some of the obstacles Mamie had to overcome to reach her dream? <i>A. She had to deal with racial prejudice, being a female in a male-dominated sport, being away from family, enduring the loss of her grandmother, and moving from the familiar to the unknown.</i></p> <p>Q. Why does the author title this book <i>A Strong Right Arm</i>? <i>A. Mamie says that all she needed to get along in life was baseball, a dream, and a strong right arm.</i></p>
<p>Suggested Extension Activities:</p>	<p>Additional Student Activities for Application to New Situations:</p> <p>Assign each small group research projects in which they become</p>

	<p>the experts and have them report their findings to the class in a PowerPoint presentation. Research suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minorities in sports today • African Americans breaking the racial barrier in football • A historical look at segregation in the military • Women in sports • The Negro Baseball League
Assessment:	<p>Student Journals Presentations</p>
Extension/Cross Curriculum:	<p>Math: guest speaker on baseball statistics. Science: analyze the characteristics of pitching. (fastball, knuckleball, etc.) Art: research and illustrate various styles of baseball attire. Music: research and listen to jazz music from the period.</p>
Additional References and Web links:	<p>Mamie Johnson: http://www.nlbpa.com/johnson_mamie.html Michelle Y. Green: http://www.michelleygreen.com/michelle-servlet/do/Home National Baseball Hall of Fame: http://www.baseballhalloffame.org/ Negro League Baseball History: http://www.nlbpa.com/history.html</p>

Appendix A

Social Studies Journal Rubric
Developed by Melinda Odom Staubs

	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
Language, Details, and Ideas	Responds to vocabulary and concrete details, directly stated ideas of key points in the reading.	Responds to concrete details, strongly implied ideas, or key points in the reading.	Responds to more abstract or subtle language, details, and ideas in the reading.	Responds to elements of style, selections of detail, and matters of organization, as well as complex ideas presented in the reading.
Purpose, Content, and Relationships	Makes judgments about the purpose, content, or relationships in the reading.	Makes supported judgments about the purpose, content, or relationships in the reading.	Makes informed and well-supported judgments about the purpose, content, or relationships among elements presented in the reading.	Makes insightful judgments about the purpose, content, or relationships among elements presented in the reading.
Quality of Information	Entry shows no thought or connection to the historical events presented in the reading.	Entry shows some thought or connection to the historical events presented in the reading. Includes some inaccuracies such as details, conclusions, or predictions that are inaccurate or unsubstantiated.	Entry shows thought and connection to the historical events presented in the reading. Includes connections between the text and reader's background knowledge (schema).	Entry shows great thought and connection to the historical events presented in the reading. Includes connections between the text and reader's background knowledge (schema), their ideas and beliefs, or other resources.

Organization	Information is not presented in any organized manner.	Information is presented in an organized manner but little attention is given to construction of the written information or neatness.	Information is presented in an organized and neat manner. Attention is given to the construction of the written information.	Great attention is given to the organization of the information, neatness of the journal, and construction of written information.
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