

**Negro
Leagues 1:
Timelines**

Growing Mathletes

Negro Leagues 1: Timelines Overview

Key Ideas in this Session: Youth collaborate to complete a timeline, 1850-the present, about the Negro Leagues, MLB, and how language shifts over time. Youth learn about three women of the Negro League and make connections to effort and persistence.

Driving Questions:

1. What are some significant events in baseball since 1950?
2. How does the use of language change over time?
3. What ways did the women of the Negro League exhibit effort and persistence?
4. How does persistence show up in our own lives?

Math Standards:

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.3.NBT.A.2
Fluently add and subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.NBT.B.4
Fluently add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm.

Activity	Time	Description
Activity 1	45 minutes	Youth learn about the history of the Negro League and then collaboratively fill in a timeline about the league and the shifting of language over time. Then they find differences between years and make connections between their life and the timeline.
Activity 2	15 minutes	Youth learn about three women who played on the Negro League, then discuss effort and persistence.

Materials

- Scissors or a paper cutter (for facilitators to cut out the Info Cards on page 15 & 16)
- Pens/pencils for youth to fill out worksheet

Set-Up

For Activity 1, cut out the Info Cards on page 15 & 16 so they are ready to hand out to youth in small groups.

Hand out writing utensils & Worksheet 1 at the end of activity 1.

Growth Mindset Connection

Effort and Persistence.

Facilitator Resources for this Lesson

Be prepared to review the following information with the youth (see Youth Slide 2):

This lesson uses historical terms and phrases that have changed over time. At certain points in US history, the terms “colored” and “Negro” were considered respectful ways to refer to members of the Black or African American community. These words are used in this lesson as they were used in baseball’s history and so we can learn together how language changes over time.

Some language may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable. “While the terms “colored” and “Negro” were once acceptable...today these terms are often considered offensive and are unacceptable. [S]ome members of the Black community have reclaimed, reimagined, and repurposed “colored” and “Negro.” However, it is now inappropriate and offensive for non-Black people to use these words (aside from discussing historical material). Instead, you should use the terms *African American* or *Black*, as in a *Black person* (or a Black woman, a Black man, a Black student, etc.)”

CONTENT & QUOTES SOURCES

- <https://www.mission-us.org/2022/11/08/historical-terms-and-why-they-matter/>
- <https://www.mission-us.org/teach/no-turning-back/teaching-this-mission/content-and-language-advisory/>

Learn more about language use from the sources:

[Historical Terms & Why They Matter](https://www.mission-us.org/2022/11/08/historical-terms-and-why-they-matter/)

[Content & Language Advisory](https://www.mission-us.org/teach/no-turning-back/teaching-this-mission/content-and-language-advisory/)

Graph Sources:

[Rise of Latinos in the Major League](#)

[Baseball Demographics 1947-2016](#)

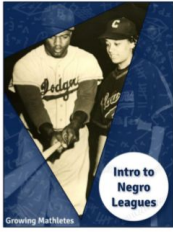
[Where have all the Black players gone?](#)

Negro Leagues 1: Timelines Introduction

Start the session by providing youth with an overview of the key activities.

Negro Leagues 1: Timelines

Activity	Time	Description
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Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 1

Next, take a moment to discuss the language used in this lesson.


NOTE: we recommend taking time to prepare well for this aspect of this lesson. There are resources on the topic of language on page 3.

Before we begin: A note about language

This lesson uses historical terms and phrases that have changed over time. At certain points in US history, the terms "colored" and "Negro" were considered respectful ways to refer to members of the Black or African American community. These words are used in this lesson as they were used in baseball's history and so we can learn together how language changes over time.



Some language may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable. "While the terms "colored" and "Negro" were once acceptable...today these terms are often considered offensive and are unacceptable. [S]ome members of the Black community have reclaimed, reimagined, and repurposed "colored" and "Negro." However, it is now inappropriate and offensive for non-Black people to use these words (aside from discussing historical material). Instead, you should use the terms *African American* or *Black*, as in a *Black person* (or a Black woman, a Black man, a Black student, etc.)"




IMAGE, CONTENT & QUOTES SOURCES

- <https://www.nfl.com/news/negro-leagues-given-major-league-status-for-baseball-records-stats-6> <https://www.nfl.com/>
- <https://www.mission-us.org/2022/1/08/historical-terms-and-why-they-matter/>
- <https://www.mission-us.org/teach-to-turning-back/teaching-this-mission/content-and-language-advice/>

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 2

Then, share and discuss this quote.

Negro Leagues 1: Timelines



I sure get laughs when I see in the papers where some major league pitcher says he gets a sore arm because he's overworked, and he pitches every four days. Man, that'd be a vacation for me.

- Satchel Paige

What do these quotes mean to you?

What messages are Satchel Paige trying to send?

Activity 1

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 3

Never let the odds keep you from pursuing what you know in your heart you were meant to do.

- Satchel Paige

Activity 1 - Co-Created Timeline (1 of 5)

Description: In this activity, youth will collaborate to complete a timeline, 1850-the present, about the Negro Leagues, MLB, and how language shifts over time.

Baseball Connection: In the early days of professional baseball, not all people were allowed to play together. Black players were only allowed to play in the Negro Leagues. The history of the Negro League is not widely known, yet there is much we can learn and many ways that the Negro Leagues influenced baseball as we know it today. This timeline activity will invite in learning, curiosity, and reflection on the history of professional baseball.

LAUNCH:
Connect with prior knowledge & History of the Negro Leagues

Solicit youth’s knowledge by asking:

- What do you know about the Negro Baseball Leagues?
- Do you know any names of players from the Negro Leagues?

Next, to support youth understanding of baseball history, show and discuss this

VIDEO: How the Negro National League Was Formed | Field of Dreams...Deferred

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXo1zmpn_10

- What stood out from the video?
- What are you curious about after watching this video?

Activity 1

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 4

Activity 1

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 5

Activity 1 - Historical Timeline (2 of 5)

INTRO TO TIMELINE GAME: Inquiry & Group Example

Use Slide 6 to transition from the discussion to the Timeline activity. Frame it as a game to increase interest.

Then show Slide 7 with the blank timeline. Ask youth:

- What do you notice?
- What do you wonder?

Discuss their answers for a few minutes. If no youth respond by saying “timeline,” tell them it’s a timeline and that we are going to collectively fill it in.

Next, start the Timeline Creation Game as a whole group using Slide 8.

Ask, where does the information below go on this timeline?

Call on youth for the two examples. If time permits, ask them to walk to the board and point, and **have youth explain the reason why.**

Then expand on the timeline using Slide 9, taking time to address the notes on language in the gray boxes.

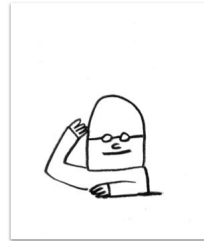
Call on a few youth to reflect briefly on this portion of the timeline using Slide 10. **Ask:**

- What did you notice?
- What did you wonder?

NOTE:

There is another reflection coming up soon, so keep this one short!

We’ve learned a little about the Negro Leagues...

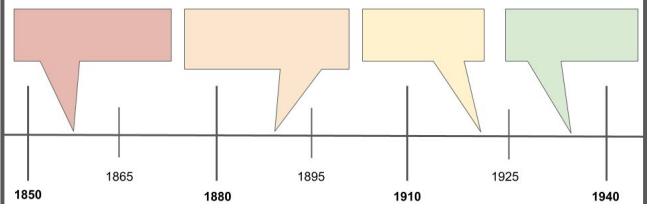


Now we are going to play a game to apply our knowledge AND learn more!

Activity 1

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 6

What do you notice?
What do you wonder?



Activity 1

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 7

Timeline Creation Game: Whole Group Example

Where does the information below go on this timeline?

1887: The National Colored Baseball League becomes the first professional African American league.

1859: First baseball game between two African American teams is played.

Timeline of African American Baseball & The Shifting of Language

1859: First baseball game between two African American teams is played.

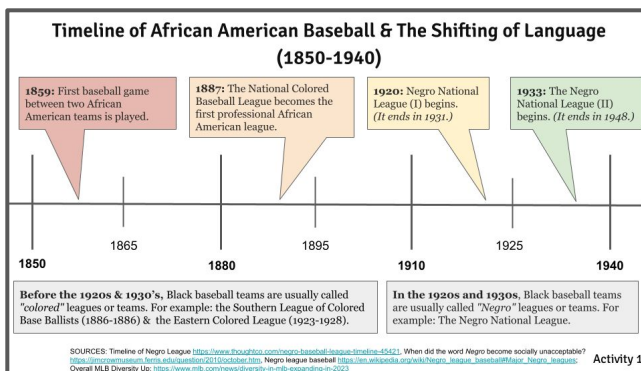
1887: The National Colored Baseball League becomes the first professional African American league.



SOURCES: Timeline of Negro League <https://www.thoughtco.com/negro-baseball-league-timeline-45421/>; When did the word Negro become socially unacceptable? [https://www.quora.com/When-did-the-word-Negro-become-socially-unacceptable?](https://www.quora.com/When-did-the-word-Negro-become-socially-unacceptable); Negro league baseball https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negro_league_baseball#Major_Negro_leagues; Overall MLB Diversity Up <https://www.mlb.com/news/diversity-in-mlb-2023>

Activity 1

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 8



Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 9

• What did you notice?

• What do you wonder?

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 10

Activity 1 - Historical Timeline (3 of 5)

TIMELINE GAME

Now it's the youth's turn! Use Slide 11 to give instructions. **Pass out the Info Cards and let them know how long they have to work as a group.**

When time is up, give the following prompt, starting with Red, until all the boxes are filled:

PROMPT: Stand up or raise your hands if your group thinks you have the info that goes in the ____ box!

IMPORTANT: Prompt youth with colors in this order:

1. Red
2. Dark Blue
3. Green
4. Pink
5. Orange
6. Light Blue
7. Purple
8. Yellow

This is the order in which the slideshow will reveal the content.

SEE KEY ON NEXT PAGE

Ask the group(s) that stands/raises hands to read their information out loud. **If there is more than one group, ask the whole group which one they think is right, then say... "let's see" and reveal the correct answer by clicking the slideshow. Continue until all boxes are filled.**

Celebrate their teamwork and the completion of the Collective Timeline Game!

Then, reminding them that language use and preferences is ever changing, and read the gray box out loud: **"In recent polls, most Black interviewees express no preference between *Black* and *African American*."**

Remind them that "African American" and "Black" are the terms they should use and that it's unacceptable to use the terms "colored" or "Negro."

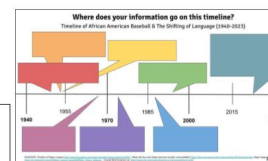
Close with a reflection, asking:

- What's something on the timeline that surprised you?
- What else are you curious about?

Now it's your turn! Timeline Creation Game

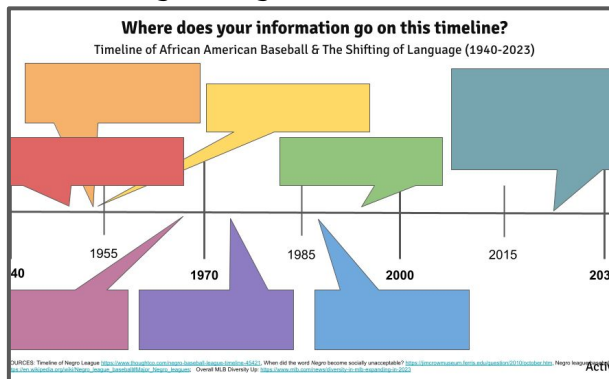
How to play:

1. Get into pairs/small groups
2. Look at your info card(s)
3. Talk to your group: where does your information go on the timeline?
4. Together we will piece together the timeline like a puzzle!



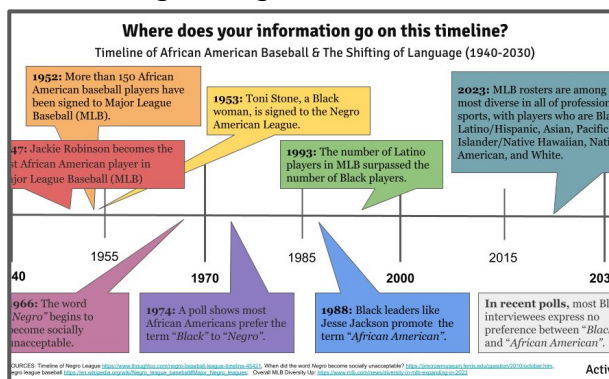
Activit

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 11



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Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 12



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Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 13

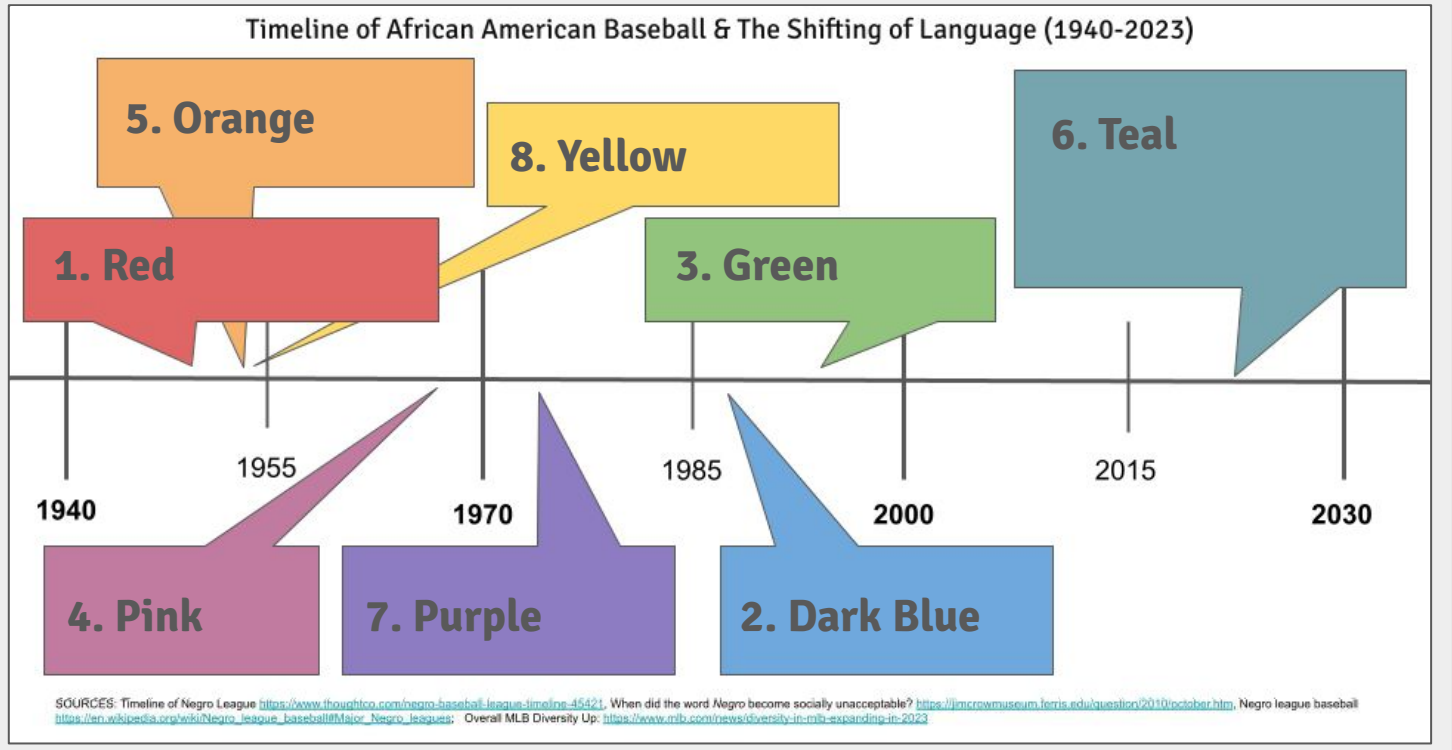
- What's something in the timeline that surprised you?
- What else are you curious about?

Activit

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 14

Activity 1 - Historical Timeline (4 of 5)

COLOR KEY & ORDER OF THE REVEAL



Prompt youth with colors in this order:

1. Red
2. Dark Blue
3. Green
4. Pink
5. Orange
6. Teal
7. Purple
8. Yellow

Activity 1 - Historical Timeline (5 of 5)

TIMELINE WORKSHEET

If time permits and the youth's interest and attention is still present, introduce this next activity which invites youth to explore the timeline more deeply, do some math, and make personal connections.

Pass out **Worksheet 1a**, **Worksheet 1b**, and utensils to youth.

- They can work alone or in pairs.
- Tell them how much time they have to work on the worksheet.
- When time is up, ask one or two youth to share their response to each question.
- Get at least one response for each question.

NOTE: It might deepen the reflection and discussion if you have answered the questions yourself as well.

Answers for Worksheet 1a: 1. Use the equation $[current\ year] - 1920 = X$
 2a. 17 years old
 2b. As of December 2023, Mays was still alive and was 92 and a half years old! To find out his age, use the equation $[current\ year] - 1931 = age$

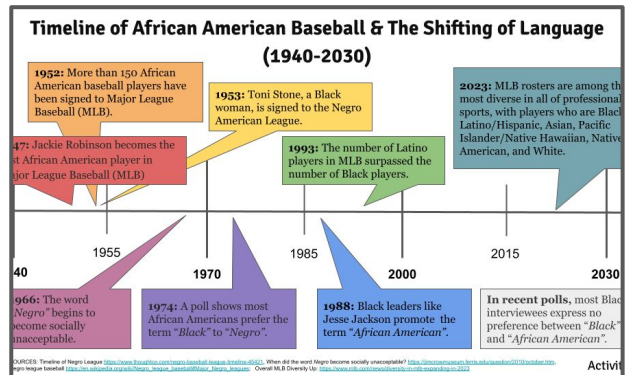
You, Willie Mays, Jackie Robinson & the Timeline

Work on your own or with a partner to answer the questions on **Worksheet 1a**.

Use the timeline we co-created to help you (on **Worksheet 1b**).

Activity materials including a photo of Willie Mays, a worksheet, and a timeline.

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 15



Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 16

Activity materials including a worksheet and a photo of Jackie Robinson.

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 17

Worksheets 1a and 1b for reference.

Worksheet 1a

Worksheet 1b

Activity 2 - Growth Mindset Connection (1 of 2)

Description:

Youth learn about three women who played on the Negro League, then discuss effort and persistence.

Growth Mindset Connection and Baseball Connection:

Effort and persistence is evident in many of the stories told by both men and women players in the Negro League. Youth are invited to reflect on the role of persistence in their lives, especially in overcoming barriers.

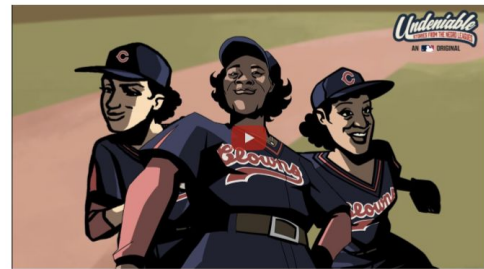
Women of the Negro League, Effort & Persistence

Play this **VIDEO: Women of the Negro Leagues** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCreNCuqfu0> (3:41) on slide 18.

Read Slide 19 contents or ask one youth to read each paragraph out loud:

Mamie "Peanut" Johnson wanted to play for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League but was not allowed to because of the color of her skin. Instead of giving up her dream to play baseball, she persisted and found another way: by playing in the Negro League alongside the men.

Activity 2: Women of the Negro Leagues



[Undeniable Episode 1: Women of the Negro League \[VIDEO LINK\]](#)

Activity 2

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 18

Persisting to pursue our dreams

Mamie "Peanut" Johnson wanted to play for the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League but was not allowed to because of the color of her skin.



Instead of giving up her dream to play baseball, she persisted and found another way: by playing in the Negro League alongside the men.

Activity 2

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 19

Activity 2 - Growth Mindset Connection (2 of 2)

Women of the Negro League, Effort & Persistence (continued)

Ask youth to discuss the questions on Slide 20 with a partner.

- What's a dream you have that might require effort and persistence to achieve?
- Have you ever been told you could not do something because of something about you?

NOTE: consider sharing personal examples before or after the youth share to deepen the connections.

Close by revisiting the quote from the beginning of the lesson on Slide 21:

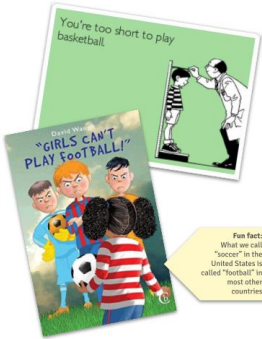
Never let the odds keep you from pursuing what you know in your heart you were meant to do. ~ Satchel Paige

Add your own encouraging words to youth to complete the lesson.

What's a dream you have that might require effort and persistence to achieve?

Have you ever been told you could not do something because of something about you?


Share with your partner.



Fun fact: What we call "soccer" in the United States is called "football" in most other countries.

Activity 2


Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 20



How does this quote we read earlier connect to what shared with your partner?

Never let the odds keep you from pursuing what you know in your heart you were meant to do.

- Satchel Paige



UPI/Bettmann Archive

Activity 2

Intro to Negro Leagues Youth Slides, Slide 21

Worksheet 1a - Questions

INSTRUCTIONS:

Work on your own or with a partner to answer the following questions. Use the information in the timeline we co-created to help you.

1. How many years ago did the Negro League begin?

2. Willie Mays was born May 6, 1931 and joined the Negro American League in 1948.
 - a. How old was he when he joined the Negro League?

 - b. Do you think he might be alive today? If so, how old would he be?

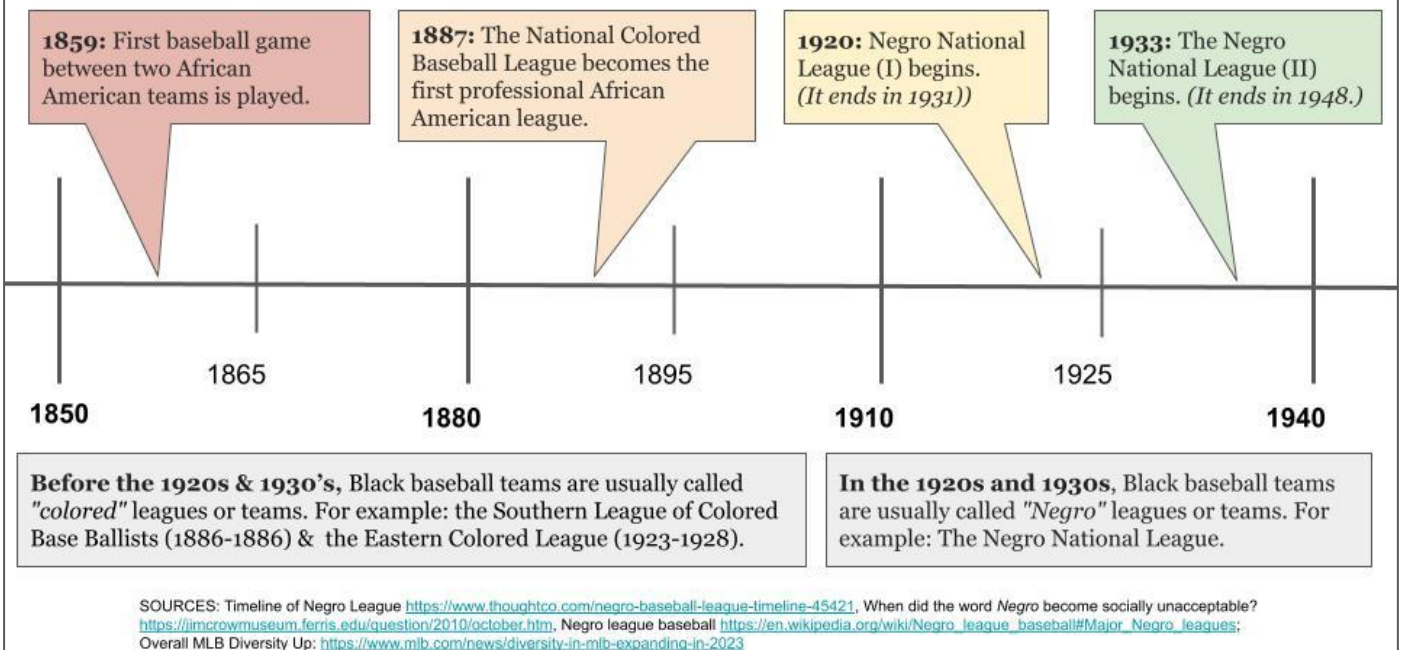
3. Can you think of anyone in your family, or anyone you know, who might have been alive when Jackie Robinson joined the MLB?
 - a. Who is that person to you?

 - b. About how old would they be now or about how old are they now?

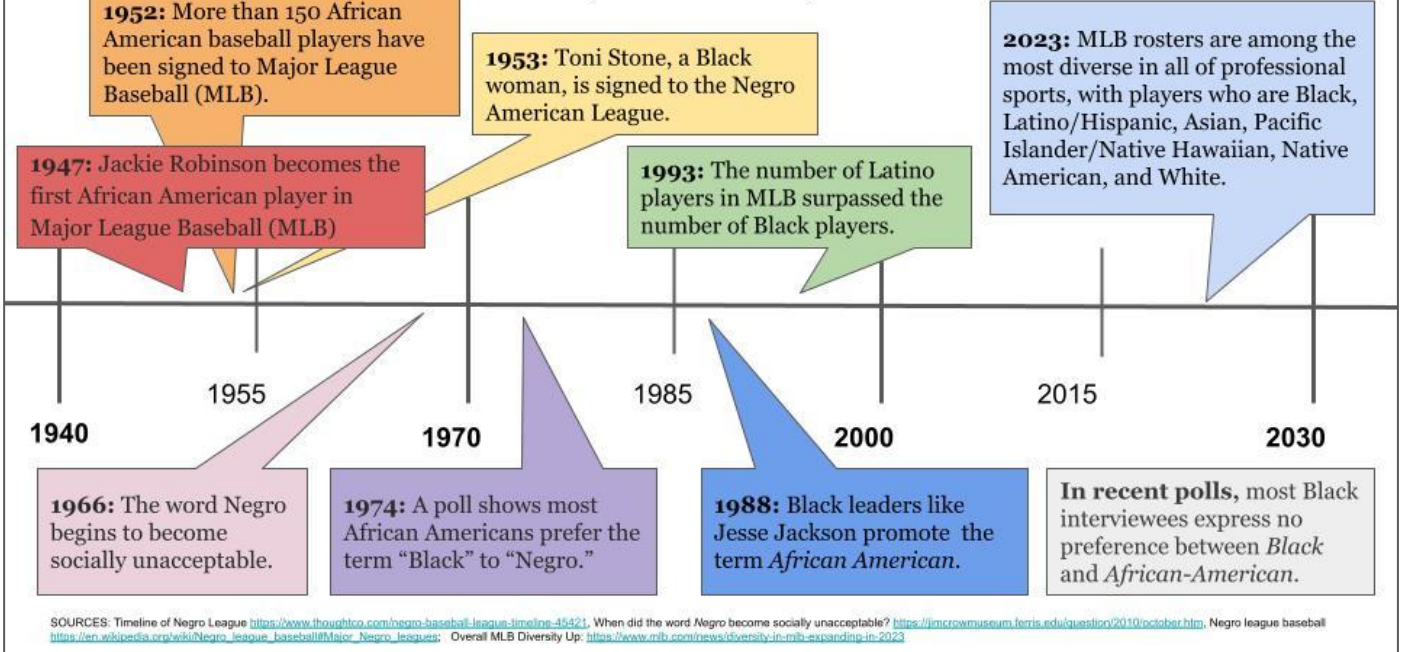
4. **BONUS:** What other ways can you connect your life to the timeline?

Worksheet 1b - Timelines (for reference)

Timeline of African American Baseball & The Shifting of Language (1850-1940)



Timeline of African American Baseball & The Shifting of Language (1940-2030)



Info Cards for Timeline (1 of 2)

INSTRUCTIONS:

CUT OUT BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION

HAVE READY TO HAND OUT FOR LESSON 1

1952

More than 150 African-American baseball players have been signed to Major League Baseball (MLB).

1953

Toni Stone, a Black woman, is signed to the Negro American League.

1947

Jackie Robinson becomes the first African-American player in Major League Baseball (MLB)

1966

The word Negro begins to become socially unacceptable.

Info Cards for Timeline (2 of 2)

INSTRUCTIONS:

CUT OUT BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION

HAVE READY TO HAND OUT FOR LESSON 1

1974

A poll shows most African Americans prefer the term "Black" to "Negro."

1993

The number of Latino players in MLB surpassed the number of Black players.

1988

Black leaders like Jesse Jackson promote the term *African American*.

2023

MLB rosters are among the most diverse in all of professional sports, with players who are Black, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, Native American, and White.