

PLAYERS IN PIGTAILS

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Ages: 6-9

Themes: Baseball, Stereotypes, America in the 1940s, Feelings, People-at-Work

Running time: 12 minutes

SUMMARY

People thought Katie Casey was an unusual girl. She didn't keep her clothes pressed or her room clean. She was a disaster on the dance floor and in the kitchen, but strangest of all, she loved baseball. This video playfully portrays WWII-era America and its relationship to the new faces in baseball – girls! Through song and colorful artwork, students will gain a beginning understanding of the social forces that changed America's national pastime during WWII, and they will meet Katie Casey, one of the dynamic players that was a part of this movement.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the Girls Professional Baseball League.
- Students will learn about stereotypes.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Make a Venn diagram that compares sports that boys play, sports that girls play, and sports that are played by both boys and girls. Discuss the results of the diagram with the class. Guiding questions:

- Who decides if girls or boys play a sport?
- Why are some sports for boys or girls only?

- Were these sports always only for boys or girls, or do you think that there was a time when both boys and girls played them?

Discuss stereotypes. Make a list of activities that students think are “boy things” and that they think are “girl things.” Ask students to explain why they have these views. Ask students if boys can ever do or own any of the “girl things” or vice versa. Explain that stereotypes are categories that people or things are placed in, that are based on one characteristic or idea, but that do not necessarily reflect all of the characteristics of those people or things.

Give students examples, such as: Native Americans' being stereotyped as always wearing feather headdresses, when in fact only some tribes of Native Americans wear feather headdresses; or, pitbull dogs' being stereotyped as mean, when in reality, not all pitbulls are mean. Help students understand why stereotypes may make people feel bad and create false impressions. Generate a list of stereotypes that students have heard or experienced. Work with students to give examples of how the stereotypes are untrue.

Lead into the video by saying: “We will watch a video about a girl who played a part in American history by showing people that stereotypes that they believed about girls and sports were untrue.”

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Follow up on the discussion of stereotypes.

Guiding questions:

- What was a stereotype in baseball before the formation of the GPBL?
- How did Katie Casey and the other girls in the GPBL help to undo that stereotype?
- What other stereotypes did you notice in the video about how girls should behave or look?

Students can make baseball cards for the GPBL. Students can make up the information using real baseball cards as a model, or the teacher can guide students in doing research to find real statistics and photos of the players in this league.

Students can make posters advertising the GPBL. The posters should include reasons why people would want to come to the games and information on where and when the games would be held.

Other videos from Weston Woods about stereotypes:

Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman, ill. by Caroline Binch

Martin's Big Words by Doreen Rappaport, ill. by Bryan Collier

Whitewash by Ntozake Shange, retold by Michael Sporn