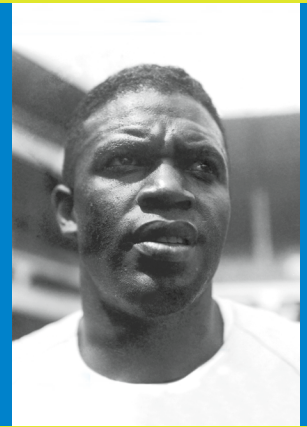


A Teacher's Guide for **CALL HIM JACK**

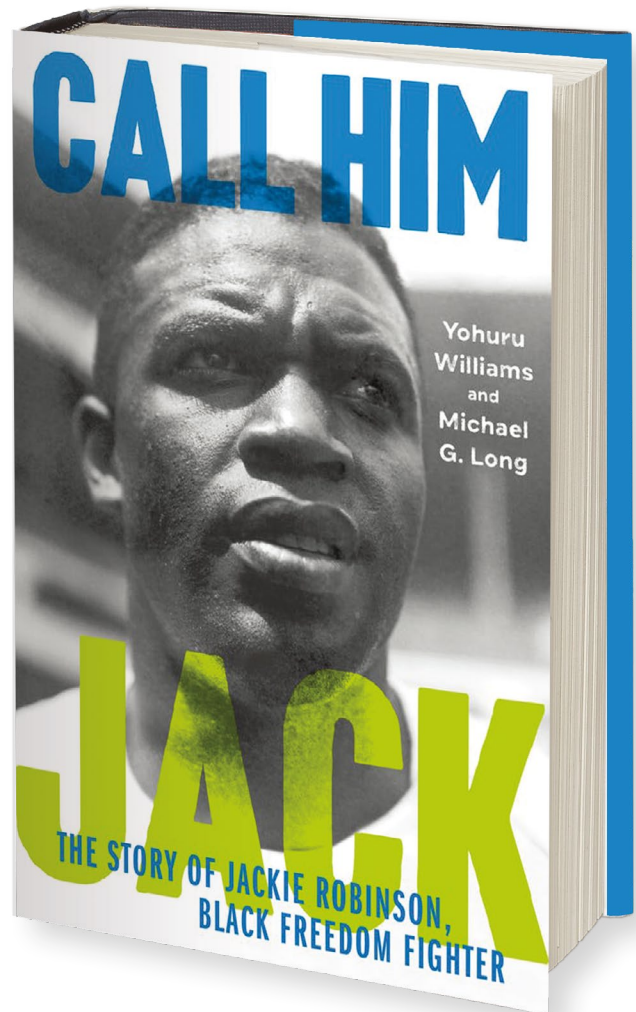


ABOUT THE BOOK

Call Him Jack is an enthralling, eye-opening portrayal of this barrier-breaking American hero as a lifelong, relentlessly proud fighter for Black justice and civil rights.

According to Martin Luther King Jr., Jackie Robinson was “a sit-inner before the sit-ins, a freedom rider before the Freedom Rides.” According to Hank Aaron, Robinson was a leader of the Black Power movement before there was a Black Power movement. According to his wife, Rachel Robinson, he was always Jack, not Jackie—the diminutive form of his name bestowed on him in college by white sports writers. And throughout his whole life, Jack Robinson was a fighter for justice, an advocate for equality, and an inspiration beyond just baseball.

From prominent Robinson scholars Yohuru Williams and Michael G. Long comes *Call Him Jack*, an exciting biography that recovers the real person behind the legend, reanimating this famed figure’s legacy for new generations, widening our focus from the sportsman to the man as a whole, and deepening our appreciation for his achievements on the playing field in the process.



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Yohuru Williams is a distinguished university chair and professor of history and the founding director of the Racial Justice Initiative at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. The former chief historian of the Jackie Robinson Foundation, he appeared in Ken Burns’s *Jackie Robinson* and was one of the hosts of *Sound Smart*, the History Channel’s popular YouTube program. His educational videos on civil rights, social movements, and other historic events have garnered more than a million views. He is the author of numerous books, including *Teaching Beyond the Textbook*, and has appeared on a variety of media outlets, including ABC, CNN, MSNBC, the History Channel, BET, C-SPAN, and NPR.



Michael G. Long is the author or editor of books on civil rights, religion, and politics, including *Jackie Robinson: A Spiritual Biography*, which was selected as a best book of the year by *Publishers Weekly*; *Gay Is Good: The Life and Letters of Gay Rights Pioneer Franklin Kameny*; *Beyond Home Plate: Jackie Robinson on Life After Baseball*; *Martin Luther King, Jr., Homosexuality, and the Early Gay Rights Movement*; and *Marshalling Justice: The Early Civil Rights Letters of Thurgood Marshall*. Long also served as an expert historian for Ken Burns’s documentary on Jackie Robinson. He lives in Pennsylvania with his family.



BEFORE READING

1. The book opens with a quote from Robinson: “If I had to choose between baseball’s Hall of Fame and first-class citizenship, I would say first-class citizenship to all of my people.” How do the authors let the reader know what they’ll be reading about? How does this quote help the reader prepare for the text?
Standard: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
2. *Call Him Jack* includes a section titled “Our Words,” and explains to the reader the power of the words we choose to use: “The words we choose to describe ourselves and one another can be respectful, kind, or cruel. They can make us smile and frown, laugh and cry, and cheer and jeer. They can make friends and enemies at the same time.” Why is this an important way to begin the book, and how does this inform the reader about the power of words and word choices?
Standard: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

DURING READING

1. Using evidence from the text, explain why Jack was given the name Jack Roosevelt Robinson.
Standard: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
2. When describing the Robinson family’s move to California, the authors include a block of text explaining the Great Migration. How does organizing the text in this way support a reader?
Standard: Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
3. Define “International Day” as described on pages 25 and 26.
Standard: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
4. On page 50, the authors describe the media coverage Robinson received in California newspapers, which often included “making reference to Jack’s skin color . . . and peppering their writing with offensive nicknames and imagery.” However, on page 59, the authors explain that the Hawaiian sports writers did not include references to skin color. Why was the media coverage so different in these two states?
Standard: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
Standard: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
5. Throughout chapter 9, the authors explain the impact of a racially segregated army. Using evidence from this chapter, analyze the impact racial segregation in the US Army had on Robinson’s service.
Standard: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.
6. On page 80, the authors include a section titled “Why Did Rickey Choose Jack?” How does this question, separate from the body of the text, fit into the overall structure of the text?
Standard: Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.
7. In chapter 12, the authors show how Robinson faced racism in all parts of the country. Using examples from this chapter, show how this point of view is conveyed in the text.
Standard: Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
8. Why did Jack Robinson shift to Jackie Robinson when he became a Dodger?
Standard: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

9. How did Jack’s comments about Paul Robeson during and after Robeson’s appearance before House Un-American Activities Committee “mark an important turning point in his fight for justice” (page 108)?
Standard: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
10. “Those were fighting words, and the battle between the two men would erupt again before the end of the year. Before that would happen, though, one of the best days of Jack’s life was right around the corner” (page 144). How do the authors use foreshadowing to keep the reader hooked?
Standard: Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.
11. Why was Malcolm X’s pilgrimage to Mecca described as “personally transformative” (page 152)?
Standard: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
12. Why did Dr. King and Robinson disagree about the Vietnam War?
Standard: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
13. Why did Robinson shift away from the Republican Party?
Standard: Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

AFTER READING

1. Watch an official trailer for *42*, the 2013 movie about Robinson, like the one linked [here](#). What did the movie get right based on the trailer and what needs to be added to tell Robinson’s full story?
Standard: Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
Standard: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
2. Create a ten-song soundtrack that details Robinson’s life, using *Call Him Jack* as well as other resources. For each song, provide evidence as to why it was chosen and how it showcases a part of his life.
Standard: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
3. Create a timeline of Robinson’s life using the text of *Call Him Jack* as well as the included primary sources. The timeline should be in chronological order and include evidence from all aspects of Robinson’s life, including his younger years, his feats in sports, and his fight for civil rights.
Standard: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

4. Robinson attended the March on Washington and watched as Dr. King gave his “I Have a Dream” speech. First, read the text of the speech in its entirety. Then, view a clip of Dr. King giving his speech. Compare and contrast the speech as written and the video of the speech using a Venn diagram.

Standard: Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium’s portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

5. As you read about Robinson’s fight for civil rights both on and off the field, you may have reflected on how the fight for these rights have continued. Research a contemporary protest, organization, or person who is fighting for civil rights today (Black Lives Matter, Colin Kaepernick, etc.). Then, create an infographic that compares and contrasts Robinson’s fight as well as the one researched. Canva is a free online tool for students and educators that supports infographic design.

Standard: Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful in aiding comprehension.

6. Write a eulogy for Robinson keeping in mind the words inscribed on his tombstone: “A life is not important except in the impact it has on others” (page 180). Your eulogy should connect to the inscription on Robinson’s tombstone and highlight his impact on others during his lifetime and beyond.

Standard: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

7. How did Jim Crow laws, explained on page 28, impact Robinson throughout his life? Be clear and concise with your argument and defend your thinking with evidence from the text.

Standard: Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Nicole Woulfe has taught middle school Social Studies in New Hampshire for seventeen years. She is also an adjunct professor at Southern New Hampshire University in the competency based learning program. In 2018, she was named NH’s History Teacher of the Year.